Dr. Amarjit Singh
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भारत सरकार
मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय
स्कूल शिक्षा और साक्षरता विभाग
शास्त्री भवन
नई दिल्ली – 110 115
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION & LITERACY
SHASTRI BHAVAN
NEW DELHI-110 115

D.O. No.43-27/2012-EE.9   Dated:3rd May 2013

Dear Arnab,

I am enclosing herewith the report of the Joint Review Mission, lead by Prof. Janaki Rajan and Prof Dewan, which visited West Bengal from 9th to 13th April, 2013. The team had discussed the report with you and your other team members.

2.   I would request you to prepare a comprehensive position with regard to the status of teacher education in your State, along with steps taken by the State Government in the last one year for making qualitative and quantitative improvements in the Teacher Education scenario. Further, the action, which the State Government proposes to take, along with time lines, with regard to the recommendations of the Joint Review Mission, may also be indicated.

3.   In this regard, I also refer to the SLP (C) No. 4247-4248/2009 before the Hon'ble Supreme Court in which the Hon'ble Court is hearing the matter relating to implementation of the various recommendations contained in the Report of Justice J.S. Verma, former Chief Justice of India on Teacher Education. The Supreme Court has also taken note of the JRMs and has desired that Action Taken Report should be obtained from the concerned States and placed before the Court by the Central Government.

3.   In the light of the above Court order, I am to request you to indicate the action taken/proposed to be taken on the recommendations of the JRM by 15th May, 2013. A copy of the report is also placed on our website www.teindia.nic.in.

Please do let us know if we can facilitate this in any manner.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

(Amarjit Singh)

Shri Arnab Roy
Secretary (Education)
Govt. of West Bengal
Bikas Bhawan, Salt Lake
Kolkatta-700091

Mid Day Meal Scheme

Report of the

Joint Review Mission on Teacher Education

West Bengal

8-13 April, 2013

Table of Contents

List of abbreviations:

AWP&B	Annual Work Plan and Budget
ASER	Annual Status of Education Report
BCWD	Backward Class Welfare Department
BO	Block Officer
BRC	Block Resource Centre
BRCC	Block Resource Centre Coordinator
CAL	Computer Aided Learning
CCE	Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation
CLRC	Circle Learning Resource Centre
CRC	Cluster Resource Centre
CRCC	Cluster Resource Centre Coordinator
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CTE	College of Teacher Education
D.Ed.	Diploma in Elementary Education
D. El. Ed.	Diploma in Elementary Education
DI	District Inspector
DPSC	District Primary School Council
DIET	District Institute of Education and Training
EGS	Education Guarantee Scheme
FMR	Female Male Ratio
GOI	Government of India
GoWB	Government of West Bengal
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
JRM	Joint Review Mission
EMIS	Educational Management Information System
NCF	National Curriculum Framework
NCFTE	National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education
OBC	Other Backward Classes
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
PCP	Personal Contact Programs
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institutions
PTEC	Primary Teacher Education College
PTTI	Primary Teacher Training Institute
RD	Rural Development
RMSA	Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan
RTE	Right to Education
SCERT	State Council for Educational Research and Training
SC	Scheduled Caste
SCSP	Scheduled Caste Sub-Plan
SI	School Inspector
ST	Scheduled Tribes
SMC	School Management Committee
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
TE	Teacher Education
TEI	Teacher Education Institution

TSP	Tribal Sub-plan
ULRC	
WBBPE	West Bengal Board of Primary Education
WBBSE	West Bengal Board of Secondary Education

Report of the Joint Review Mission on Teacher Education in West Bengal

1.1 A Joint Review Mission on Teacher Education for West Bengal was constituted by the MHRD.

1.2 The Mission Objectives, guiding principles and focus terms of reference for the team as defined by MHRD were as follows:

1. To review the status of progress and issues related to planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of teacher education.
2. To serve as a learning mission to assess
3. Progress made against agreed indicators and processes
4. Cross-sharing of experiences that highlight strength and weaknesses with a view to strengthening implementation gaps and comprehensive review regarding:
    a. AWP& B approvals and budget releases for 2012-13
    b. Progress on process and performance indicators for 2012-13
    c. FMRs for 2011-12, audited accounts 2010-11, GOI budget allocations for 2012-13
    d. Progress made on utilization of funds at institutional level
    e. Quality of training curriculum for pre-service and modules for in-service teacher education
    f. Processes and pedagogical practices in delivery of programs
    g. Quality of resource materials used by trainees and teacher educators
    h. Qualification and experience of teacher educators
    i. Contribution of institutions in content development, research and action research.
    j. Issues of governance, linkages across institutions, cadre management, filling vacant posts
    k. Efforts taken to integrate ICT with teacher education
    l. Quality and adequacy of infrastructural and institutional facilities in institutions
    m. Knowledge and understanding of NCFTE 2009 and implications for teacher education
    n. Steps taken to re-align Teacher Education curriculum with NCFTE 2010
    o. Development of library and resource materials (print and ICT) to conform with NCFTE
    p.   Professional development of institutions
    q. Linking Teacher Education Courses with vision and expectations of RTE
    r. Identifying and drawing partners in collaborative practice from higher education, NGOS, civil society
    s. Developing strategies in teacher preparation for inclusive teaching-learning, multi-linguality, assistive technologies
    t. Identifying centres of excellence.

1.3   This JRM Mission was fortunate in that it had team members with a wide range of expertise and were drawn from multiple sectors-government, private, NGOs. All have had long-term engagement with various processes in school and teacher education; inclusion, organizational leadership, and classroom practices. The team comprised of eight Members drawn from universities, DIETs, civil society organizations and NGOs.

1. Prof. Janaki Rajan, Jamia Millia Islamia
2. Dr. Hriday Kant Dewan, Vidya Bhawan Society
3. Ms. Annie Namala, Director, Centre for Equity and Social Inclusion
4. Dr. Farah Farooqui, Jamia Millia Islamia
5. Dr. Sarwat Ali, Jamia Millia Islamia
6. Ms. Lalita Pradeep, Principal, DIET, Lucknow
7. Dr. Sarada Kumari, DIET, RK Puram, New Delhi
8. Dr. Amrita Sengupta, UNICEF, Kolkatta

Prof. Rajan could not undertake the field visit due to illness but has been active in preparatory work, debriefing, consultations and in writing of the report. All other team Members, after desk visited West Bengal between 9-13 April, 2013. Field visits included TEIs and schools in Interactions were held with Minster of Education, senior administrators, SCERT, DIET Faculty and civil society organizations.

1.4 The JRM team acknowledges with deep appreciation, the excellent preparatory arrangements made by officials of the Government of West Bengal, the several meetings and field trips arranged, and the documents, materials and reports made available. The JRM team also acknowledges the invaluable contribution of the following recent documents/studies that enabled in-depth analytical understanding of school and teacher education in West Bengal:

1. Annual Work Plan and Budget for Teacher Education, West Bengal, 2012-13.
2. Teacher Education Approval Board Minutes, West Bengal, 2012-13.
3. Paromita Halder and Kumar Rana. Dialoguing Development: Glimpses of Pratichi Trust Public workshops, Occasional Paper 2, December 2010.
4. The Pratichi Education Report II, Primary Education in West Bengal, Changes and Challenges Ed. A. J. Philip, 2010.
5. Amartya Sen (Chair), Role and Responsibilities of Teachers Unions in the Delivery of Primary Education: Case of West Bengal, Occasional Paper No. 3, December 2010.
6. Kumar Rana, Santanu Sen, Manabesh Sarkar. Small Schools for Underprivileged: SSK Experiment in West Bengal.
7. Manabi Majumdar and Kumar Rana. In Defense of Public Education. Voices from West Bengal. Economic and Political Weekly. October 6, 2012, Vol. XLVII No. 40.
8. Kumar Rana, Samantak Das, Amrita Sengupta, Abdur Rafique, State of Primary Education in West Bengal, Economic and Political Weekly, May 31, 2003.
9. Achin Chakraborty and Sumana Dhar The Potential for Teacher Education in West Bengal, Institute of Development Studies, Department of Education, and Government of West Bengal.
10. State of West Bengal: Re-structuring of School Education in West Bengal, Indian Institute of Management, Kolkatta, August, 2010.
11. Best Practices from Other States in India, Volume II.
12. Vision of Teacher Education in India: Quality and Regulatory Perspective, MHRD, GOI.
13. Re-Structuring and Re-organization of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Teacher Education
14. Draft Guidelines for Teacher Education Scheme

15. Teacher Education Planning Handbook 2012-13

1.5 JRM Schedule: The JRM team visited West Bengal between 9-13 April 2013 with a de-briefing meeting on 14rd February in Delhi. The team records its deep appreciation for the tremendous and unstinting support of a large number of officials of the Department of Education, Government of West Bengal.

SCHEDULE OF JRM VISIT-Table 1

Date	Time	Activities/Institutions to be vi
08/04/2013	3.35 p.m.	Pick –up from Airport and reaching the Park Hotel , Arrang
08/04/2013	7.00 p.m.	Meeting with SPD, PBSSM, CSE, GoWB, Director SCERT (\ **Hotel**
09/04/2013 & 10/4/2013	9.30 a.m. (Dep: Park Hotel) **(Team -1)**	Visit: 1. DIET, North 24 Paraganas 2. CTE, Banipur, N 3. DIET, Nadia 4. CRC, Nadia 5. Primary Stay arrangements at Barasat by PBSSM;One official from SC DPI to accompany the JRM team during visit
	9.00 a.m. (Dep: Park Hotel) **(Team -2)**	Visit: 1. DIET, Murshidabad 2. CRC, Murshidaba 3. Primary / Upper Primary Schools, Murshidabad Stay arrangements at Berhampore, Murshidabad by PBSSM; T accompany the JRM team during visit
	10.00 a.m. (Dep: Park Hotel) **(Team -3)**	Visit 1. DIET, Hooghly 2. CRC, Hooghly 3. Primary / Upp 4. DIET, Howrah 5. CRC, Howrah. 6. Primary / U Stay arrangements by PBSSM; Two officials from SCERT(W during visit
11/04/2013	10.00 a.m.- 12 noon	Visit 1. SCERT (WB) - all JRM Members
	12 noon-5.00 pm	Visit 2. Ramkrishna Mission Sikshanamandira, Belurmath, ((3. David Hare Training College (IASE), **(Team -2)** 4. Institute of Education for Women, Hastings House, Officials from SCERT(WB) and DPI to accompany the JRM
12/04/2013	10.00 a.m.-1.30 p.m.	Meeting with Secretary, SED, Principal Secretary, HED, CSE GoWB, WBBPE, WBBSE, WBCROS, Director SCERT (WB) Dept. **Venue: SCERT (WB)**
	1.30 pm -2.30 pm	Lunch at SCERT(WB)
	Time to be confirmed by PBSSM	Meeting with Hon'ble MIC , Education , GoWB ; **Venue: Bi**
13/04/2013	10.00 a.m. onwards	Sharing of findings with Officials of Education Department an (WB); **Venue: SCERT (WB)**

2. Key Achievements in School and Teacher Education in West Bengal

The officials of School and Teacher Education departments provided the following information on the efforts of the State of West Bengal towards enhancing quality of school and teacher education.

2.1 Curriculum, Teaching Learning Transaction, Evaluation

The Government of West Bengal has appointed a Committee of Experts vide a notification in August 2011. The Terms of Reference of the Committee included the following:

1. To analyze the curriculum, syllabus and text books of every class from 1 to 10 and present their recommendations for change which must be in accordance with the NCF 2005 and RTE Act 2009.
2. To analyze and critique the present evaluation system and propose a new system of evaluation where all students, even those who need special care, can participate without any fear and anxiety.
3. To advise on how to reduce the dependence of students on textbooks and encourage them to think originally and independently.
4. To find ways of reducing dependence on private tuition and ensure that children participate in the education system without fear and boredom.
5. To recommend how to bring classroom teaching in West Bengal at par with national and international standards. It is also expected that the committee will advise on how to use audiovisual medium effectively so that the teaching methods become more efficient and scientific.
6. To look into the present methods of teaching and make recommendations on how the focus of teaching can be shifted from encouraging learning textbooks by heart to understanding concepts.
7. To make some recommendations regarding science education, which will enable students to think more scientifically and expand their horizons of scientific knowledge.

The Committee has submitted its interim report, on 17th January 2012. The Committee has since produced new text books for classes I, III, V and VII, based on the newly recommended curriculum and syllabus. This marks the first major change in curriculum to be brought about after the introduction of the NCF 2005, and the RTE Act 2009 in West Bengal.

2.2 Text Book Preparation

The curricula, syllabi and texts for Classes - I, III, V, VII at elementary level have been revised and re-written as per recommendations of the Committee and the revised curricula, syllabi and texts have become effective from the academic session 2013.

State Government requested the concerned Boards and Expert Committee to ensure that the texts for the rest of the classes are finalized and printed and sent to all the schools well ahead of the academic session of 2014.

At Primary level, beginning January 2013, Board (WBBPE) has been responsible for printing and delivery of the Text Books to the students of classes I to V. At Upper Primary level, West Bengal Board of Secondary Education framed modalities for printing and distribution of

textbooks. Teacher training to ensure effective use of the new text books will be taken up as part of the regular in service training

The State proposes the Text Book grant as Top up Grant @ Rs. 58.40 for all students & @Rs. 150/- per CWSN under RTE – SSA.

Table 2: Budget for textbooks

State proposal for Text Book grant @Rupees 250/- per student under RTE – SSA is incorporated in the costing sheet as well as in the Pl. Table No.5. The requirements are:

Category	Enrolment	Unit Cost	Proposed Budget (Rs. in Lakhs)
Govt. School	4658384	250	11645.960
MSKs	295173	250	737.933
Braille Books	2524	250	6.310
Large Print Books	13568	250	33.920
TOTAL	4969649	250	12424.123

2.3 Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation

The Expert committee is developing a detailed framework for CCE. CCE is to be conducted regularly without stipulated dates for conducting the evaluation. The teacher is to prepare a report card which will help in understanding the child's abilities and progress. Before starting a new chapter, the teachers are expected to consult the report card in order to see whether every child has been successful in understanding the concepts of the previous lesson. The teacher is also expected to keep a diary where the performance of all children in the academic year sis to be recorded. Sub Inspector of Schools (CPCs), DIs and AIs are to be trained before the changes in the evaluation systems are put into effect.

2.4 Learning Enhancement Programme

Sob Boi Porboi, an umbrella programme including a classroom library, early literacy and numeracy for classes 1 and 2, school-based numeracy enhancement programme and remedial instruction for classes 3 and 4 is being launched. In part, this initiative is expected to address the findings of the ASER Report 2011 which states that in West Bengal, only 57% children of grade 6 can read grade 2 texts. The idea is to develop a comprehensive strategy for early reading for the state, creating awareness and availability of resource materials to community, parents, teachers; to develop a series of graded readers, promoting reading in schools and outside; build documentation of the processes.

2.5 Progress in the revision of D. Ed curriculum in light of NCF-2005 and NCF-TE 2009

The 2-year course Curriculum and Syllabi along with the study materials have been developed in line with the NCFTE 2005 and RTE Act 2009, finalized and approved on 28.09.2012 by NCTE for 1,77, 988 in-service teachers.

Specification of courses of study, credit requirements, preparation of study material, periodicity of contact sessions, project work requirements for the teacher trainees, and system for assessment and examination, have been finalized. The curriculum & Syllabus for two-year D. Ed. Course have been based on current approaches to Teacher Education including (i) subjects in the basic areas of knowledge and skills including (a) planning and management, (b) contemporary developments in Education in India, (c) purposeful learning through direct experience, (d) art education and (e) computer applications in education; (ii) English (second Language as Method Subject), (iii) Practical teaching (micro & macro)The SCERT, West Bengal has been involved and will monitor the implementation. The State Government has also identified nearly 60,414 in-service teachers of the upper-primary and secondary levels in the state who do not have the prescribed qualifications. Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU) is to act as examining body, based on the pattern followed by IGNOU. NSOU will adopt the syllabus and curriculum along with the study materials of the B.Ed. programme of IGNOU.

2.6 In Service Teacher Training

Progress overview of 2012-2013 as presented by State authorities is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Training undertaken in 2012-2013

Category	Level	Target for 2012-13	Achieved by 31st March 2013	Percentage of achievement
20 days	Primary	127904	82310	64.35
	Upper Primary	134096	48715	36.33
	BRC/CRC	8900	8900	100
60 days	Primary	25000	Bridge Course & D. El. Ed course for 75,000 in-service teachers already started in December 2012.	

The Expert Committee has recommended that training focus will be on three generic areas: a. Equity and social inclusion for making children free of fear, trauma and anxiety, no screening, no detention, no corporal punishment, bridging learning gaps b. Pedagogical Foundations :learning through activity, discovery and exploration along with a focus on developing basic reading skills as the foundation for future learning, conceptual learning, bridging learning gaps and c. CCE integrally linked to classroom processes. Training is to include extensive use of use audio-video training aid and discussion based facilitation by Resource Persons.

Training includes extensive use of use audio-video training aid and discussion based facilitation by Resource Persons.

NGOs are being involved in teacher training on activity based science teaching and learning; early grades literacy and numeracy; targeted, level based remedial instruction, setting up and use of classroom library in support of language pedagogy.

2.7 Augmenting Teacher Support System:

In urban areas, Circles have been upgraded to ULRC. CLRCs at the Block level and nodal CRCs are being provided computer, furniture, TLM etc. Sub – Divisional Working Groups have been set up for supervision, monitoring and extending support services for the teachers. A Gazette Notification has been published for DIETs & PTTIs for recruiting Faculty with qualifications and experience as per NCTE norms. WBBPE & WBBSE have been designated as Academic Authority for Primary & Upper Primary levels and SCERT will take over the role of the Academic Authority from 2014. UNICEF, Kolkata are being involved for reorientation of the teacher training component. Visit to science centers & simultaneous training of the teachers of 5 selected schools from each district in collaboration with BITM, Kolkata and its regional centres has been taken up on pilot basis. SAC has been formed which will also oversee the teacher training component.

2.8 Training of Untrained Teachers

Assessment of the district/block wise number of untrained teachers, availability of infrastructure and Resource Persons for their training:-

Table 3: No. of teachers requiring professional training

S. No.	Teacher Category	Number of in-service untrained teachers requiring up gradation of professional qualification as per NCTE norms.
1	Primary Teachers	1,12,948
2	Para Teachers (primary)	21,960
3	SSK teachers	43,080
4	Upper Primary Teachers	30,118
5	Para Teachers (upper primary)	22,223
6	MSK Teachers	8073
	Total	2,38,402

There are 185 NCTE approved Study Centres including 86 PTTIs, 22 recognized B. Ed. Colleges in the State. Each study centre will have one Coordinator to organizing the Personal Contact Programmes (PCP). PTTI Lecturers, DIET Faculty Members, B.Ed. College Teachers will act as Resource Persons in the PCP. In case of non-availability, Guest Teachers will be engaged.

State Strategies for Ensuring Adequate Availability of Teachers

Recruitment of teachers based on PTR is being been made by the concerned DPSCs at Primary level. In case of Upper Primary, Regional School Service Commission, is authorized to recommend the names of Assistant Teachers based upon scheduled PTR, as reported by concerned District Inspector of Schools.

Action proposed/taken

- DPSC Chairperson are expected to complete teacher rationalization process within their districts by first identifying the schools with surplus teachers and those with less than required teachers on the basis of the PTR at primary level.

- A redeployment policy for teachers at the upper primary level is under consideration of S. E. Department.

- WBMSC has also released advertisement for Recruitment of teachers against the vacant posts of its recognized Madrasas.

Table 5: The number of teacher vacancies is per official records:

	sanctioned	engaged	vacancies
Primary	84425	72,909	11,516
upper primary	115691	63,986	51,705
total vacancies	63221		

Table 6: Teachers Sanctioned Under SSA in West Bengal up to 2012-13

Sl. No	District	TOTAL TEACHER (Prim. + U. Prim.)
1	Bankura	8385
2	Bardhaman	11,904
3	Birbhum	7,676
4	Dakshin Dinajpur	4,694
5	DGHC	2,096
6	Howrah	7,285
7	Hooghly	8,263
8	Jalpaiguri	11,752
9	Kochbehar	7,920
10	Kolkata	2,084
11	Malda	13,,940
12	Murshidabad	25524
13	Nadia	13,025

14	North 24 Pgns.	16,454
15	Paschim Medinipur	13,586
16	Pururba Medinipur	10,158
17	Purulia	5,798
18	Siliguri	3,207
19	South 24 Pgns.	17,711
20	Uttar Dinajpur	8,,,654
	Total	2,00,116

For elementary school teachers, alternative school teachers/ para teachers, VEC members, community leaders and parents, CRC/BRC Coordinators and faculty of DIET, SCERT, NGOs training is being organized with self-instructional print materials, audio-video, CDs, On line learning, wiki portal, tele-conferencing through IGNOU Gyan Darshan, Gyan Vani and All India Radio is underway. Refresher Programme on English was organized in collaboration with DEP-SSA, IGNOU New Delhi for the In-service teachers, capacity building in Science at DIET Malda and Jalpaiguri for thirty upper primary teachers each, radio programme 'Pathshalla' through AIR Kolkata a & Shantiniketan Kendra for teachers, learners, community members and stakeholder from Kolkata, South 24 Paraganas, North 24 Paraganas, Howrah, Hooghly, Nadia, Purba, Medinipur, Pachim, Medinipur, Bhirbhum, Bankura and Purulia.

3.Teacher Education Institutions: Context and Concerns

The achievements highlighted by the State government shows that there has been considerable activity related to teacher education in the State. These achievements need to be viewed in the context of the overall quality requirements of the State. The State also faces the challenge of the cumulative deficit due to hiatus in the past in development of teacher education.

In the following sections, we attempt to address the various issues related to teacher education in relation to school education and RTE. Teacher Education is multi-layered and multi-dimensional and does not lend itself easily to linear descriptions. We have used a layered approach, directing our lens on different dimensions in different sections on the same institutions and programs. At first glance, the sections might appear re-iterative, but the issues addressed are specific if inter-related.

3.1 School Education in West Bengal is managed through three departments: Education Department, Department of Minority Affairs and Madrasa Education and - Panchayat & Rural

Development Department that oversees the Shishu Shiksha Kendras (SSKs for primary education) and Madhyam Shiksha Kendras (MSKs for secondary education), what were formerly EGS Centres. The Backward Classes Welfare Dept contributes through providing hostel facilities to SC, ST, and OBC students and scholarships to SC, ST students in government and government aided schools. West Bengal Council for Rabindra Open Schooling conducts exams for open schooling for class X and XII. The Sarva Shiksha Mission also works for school education under school education department and is headed by State Project Director. SSM at present has a full contingent of staff at the district levels too. West Bengal School Service Commission is responsible for teacher recruitment from upper primary to higher secondary levels including conducting the TET. SCERT also is within the purview of school education department and DIETs.

Teacher education has to cater to 20 Educational Districts with 51,191 primary, 12,353 upper primary, 9001 secondary, 5175 higher secondaryschools. The data relied on this section was provided by the SCERT, West Bengal. According to information provided by SCERT, West Bengal, there are 170 regulare teacher education institutions and 1300 teacher educators which appears to be inadequate to meet the attrition needs of teachers in the system

Table 7: Number of teacher educators in West Bengal

Institution	Number of Institutes	Number of Teacher Educators
SCERT	1	7
DIETs	16	57
CTEs	6	60
IASEs	1	11
Govt. B.Ed. College	3	22
Aided B.Ed. Colleges	170	1300

Table 8: Number of teachers being trained in West Bengal through regular courses

	Government		Aided		Private		Total	
	No.	Intake	No.	Intake	No.	Intake	No.	Intake
D.EL.Ed	38	1900	22	100	115	5750	175	8750
B.Ed	8	800	36	3600	91	9100	135	13500
M. Ed	2	70	5	175			7	175
Total	48	2770	66	5085	208	14920	322	22775

Besides these, there are 5 Government and 5 private institutions which conduct 2 year D.Ed. (Special Education) courses with 500 students, 2 government and 2 private institutions that conduct B.Ed special course with 100 students.

3.2 Comments on Strategies for Training Untrained Teachers

Article 23 of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 (RTE Act) mandates that all teachers teaching classes at elementary level must be trained and those who don't possess training have to acquire it by March 31, 2015. The standards of training course should be as determined by the National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE). However, the NCTE norms don't apply for those untrained teachers who have been recruited as teacher before September 3, 2001, the date when it came into effect. According to NCTE norms the teachers teaching at elementary level have to possess training for two years duration from a NCTE approved institution. In West Bengal the duration of training course was for one year. According to the State records provided, the number of untrained teachers at primary (Class I-IV) and upper primary levels are 75,715 and 29,515 respectively. At primary level the number of fully and partly untrained teacher are 45,808 and 29,907. The number of training institution operating in West Bengal is 300 each of which has capacity to provide training 200 candidates in two batches, that is, in one session 60,000 teachers can be trained. However this figure does not include teachers in SSKs and MSKs 16,000 SSKs and 3000 MSKs have been upgraded to primary and upper primary schools under RTE Act2009. At present there is no well laid down plan to train these Sahayikas for RTE compliance.

The numbers and the proportion of untrained teachers vary between districts.

Table-9: Distribution of teachers by training status and by category of school as provided to JRM

District	Primary			Upper primary		
	Total regular teacher	No of untrained teacher	% of untrained teacher	Total regular teacher	No of untrained teacher	% of untrained teacher
BANKURA	9954	4637	47	4660	1498	32
BARDDHAMAN	14302	5184	36	7822	2404	31
BIRBHUM	8219	3423	42	3595	1304	36
DAKSHIN DINAJPUR	4218	2372	56	1618	501	31
DARJILING	1783	1018	57	800	335	42
HAORA	6450	3326	52	4974	1285	26
HUGLI	11780	3795	32	5889	2309	39
JALPAIGURI	7142	2790	39	3421	1502	44
KOCH BIHAR	6403	2197	34	3110	1185	38
KOLKATA	6888	3037	44	4424	953	22
MALDAH	6242	2517	40	3163	1232	39
MURSHIDABAD	11335	3313	29	6000	2403	40
NADIA	9494	6827	72	4960	1909	38

NORTH PARGANAS 24	11635	6814	59	9317	2534	27
PASCHIM MEDINIPUR	14901	8154	55	7752	2394	31
PURBA MEDINIPUR	9018	1999	22	5820	1127	19
PURULIYA	7332	3590	49	3330	1195	36
SILIGURI	2011	790	39	1042	497	48
SOUTH PARGANAS 24	12168	6229	51	6468	2173	34
UTTAR DINAJPUR	5219	2071	40	1891	775	41
Total	**166494**	**74083**	**44**	**90056**	**29515**	**33**

From data provided to the JRM, on an average the proportion of untrained teachers to total teachers at primary and upper primary levels in West Bengal as a whole are 44 and 33 percentages. However they are not uniform between the districts. The percentage of untrained teacher at primary level is highest in Nadia (72%) and lowest in Purba Medinipur (22 %). In upper primary level the percentage of untrained teachers are highest in Siliguri (48 %) and lowest in Purba Medinipur (19 %).

There are two categories of untrained teachers in the government-run Primary schools in West Bengal. One Category consists of the teachers having no training of any sort. The second Category consists of the teachers having one year Primary Teachers' Training which by itself, is not equivalent to Two – Year D. El. Ed. Course.

After a series of discussion and deliberations, curriculum and course material for D.El.Ed. (ODL Mode) has been prepared and approved by experts from different colleges, universities, DIETs and PTTIs, including NIOS and IGNOU.

Table 10: District Wise Target Groups for the TWO-YEAR-D El Ed COURSE through ODL Mode

Name of the Districts	Total No. of untrained Teachers for 2 year D.El.Ed
Bankura	1393
Birbhum	1245
Burdwan	3190
Cooch behar	1607
DakshinDinajpur	1497
Darjeeling	600
Hooghly	2492
Howrah	1871

Jalpaiguri	1972
Kolkata	1995
Malda	1549
Murshidabad	2617
Nadia	3722
North 24 Pgs.	5172
PaschimMedinipur	4000
PurbaMedinipur	950
Purulia	2499
Siliguri	494
South 24 Pgs.	4872
Uttar Dinajpur	2071
Total	**45808**

For teachers who have completed one year D.Ed. course, 1 year bridge course in ODL mode is being conducted by the West Bengal Board of Primary Education (WBBPE).

Table 9: District Wise Target Groups for the ONE YEAR BRIDGE COURSE (through ODL Mode)

Name of the Districts	Total No. of untrained Teachers for 1 year D.El.Ed
Nadia	3105
North 24 Pgs.	1642
PaschimMedinipur	4154
PurbaMedinipur	1042
Purulia	1091
Siliguri	296
South 24 Pgs.	1357
Uttar Dinajpur	1385
Total	**29907**

There are 300 ODL training institutes in West Bengal to provide training to the untrained teachers. Each institute has capacity to train 200 teachers. Theory classes will be held on Sundays only. Two shifts have been arranged for training in each institute. Each shift has provision of training 100 teachers. Duration of each shift is 4 hours (first and the last shifts are

between 9 AM to 1 PM and 2 PM to 6 PM respectively).The measures taken for training teachers at upper primary level are not mentioned in this report.

The West Bengal Board of Primary Education headed by the President, WBBPE will be in-charge of both two year D.El Ed Course and One year Bridge Course for both the untrained and under qualified Primary School Teacher respectively which will be executed by the Directorate of Core Faculty under WBBPE in perfect collaboration and cooperation with the Expert Committee, WBBPE for both the Courses, the Board of material developers, the expert committee of School Education under School Education Department. and the DPSCs and the Study Centers.

Our visit in the DIET reveals that there has been shortage of mentors. The centers assigned for ODL do not have adequate number of mentors. It is sometime difficult conduct the session as most the administrative staffs are not available on Sundays. The DIET faculties expressed their concerns regarding efficient management of the ODL classes.

West Bengal is in a tight situation in relation to the training of untrained teachers. In this situation perhaps the government has taken the right decision of organizing ODL mode of training. But it appears from the presentation at JRM meeting focus is more on primary school teachers. Less attention is paid for the teachers teaching at upper primary level.

3.3 The IASE: The state has one IASE, the David Hare Teacher Training Institute. The institute has good campus and fairly good infrastructure, some more is being added. It is managed by a Principal in charge, the post being vacant for over two years. The teachers are active and committed and interactions with students showed that teachers maintain good rapport with students, encouraging them to think and question too. There was sense of openness and a teaching-learning environment between students and teachers. The institute encourages students to practice certain values in their professions and had a code of conduct for teachers and students. Teachers were also keen to take up additional programmes and had conducted a number of trainings, seminars and some even published books on research methodology. The institute had good computer facilities and library too. While there were teachers for mainstream subjects/languages, subjects like music and Urdu/Arabic had only part time teachers and students expressed that these subjects/languages were not being given due regard in the education system in the state. Urdu and Arabic languages are in demand with students given the large numbers of Muslim students. Hence, they had limitations while teaching these subjects when they became teachers themselves. In addition, students said that they needed more orientation to understand children's context and current realities to help them teach better. They felt that the mix of fresh trainees and current teachers in their course helped them gain each other's experiences.

The JRM members had long interaction with both the students and teachers. While students shared that they gained good basis for teaching in the institute, they expressed that the current constraints in the school systems limited their performance as teachers. The constraints expressed included – large class rooms, infrastructure gaps in schools, teacher shortage, multiple languages in classrooms, different learning levels among children, illiterate parents who did not take interest in their children's learning, lack of local context in the school curriculum, etc. Thus, it seemed that even when student teachers may be oriented well, they are not able to translate their

learning to the classrooms in the given school contexts. These are student-teachers; are they so demotiavted even before they have entered the school

Here the need for continuous motivation and learning of the teachers themselves plays a role in addition to addressing the constraints expressed above. The in-service trainings, designed to overcome this back-sliding on one hand and support them in progressively improving their ability to address the constraints they face in the classroom situations.

Teachers also expressed how the teacher training followed the dominant paradigm and did not reflect or relate to the real situation and context. The large numbers of children from poor and marginalized sections, the diversity of languages, the diversity within Bangla language, the need to integrate various subjects in teaching did not have an integrated approach within the teacher education curriculum.

3.4 College of Teacher Education The JRM visited one CTE, the Institute of Education for Women, Hastings House is located along with four other institutions in a heritage building spread over 30 acres of land. Considering the size of the campus there was a dearth maintenance personnel. B.Ed., M.Ed. and M.Phil. in ODL mode are conducted here. The CTE is affiliated to the Calcutta University. It has a computer lab, language lab, a psychology lab, well equipped seminar room and a music room. Some classrooms have LCD projector facilities. Medium of instruction was English and the library is digitalized. Arabic and Urdu are taught, for which guest teachers are appointed.

B.Ed. students also work with an NGO to work with marginalized children. Language, psychology lab had intelligence tests, which students use for testing and learn to score them as a part of the psychology experiment. Teaching learning materials used were largely charts that were aesthetically apt, teaching practice was happening in didactic mode based upon the curriculum that professed behaviorist pedagogy.

In CTE, Ramkrishna Mission, Belur, surprisingly, there was no wash-room separately for females. The logic is that it is a Boys' college. Incidently JRM team was of two female members who visited there, and found it very inconvenient. It's highly recommended even if it's a "Boy's Only" institution, it must have an integral wash room facilities all over.

3.5 State Council of Educational Research and Training: SCERT was formed in 1980 but the State government had not envisaged a key role for them till recently. SCERT is also housed in David Hare Training (IASE). SCERT needs to have a separate building of its own and state need to make provision of space and funds for its construction. SCERT is also understaffed. Teaching staff appointed as Research fellows undertake various training programs. None of the research fellows had M.Ed. or Ph.D. qualifications. Child centered approaches, constructivism, CCE, inclusive classrooms, exclusion, contextualization and gender parity etc have percolated into teacher education vocabulary in the newly formed curriculum of the ODL and revised regular D. El. ED course and in text books. As we shall note in detail, under the sections of bridging gender and social gaps, curriculum and pedagogy and on governance, much more work is needed in this area.

The academic and administrative responsibility of the DIETs was delegated to SCERT, West Bengal on 29.01.2013. In order to strengthen the linkage between SCERT, DIETS, BRCs, CRCs, SCERT has proposed for 2013-14, the following initiatives:

1. In-service Education of teachers (INSET) at the primary, upper-primary & secondary level in the state of West Bengal by which the linkage between the different TEIs is expected to be strengthened.

2. Managing Change: Capacity Building of SCERT & DIETS personnel proposal under which SCERT will organize a series of residential capacity building workshops for the Academic Officers of SCERT, DIET Officials, SPO & DPO Officials and the CPC coordinators who are ex-officio SI/S of the schools.

The SCERT faculty members realize, both, the immense possibilities and accompanying responsibilities and are trying to gear up for the change. In order to make the best of the mandate, that they now have, and to bring all the participants together they have sought the help of British Council. This was a little surprising for us as we felt that they themselves understand their context and needs better in comparison to an outside agency. At best they could have invited a university department, abreast with changes in the education system of contemporary India to moderate the discussion between the stakeholders.

 SCERT has tried to provide support to DIETS, brought out a few publications and conducted achievement surveys etc. The publications, however, do not reflect a deep understanding of problems and issues of education. Their document on school development plan is a collation of RTE act, few pro – forma including instructions to schools, and has not been field tested. Similarly, the document on action research does not reflect a mature understanding of issues and the social reality has been simplistically represented. This suggests the need for furthering the capacity and qualification of the current SCERT personnel and filling up of vacant positions. It needs to be ensured that the faculty if recruited through Public Service commission has the required qualifications to provide academic leadership.

Since there are multiple power structures in the field of teacher education, this at times give a feeling of disempowerment to the stakeholders, SCERT seem to be caught in the web. As we know the mandate for writing of textbooks was given to an independent expert committee, through special government orders. The SCERT, in trying to assert its academic position, has worked on Class VI textbook which they have submitted to the school education department for approval. We feel that their effort should be acknowledged by giving the book a fair critical appraisal followed by approval.

Even during the phase SCERT remained in isolation with very little recognition and support, the presentation of the Director SCERT informed that SCERT conducted various training programs and have publications to their credit. The faculty of SCERT have attended various capacity building training programs conducted by NCERT, NUEPA, INTEL and British Council. For the current session, it proposes to conduct training programs that relate to Action research, disaster management, integrating ICT etc. D.EL.ED syllabus has also been revised by the SCERT faculty and submitted it to the board for approval. These initiatives inform the zeal and the potentials

that are inherent within SCERT. SCERT needs to engage with schools for evolving pedagogies for first generation learners.

SCERT is being designated academic authority from 2014 and needs to be empowered and strengthened to play this crucial role.

3.6 District Institutes of Educational Training (DIET's): JRM visited various DIET's and observed that the infrastructral facilites varied in different DIET's, how ever understaffing cuts across all of them although the pattern of understaffing varied. For example, one of the DIETs had just two teachers, another DIET had no clerical staff, just an accountant. Expecting any institution to perfom without the staff is niether fair nor justified. DIETs which were relatively better placed in terms of staffing, were found to be relatively better. Hooghly DIET displayed the materials for the JRM that included training modules. DIET Howarh is spread across the land of 6 acres, Hooghly DIET across 3 acres. Some of the DIETs ahd even larger spaces. None of the hostels have wardens and the girls live by themeselves with no supervision. In Hoogly DIET some of the female staff members live in the staff quarters, but in Howrah, only the male Principal resides in staff quarters. From the security point this seems to be problematic. In Hooghly the staff quarter of the Principal has collapsed. The profiling of the infrasructure of the DIETs and corrective measuers on case to case basis is urgently needed. Washrooms were in dismal state in schools and in DIET's except Hooghy DIET.

The scheduled time table of the DIET Howrah is perhaps reflective of time table of other DIET's. Theory classes is between 11- 3.10 pm. Theory classes ideally should begin in the morning. Work Education/ creative work classes may be organised for teachers to prepare teaching learning materials. Relevant literature needs to be collated and translated. Right now, teacher training is mostly happening through guide books.

During the interaction with the pre- service teachers they informed that all of them can access internet. Charts and thermocol aids can be seen. Lesson plans could not be examined in large numbers due to language constraints, but a few Mathematics and Science lessons upon translation indicated that that teaching learning is still confined to didactic mode, with algorithm and microteaching being used which is contrary to the constructivist approach, the recommended pedagogic strategy of NCF2005. Two hours each Saturday are assigned for lessons on Microteaching in Howrah DIET.

3.7 CLRCs are resource centers at Circle level in West Bengal. SIs are appointed as coordinators of CLRC through public service commission, often do not have the teacher training qualifications and are assigned academic duties such as inspection of schools, monitoring of classroom processes, assess teaching efficacy and conduct training.

The JRM on their visit to CLRCs observed that some of the CLRC's had projection facilities but space available at CLRC was not sufficient. Teachers during the interaction at various centers expressed their discontent with the training and felt that the methods suggested are not feasible in actual classrooms. There is no clear policy per for selection of Resource Persons. One SI reported that he is assigned responsibilities of 3 centers and 115 schools. One CLRC organized National Hygiene day, Nirmal Vidyalaya Abhiyan, Sanitation day, School Chalo Abhiyan,

National book day when children's literature was sent to selected schools to share with at least three schools.

"SI's often have to rush for various meetings, often called on short notice (e.g., on health awareness programs, disaster management etc.). SIs need to fill-up a variety of evaluation forms, some of which are very cumbersome. A considerable time goes in managing the salary/pension and related queries. There are instances where SIs fails to visit most of the schools even once a year. SIS/AISs do not have any power to take disciplinary actions on errant teachers. SISs are not even given feedback on the action taken on their written complaints. As a result the authority of the SISs is very seriously eroded and the delivery system in the schools suffers almost beyond repair. Monitoring is yet to happen effectively in schools under the prevailing circumstances (IIM Study).

CLRC is clearly the weakest link in the delivery process. They are also not equal across the state. CLRCs in the bigger districts have a lot of burden with respect to number of schools to be inspected and training to be done. There is no coherent training mechanism. Participants are called at random. CLRC official is a lowly paid job and does not attract talented personnel. Considering that significance of the role of CLRC, the salary structure shall be such so as to attract better talent.

3.8 Expert Committee:

In the interaction that we had with the expert committee, they said that many curriculum documents and syllabi were consulted for making the syllabus and the text books. There are 4 to 5 consultants per subject, in the committee, who have been selected as they were seriously involved in writing and have seminar papers to their credit. The expert committee initially had 22 members and was empowered to include other members. These members are teachers from colleges and schools. There are no members **from DIET and SCERT.** Class 1,3,5,7 text books have been already completed and illustrations are done by renowned artists. Textbooks for classes 2, 4, 6, and 8 are to be done this year. The text books have been translated into Santhali, Hindi, Urdu, Nepali and English. The team was told that books are contextualized; inclusion and gender issues are addressed; they are aligned with NCERT text books. The committee success and fully completed the huge task of developing **16 text books in 8 months.**

The teacher education fraternity however perceives the committee with skepticism. They complain that they have been excluded from the process. However, our concern is that a body involved with the important task of curriculum development should have its roots in concerned institutions so that there is possibility of mutual nurturance and learning. Moreover, its institutionalization would enable the process of textbook development to remain in the institutional memory so that there is a prospect of learning from experience and future improvement.

It is also important to first analyze the set of textbooks which have been prepared before proceeding to work on the next set. Material preparation for children involves multi-disciplinary

teams including children's authors, illustrators and artists with experience in producing materials for children, child development specialists, linguists, in addition to persons with expertise in disciplines that inform the curriculum, persons with contextual knowledge, intimate engagement of school teachers, teacher educators among others. The books that have been prepared may need to be reviewed in the light of this perspective.

3.9 Comments on Pre – Service Teacher Education:

The JRM team members visited DIETs and CTEs in several districts. It was heartwarming to see the enthusiasm and dedication of the staff members towards work. They have made the best possible use of the resources and circumstances they find themselves in.

There is a shortage of both academic and administrative staff in some institutions. In one of the DIETs there are only two permanent faculty members apart from the principal who share the entire work load of the theory papers. We feel that it is impossible to do justice to the teaching and learning process in such situations.

The Pre – service teacher education curriculum of DIETs, CTEs and IASE needs to be critically analyzed and aligned with NCF (2005) and NCFTE (2009). The diploma and the B.Ed. syllabus of different institutions were found to be wanting in terms of: relevance to child's life and needs; up – to date theories and research base; rigor; potential to address real classroom issues; gender and other concerns of inclusion etc.

3.10 Comments on In –Service Teacher Education:

Both, the CTEs and the DIETs conscientiously and diligently perform the duty of organizing in – service programmes for teachers. Some of the teachers whom we met were appreciative of the programmes that they had attended in CTEs. They said that the programmes were useful and helped them in classroom teaching. These also provided them the forum to meet with teachers from other schools! Some of the institutes had toiled to prepare modules and power point presentations for use in the in – service programmes.

On asking whether their participation in the programme impacted children's learning, some teachers could simply say that it did but failed to explain how it happened. A teacher explained the situation, " ma'am the programmes are well organized, but unfortunately the children whom we teach are first generation learners, their parents are illiterate, so no improvement as such happens". Others agreed with what she said and added that many renowned educationists were invited for lectures but accepted that their "learning" did not reach children. This kind of blaming the victim tendency, without realizing the inadequacy of their own preparation, was prevalent in some institutions. They were not convinced that their support can bring about a change in the lives of children whose backgrounds were pronounced as responsible for this failure! When asked whether their training helped them in supporting children from various marginalized communities including the impoverished group, it was vehemently denied that "no such (discriminatory) feelings are found in West Bengal."

Methods need to be devised in order to understand the actual needs of teachers. Some may be more obvious and articulated by them, others need to be explored! We feel that the teachers may need support in understanding the complex social realities and in designing classroom interactions which cater to the diverse needs of children. The rich experience of teachers and their immense potential for further learning should be taken into account while designing and organizing programmes for them. Instead of ordinary modules and power point presentations which were shown to us in some institutes it will help if a good collection of original readings are sent to the group and later discussions and talks are organized around these. Provisions can also be made for on – site training, where the resource person can be a co – researcher in the school so that understanding of context makes the training much more relevant and contextualized.

We found that there was a lack of availability of data base of teachers with concerned agencies. They passed the onus on each other, when asked. A rich data base will help in creating a forum where teachers are able to learn from each others' experience. In one of the DIET's a participant teacher told us about his passion for environmental diversity. He had a huge collection of medicinal plants, aquatic plants and fish in his institution. This, he said, inspired and motivated his students.

Some teachers were rightly of the view that much more useful programmes can be planned if they are consulted in the planning. They suggested that programmes will serve the purpose if they are need based and responsive to their context. Some also felt that the decision of choosing and sending teachers for training is often arbitrary and dependent upon the whims and fancies of the higher authorities. It was also suggested that the duration of good need based courses should be increased.

3.11 Multiple Structures and Perception of Power:

Teacher education institutions and associated individuals are accountable to multiple power structures. DIETs, for example, are linked to the sub – structures of: SSA from where they receive funding for many of their programmes; West Bengal Board of Primary Education which is their administrative body; SCERT which extends academic support at times. SSA and the WBBPE are only administrative bodies which do not extent academic scaffolding. Moreover, DIETs do not have their own PAC for planning, and thereby countering the power and the pressure of multiple bodies. This creates a feeling of disempowerment and lack of control among teacher educators who have to comply with orders without their participation in the decision making process. Some bodies like DPSC have MLAs or Panchayats as members and the Chairperson is nominated by the government. While participation of elected representatives and those in governance in education is necessary for deepening democratic engagement in education, given the skewed power relations of such structures, the voices of teacher educators and teachers get muted and a sense of powerlessness prevails. Engaging with multiple bodies without adequate planning and participation; academic and geographical isolation; lack of coordination between different agencies, creates distrust and de - motivates teachers. Both, functional autonomy and hand holding are needed for DIETs to improve in their functioning. Moreover there is no cadre for teacher educators, which again is a cause of their frustration!

Filling up of existing vacant positions and a stable career progression will ease the burden off teachers.

The CTEs, which we visited, appeared to have a more open relationship with the WBBHE. They shared that they were supported in their endeavors by the Board.

It is important to make the governance and administrative structures more democratic. Now with the mandate for academic and administrative leadership of DIET's going to SCERT, it is important to have participatory planning and implementation process. There is a need to have coordinated structure, with functional autonomy. The roles and responsibilities of all stake holders need to be fixed and norms developed for smoother functioning.

3.12 Madrasa Education Department: The JRM team could not visit Madrasas but could interact with Head of the Madrasa Department. From information available, we learnt that the Department of Minority Affairs and Madarsa Education is responsible for education in the Madarsas in the state. The WB Madarsa service commission recruits teaching and non-teaching staff. Officials expressed that having a separate board helped to provide special attention to matters of Muslim children's education in the state.

There are 597 recognized Madrasas in West Bengal as on 31.12.2010. Madrasas in West Bengal function like any other primary and upper primary school in West Bengal except the children have to learn two additional subjects Theology and Arabic. It was reported that some Madarsas are rated to be better than Government schools and cater to all sections of the society. At the district level the Madarsa are monitored by West Bengal Primary and Secondary District Council.

Madrasa teachers need to be included in in-service training and provisions made for their professional training as well.

3.13 Panchayat & Rural Development Department (P&RD) governs institutions which were formerly the EGS Centres and serve as alternative elementary education system which could reach any corner of the state, cater to children who were not covered by the mainstream system, mostly children engaged in child labor, urban poor, SC, ST, Muslim communities and are now known as Shisu Shiksha Kendra (SSK). SSKs are opened at the initiative of the community and are owned and managed by them wherever there were at least twenty children not having access to any existing primary school or require some special dispensation, which are not available in the formal primary schools, school less villages. Funds are provided by the State Government and Panchayats for facilitators Shiksha Bandhus.

Shiksha Bandhus, who draw a meager salary of Rs 5400 who are assigned 3-10 villages.
The Shiksha Bandhus (SBs), who are recruited to serve as bridge between the system and the schools. There are to be two SBs in each circle – one for the primary schools and another for the secondary schools, however, in practice there seems to be one person on average. They are contractual staff with limited qualification and respect within the system. Their tasks are not clearly defined nor do they get adequate support or facilities to perform their tasks, lacking even transport facilities to visit the many schools under their charge. Some SBs reportd that they are

engaged in child tracking, drawing children into schools and interacting with community. In practice, they become responsible for collecting and collating all sorts of data and information from schools (DISE data being prime) and messengers for the school inspectors. The SBs reported that they exert some moral pressure on teachers as they visit these schools regularly, particularly in the primary schools. The JRM found that some of them have basic qualifications and can be encouraged to play a bigger role. At present however, the system does not have a constructive role for them nor provide them any training to play an important role.

4.Views from Teachers Union

The All Bengal Primary Teachers Association, ABPTA has 1,30,000 primary teachers as members out of a total 1,50,000 primary teachers. Para teachers have separate organization and they are not the member of ABPTA. The association began in 1920. Teachers union works with schools and community at district, circle and zonal level. The concerns of the union are access, quality and universalization, mid- day meal; teachers concerns such as leave, pension, service book, transfers, promotions etc. Union presently works with Pratichi trust an NGO to conduct surveys, create awareness and undertakes various other academic activities. Recently a meeting was conducted on issues pertaining to mid day meal, RTE implementation and quality education in schools. Unions stand together on such issues but the differences are at top level appointments. The Union perceives huge policy gaps. Some of the issues they highlighted were:
-   Rationalization of teacher placement in schools is not on the state agenda. The distribution of teachers is heavily skewed as the PTR indicates. The reason assigned was nepotism, partisan approach and biases. Urban teachers are influential and manage to be placed in urban schools even though there is huge teacher shortage in rural areas.
-   Toilets in schools are not in place and there is no separate provision for girls.
-   There are problems with Teacher Eligibilit Test (TET), the content of which has been legally challenged.
-   The mode of conducting training programs are through lecture mode and is not participatory. The abilities of Resource Persons and their selection process were challenged; there was bitterness among the teachers that more conversant teachers have to listen to people who do not know as much.
-   Unions feel that State has failed to comply with RTE. The union is working with UNICEF to organize a series of workshops on Sunday and holidays for RTE awareness and plans to publish a report on status of compliance of RTE.
-   The union has published a critique of the RTE which highlights the lack of financial commitment, not having one teacher per class and prescription of working hours of teachers.
-   Centralized Recruitments lacked acceptability among the union members and emphasis was to decentralize the process and hand it over to the panchayats.
-   The problems relating to dropouts especially of the children from marginalized section of the society, and the ASER report that children of class three not being able to write are causes of concern.
-   Assigning task to one agency for providing mid- day meal tends to become a source of corruption, according to them. Presently, the contract is being given to NGO's who work through self help groups for 15 schools that works well. Only 70% schools have Mid Day Meal scheme. Mid Day Meal was a non starter, it gained momentum only due to teacher association.

5. School and Teacher Education: Issues of Governance

5.1 Structures: The JRM team members were able to meet the SCERT, Education Secretary, Officials of two (primary and secondary) of the three boards and members of the Expert committee look after development of textbooks for the elementary classes. SCERT is getting lost somewhere between the Boards, the Directorate and the SSA/RMSA. Our view is that there is a need to have a coordinated structure and specifically agreed to mandate and role for the SCERT in West Bengal. The State has initiated some steps on this but much more is needed.

There was also difficulty about the staffing in the SCERT and DIETs. As in many states, a number of faculty positions are vacant and these institutions are over-loaded with work.

The DIETs have a very few people but they seem to be enthusiastic. The infrastructure of the DIETs, that the team visited, also seems to be elaborate and well maintained.

Since the IASE is also run by the State Government it also has a shortage of faculty. The CTEs that are, however, run by the aided institutions have much better faculty ratio and therefore prospects of doing better.

The maintenance of IASEs and SCERTs including faculty however, itself need a lot to be desired as do hostels and facilities in the DIETs.

The State team at the moment is concerned and is on way to thinking about the way forward. The team provided feedback on the new textbooks produced.

5.2 Observations of JRM: Curriculum renewal following NCFTE and NCF2005 for D.El.Ed, B.Ed. and M.Ed. needs to be seen contextually rather than as isolated activities. Reading, reflecting and assimilating, NCF 2005 and NCFTE 2009 requires time and collective effort. In such a short time it can only result in surface understanding. The books had been prepared within a short period of time. There is need for research on children's understanding of the concepts. Institutionalized memory of the experiences of textbook preparation is essential for future improvements. Expert committee is currently transient in nature. It needs to be institutionalized and embedded into the overall structure so that institutional identities and memories can be built. Recording and storing the data needs to be followed by critical reflection. There is need for materials to be in open domain along with assumptions that informed the material development. This helps in understanding how the textbooks had been written and addressing conceptual questions, such as, what is the relationship between language development and conceptual constructs and thought? The books that have been prepared need to be reviewed by experts/ academics with experience in writing text books within and outside the state. It is helpful to collate and translate related reading materials which can then be used for collective, close reading and discussions. Such processes helps build deeper collective understanding of how children learn, the nature of knowledge and so on and build dialogue an discourse around the textbooks among teachers, researchers, community members and children. Systematic, large-scale feedback on the textbooks needs to be generated from teachers and children. A lot of thought and effort is required to develop and ensure quality. At present, the school textbooks are

developed by an expert committee which is not a permanent body. There is a need to involve the SCERT and if possible DIETs in the textbook development process.

The SCERT has prepared a new D.Ed. programme but it has too much material and has been put together in a hurry. The ODL progam for D.El.Ed. has been initiated but the mechanism to handle such large number of teachers, their assignments, providing mentorship etc. need to be carefully thought through. Teacher training programmes are not well planned, (e.g. same subject/topic is repeated in successive training programmes for a long time. There are several agencies providing training. Many teachers do not attempt to implement the new pedagogy learnt in training in class room teaching. On the other hand, many teachers feel that training is not always effective or relevant. Hence teachers do not feel motivated to implement the learning in training programmes. Training of the teachers needs to be a continuous process with emphasis on nature of knowledge, how children learn, learning in context etc. Training needs to place the agency of teacher at the centre. Current training programmes tend to view teachers as couriers of information that has been generated elsewhere. Training also needs to focus on the engagement between teachers and children, and the many ways by which this can be enabled. At the end of the day, learning involves intense human engagement.

The State needs to open itself to wider consultations and deeper engagement with equity concerns, quality concerns and alignment with key principles of NCF05 and NCFTE09. There needs to be more people in place in SCERT, IASE and DIETs and more opportunity for capacity building and exposure as well. Students pursuing B.Ed. degree in CTE's and IASE be assigned elementary classes during internship for equipping them to understand developmentally appropriate strategies for elementary classes. Revision of curriculum of B.Ed. and M.Ed. and D.EL.Ed. needs to be an exercise that is taken up holistically rather than as separate activities. Provision of study leave for teacher education faculty/ provision of M.ED through ODL mode for professional development. Research base needs to be strengthened through wider provisions of M.Phil. and Ph.D. programs.

Administratively there seems to be multiple authorities and overlapping responsibilities which it is assumed could be a reason for perplexity. Administrative structure of the school education department needs to be reviewed and restructured. Cadre for SCERT and DIET faculty needs to be initiated and appointments as per NCTE norms be made.

Some urgent policy measures required are:

a. Ascertaining human resource requirement in teacher education. Perhaps a teacher educator: teacher ration can be worked out to arrive at an estimate of the size of the work force required.
b. Identifying and inducting adequate qualified personnel at all levels of teacher education, ranging from CLRC to IASEs. Where qualified personnel are not available, there needs to be provisions for time-bound acquiring of qualifications, and abundant, relevant capacity building programs generated based on modular, credit based system. Resource Persons required for training need to be identified in each circle based on specified transparent criteria and adequately compensated especially at CLRC levels. Apart from DPO, DPSC, academically qualified educators are required. Mere seniority, experience as teacher, or administrative experience does not ensure requisite skills and aptitudes to be teacher educators.

c. Appointments of the administrative staff, hostel staff in all TEIs.
d. Sanitation requirements in schools and teacher education institutions need urgent improvement.
e. Teacher distribution in schools needs to be adequate to even begin to think of quality issues. According to a study by Pratichi, 56,000 requests from teachers for transfers pending and 30% schools have more teachers than norm while 39% have less than norm, only 31% have as per norms. There are more teachers than PTR in urban areas and less in rural areas.

6. Issues Pertaining to Curriculum and Pedagogy:

6.1 Context and concerns:

The JRM's visit to the DIETs and the CTEs was a huge learning experience. The functionaries' passion for work enables them to take on a lot of work load. The DIETs and the CTEs have published the proceedings of the seminars and workshops that they have organized in their respective institutions, which is commendable. This will remain in the institutional memory and will help them to plan better programmes in future. It was shared that the faculty members have gained a lot by attending workshops in NCERT, RIE Bhubaneswar and through working with the state SCERT. Some of the CTEs like the ones in Banipur and Bellure have rich library and laboratory facilities. Teachers in these institutions have undertaken minor research projects from UGC which shows their yearning for bettering their educational experiences. However, the some our concerns pertaining to teacher education curriculum and pedagogy are presented in the following sections:

6.2 Prescriptive "Methods" in Pedagogy Papers:

It was observed that the existing DIET and CET syllabi manifested a widely prevalent tendency in teacher preparation that of tying down all understanding of the teaching learning process to certain "methods of teaching". For example, the methods (as given in their syllabus) that the trainees are required to learn in physical sciences include: lecture, lecture demonstration, problem solving, project, heuristic and computer assisted learning. These methods are again "learnt" without any reference to how children think and learn in their respective socio – cultural contexts. A teacher educator of science in DIET Banipur had no clue about age appropriateness of concepts. He said that they don't teach "methods" in relation to how development of concepts takes place in children.

Further, the books that are being used in the government schools are also not reflective of the process of concept development in children. An interesting conversation took place with class VI children of a government school in Kolkata. They claimed to "know" the shape and movement of earth which was in their syllabus. They said that people can safely stand in an upright position on the North Pole and adjoining areas but can fall off into space from South Pole! Some of them later corrected themselves and said that people don't fall off into space because of the gravitational force of Earth. On probing further they got confused about the nature of this force

and said that people are held in their places by the air envelope surrounding the earth. Others contradicted their peers by saying that there is no air in space! This shows that children were trying to grapple with a difficult concept which is not age appropriate and requires a lot of scaffolding for children to be introduced to it!

The attempt, above, is not make linear linkages between the teacher education curriculum and what ensues in schools. However, it is asserted that there is a need for change in the teacher education curriculum keeping the psychological, social, cultural and economic needs and backdrop of children in mind.

6.3 Emphasis on the Study of Society Found Wanting:

In the syllabus of both DIET and CTE's a study of diversity and historical, political, economic trajectory of Indian society was found lacking. There is a critical need for teachers to understand the diverse contexts of children in order to respond to their diverse life experiences. Unless and until teachers recognize the existence of diverse groups such as lingual, caste, class and religious groups they will not be conscious and sensitive to whether there is equity in representation of these groups in the curriculum.

The trainees in DIET and CTE's were asked about the linkages they could possibly make between their foundation papers and their practice teaching experience in schools. They only said that learning about the thinkers like Gandhi, Vivekananda, and Dewey helped and inspired them. On asking specific question about how learning about different groups helped them in understanding children, they could not respond!

In most of the institutions that we visited, including DIET'S, CTE's, IASE and schools, the cultural symbols and representations were overwhelmingly that of the dominant class, be it the pictures on the walls, the statues, the songs, intonations and articulations.

While we recognize that West Bengal is a state which has a rich, long, syncretic and inclusive history of cultural encounters, exchanges and assimilations, elementary education at the hands of sensitive educators necessarily has to be multi-cultural, with deep consciousness of equity in distribution of social and cultural capital in the everyday life of the respective institutions. This consciousness was found missing in educators.

The educators in these institutions asserted that religious, caste and class based discrimination is far removed from their respective institutional and even larger contexts. This should also entail a conscious attempt, on the part of teachers, to recognize, support and scaffold the groups which are lagging behind others in the same school. On asking about the dropout rate in Fatehpur Uchmadhyamik Vidyalaya , Nadia, it was revealed that there is a very high dropout rate after class VIII owing to child labor and migration. There was no clarity if this was more prevalent in some groups as compared to others. However, on probing, the teachers said that it was probably more amongst Muslim minorities. A deep understanding of socio – economic and cultural trajectories of subaltern groups vis – a -vis dominant groups and processes of domination and subordination was found wanting amongst teachers and teacher educators. This needs to be included in the curriculum at all levels.

6.4 Microteaching and Simulated Teaching:

Microteaching and Simulated teaching continue to be a part of the Practice Teaching curriculum. The DIET faculty, both, at Nandia and 24 Paragnas shared that before curriculum revision the skills that were "practiced" during microteaching included skills: black board writing, stimulus variation, probing questions, citing examples, use of teaching aids etc. These are "practiced" by students in small groups and the time allocated for each presentation is six minutes. Recently, the Primary Board has "introduced" and notified a new set of skills, which are being practiced in the same manner. These skills include: Questioning, Integrated planning, Observation and performing arts. On asking how integrated planning is practiced as a skill, it was shared that in six minutes the student who presents is expected to make a presentation on a topic selected from the content and give a rationale for the same. The faculty members gave a lot of emphasis on the need for "practicing" each skill. The rationale for this change has not been understood by the teachers but the order has been followed blindly.

Similarly, simulated teaching is an important part of practice teaching curriculum in the colleges of education that we visited. Students plan and "deliver" micro lesson before their classmates. The skills which are practiced are same as those mentioned above. The emphasis is essentially on the practice of assumed micro components and skills of teaching which will elicit desired response. It assumes a deterministic response from children, wholly determined by their environment and not their thinking process!

Apart from this another practice and skill based component, which has considerable weight in terms of marks and allotted time, is the Pedagogical Analysis of content. It is a part of all the methodology papers. In this, the content is, however, assumed to be "given". It's appropriateness in relation to child's age and socio – cultural context is not questioned or analyzed. But, different sub concepts and their linear linkages are mentioned. The content is further broken down in terms of micro skills and behavioral objectives.

The lesson plans constitute an important part of practice teaching. Both in DIETS and in the CTE's the Bloom's taxonomy is followed for writing of objectives in "behavioral' terms. Knowledge is imagined to be divisible into domains such as cognitive, affective and psychomotor for which objectives are written in behavioral terms by breaking them into still smaller components of comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis etc! The assumptions in the plan are that children respond to stimuli or inputs received from the teacher. The columns in the lesson plan include: Input, teacher's activity, learners activity and learners' outcome. Thus, children's thinking process and ideas don't find a place in the lesson plan and in the teaching – learning process. Such kind of planning, microteaching, simulation is based on behaviorist paradigm which is contradictory to the basic premise of constructivism and the spirit of NCF (2005)!

6.5 Practicum:

It was shared by the faculty in CTE's that practical work in psychology is an important part of their syllabus. In psychology lab, several standardized tests of assessing intelligence, creativity and personality published from Agra are available. These are used by the teacher trainees

without any reference to children's socio – cultural background! Since adequate space has not been given to socio –cultural specificities in the theory paper as well, there is a danger of branding children as "slow learners", "gifted and "neurotic"! This was further confirmed in our conversation with the trainees who said that through these tests it was possible to diagnose" problematic" children and find "suitable remedies"!

6.6 Time Table and the Academic Rigor?

The syllabi of, both, DIETs and CTE's was found lacking in engagement with issues and concerns of contemporary Indian society, cognition and learning and a deeper educational discourse. The condition of paucity in academic rigor is also increased because less time is devoted to theory papers in the time table.

 In the DIET situated in 24, North Paragnas, there are only two regular teachers who along with the Principal shoulder the responsibility of teaching all the foundation and pedagogy papers to the Ist and the IInd year students. They also have the responsibility of conducting or organizing the in – service programmes which are held in the institution. The ODL programme has also recently started in their DIET. Guest teachers are engaged only for work experience and co – curricular activities.

Their time – table revealed that more than an hour in the morning is devoted to attendance and prayer! Only two theory classes of one hour each are held every day from 11:30am to 1:30pm. During this time, on certain days, some periods are also allotted for cultural activities. After 1:30 pm, classes for work experience and crafts are held. The time – table clearly shows that theory papers do not enjoy the required importance and rigor in the curriculum. Moreover, there is also a need to situate work experience in the larger context of teacher education by making required linkages with theory.

6.7 Academic Isolation of DIETS:

The principal of one of the DIET's was concerned about the academic isolation of DIET faculty. He said that the teachers hardly get any opportunity to participate in seminars, conferences and talks. Moreover, DIET's and CTE's do not have linkages with other institutions of higher learning such as universities and colleges of liberal arts. In such a situation the teachers do not have the opportunity to engage and understand the multidisciplinary linkages of their area of study with disciplines such as history, political science, sociology and philosophy. Also, in some institutions the increased work load due to understaffing only allows the teachers to mechanically engage in the assigned drudgery without any reflection. Working like this for years, robs teachers of enthusiasm and confidence for furthering their education through reading, writing, participation and publication. When asked, if given a chance, how they would enhance their own capacities and of their institution, the teachers could only talk about lack of furniture, vehicle for school observation, better facilities for drinking water etc.

6.8 Organisational Structure and Disempowerment:

While engaging with some of the teachers and principals of DIETs we could sense a feeling of disempowerment and lack of confidence in them. These institutions seem to be arbitrarily

following orders issued by either the funding agency or the WBBPE. Prior planning for tasks like in-service programmes and workshops does not take place as there is no PAC; also an annual collaborative work plan is not made. There seems to be a chaotic rush to "deliver" whatever is received as an order from what are perceived as seats of power. As a consequence the important routine work of DIETs like PSTE suffers from lack of academic rigor. Explaining her work load and this mad chaos to us, the principal of a DIET said "Bataiye *Maam kitna kaam karega, mein bhi to insaan hun*". Such a situation could result in a lack of motivation to experiment, innovate and learn from new experiences. The teachers who are overburdened and crushed under organisational hierarchy may not be able to inspire confidence in students as well.

6.9 Issues regarding the Curriculum of D.El.Ed Course (ODL mode):

In order to provide training to existing in – service untrained teachers, two year D. El. Ed course, through ODL mode has been started by West Bengal Board of primary Education (WBBPE) in 300 study centres.

The core papers of the syllabi include Understanding Children in Inclusive Context, Pedagogic Process in Elementary schools, Elementary Education: Socio Cultural Perspective Art, Health, Physical and Work Education. Methods courses include First Language, Second Language, Mathematics, Environmental Science, Teaching Learning of Social Science, Science, Practice Teaching, Workshop Based Activities, School Based Activities.

The DIETs and the PTTEs are the study centres for the programme and both these institutions are under-staffed. The study material prepared for this purpose is a collaborative effort of IGNOU, NCTE and educationists from other institutes. We recognize that the study material was prepared in a short time by experts in the field but we need to ensure that it helps in preparing teachers who are sensitive to children's world of experiences and the socio – political realities of their classroom. The material which has been prepared in the form of booklets claims that it is based on NCF (2005) and NCFTE (2010)! But, going through the text prepared for foundation papers we found that content was inadequate and lacked in conceptual depth, required linkages and presented a simplistic picture of social reality. For example the booklet titled Elementary Education: A socio – cultural Perspective, Part I and II, barely touches upon different agencies of education, constitutional provisions for primary education, RTE (2009), Planning and management of elementary education. There is no discussion about different socio – cultural groups, nor any analysis of social processes and patterns involved in the process of education. For example, without discussing the processes of marginalization and alienation, the text discusses the role of teacher in classroom and "preaches" the importance of giving equal attention to all children including Dalits. Later, in a small paragraph it talks about hidden curriculum and the ways in which schools socialize children by giving them responsibilities and through different ways of discipline. Instead of creating an understanding of tacit yet powerful messages of acceptance and non – acceptance that children get from the school environment, the text only creates confusion!

There are no references given in the booklets. We feel that in the study material of this kind, it is important that references are given after each section and it should be ensured that the suggested books are available in the study centre. Moreover, it is prepared for teachers who have rich

classroom experience. The material nowhere takes this into account. The exercises which are given are simplistic. For example, after a brief paragraph on hidden curriculum, the given question simply asks students to tell whether the statement, that hidden curriculum is a part of text books, is correct or not!

6.10 The Proposed D. El. Ed Curriculum:

The SCERT was recently entrusted the task of revising the two year D. El Ed curriculum by the School Education department in February this year. It has successfully completed the task and submitted the revised curriculum for approval to the department. It has been a collaborative effort of faculty from SCERT, DIETs and PTTIs. It is worth appreciating that SCERT has successfully anchored a huge project in a short time of few months.

The group has tried to incorporate lot of ideas from suggestive curriculum prepared by NCTE. Some of the courses that are given in the proposed curriculum are well prepared. However, there is a need to strengthen others. In some courses references are not mentioned at all. In front of the heading, essential readings, there is a note saying that the readings proposed in NCTE curriculum can be referred to. In others, readings as suggested in the NCTE document have been proposed. In some courses it is mentioned that the content will be developed by the SCERT.

In order to get rid of the practice in teacher education institutes of resorting to second rate material/books available in the market, it is important to give relevant references in the syllabus. Moreover, it should be ensured that these readings and books are also available in the library. Apart from suggesting the readings as given in the NCTE document educators can search for material which is relevant to their contexts.

As mentioned in the syllabus, content in some courses may be developed by SCERT. But, it needs to be ensured that content is not diluted as is the case with the ODL courses. Moreover, the developed content can be a supplement and not a substitute for original readings. For example, for understanding Paulo Freire, reading at least some excerpts from his book "Pedagogy of the Oppressed", is required to appreciate and understand his ideas. Thus appropriate references need to be identified and mentioned in the document.

The curriculum document at a few places finds it hard to break away from trivialization of pedagogy in terms of "prescriptive methods". The "methods" mentioned in the pedagogy course in social science education are: discovery/ heuristic method, project method, conversation method, storytelling method, field study, observation method, correlation method and pendulum method. There is a need to make linkages between the nature and evolution of discipline, cognition and learning and the pedagogy of discipline. The running thread between the foundation and the pedagogy papers is also missing in the document.

There is a need to revisit the document so that the students are able to benefit from the effort.

6.11 The School Text Books:

Development of text books which are relevant, age appropriate, capture the attention of children and are representative of social reality of diverse social groups is a challenging task. The JRM

members tried to study and analyze a few text books being used in the government and the government – sponsored schools of West Bengal.

The Class IV text book, Prokriti Bigyan, contains concepts which are not age appropriate at all! It consists of concepts like work, force, energy and photosynthesis which cannot be understood by children of this age. There is a lot of research literature available which tells us that such abstract concepts can only be memorized without comprehension by children of this age. Most text book exercises are also recall – based and seem to only expect children to rote memorize without understanding! Such text books only increase the load of non – comprehension on children and de - motivate them.

Some of the new text books prepared by the expert committee were also studied. It is worth appreciating that the committee has worked very hard to develop a number of text books in just eight months. Their attempt has been to develop books which interact with children and are representative of their local context.

However, the books in the foreword claim that they have been prepared on the basis of NCF (2005) but this is not reflected in the text books at all! The class V text book, Amader Paribesh, tries to make the text engaging for children by using interactive story format, without realizing that the difficulty level of the chosen concepts remains the same. For example, in a chapter on sky, the book mistakenly expects young children of class V to understand the concept of solar and lunar eclipse! At this age children struggle to understand the shape and size of earth, let alone the concept of movement, orbits and tides which are included in the text book! Abstract concepts like: pull of moon causes tides; movement of moon and earth around the sun; partial and complete eclipse; distance between celestial bodies etc are not age appropriate for nine to eleven year old children! Apart from this, there are many other concepts in the book which are of much higher difficulty level.

The textbooks should also be sensitive to social diversity and help children to interrogate social prejudices resulting in discriminatory practices. In the class VII History book, Atit – O – Aitihya, it is mentioned how Arab Muslims campaigned and conquered parts of India and plundered temples for wealth. It would have helped the learners to understand the context better, if a sentence that temples were repositories of wealth and power, and hence were attacked by even Hindu rulers, was written.

Since textbooks are the only books available to a large majority of children in the form of what is considered as legitimate knowledge, our concern, we think, is justifiable.

6.12 Recommendations:

- In order to comprehend and implement NCFTE (2010) and NCF (2005), there is a huge need for capacity building of teacher educators associated with IASE, CTE, DIETs and also research fellows associated with SCERT. Refresher courses in education can be organized for them. In order to have meaningful programmes it is suggested that a compendium of readings be translated to Bengali and later interactions, around different themes in the compendium, can be organized for the teacher educators. In order to choose

appropriate set of readings (on constructivism, socio – cultural and political life etc), help may be sought from institutions like CIE, DU, TISS, APU and colleges of Delhi University which have B.El.Ed programme. Help of NGO's, like Eklavya, Vidya Bhavan Society which have a long history of making interventions in the field of education, can also be sought.

- SCERT should now assume the leadership role and, along with teachers of DIETS and PTTI's, critically analyze the D. El. Ed and ODL curriculum and recommend suitable changes. Such meetings, initially, can be organized in a workshop mode with moderators invited from institutions recommended above.

- There is an urgent need to strengthen library facilities. This is imperative, not just for carrying out the regular D.El.Ed programme but, for doing justice to ODL and bridge courses. Since most teachers and students are more comfortable with Bengali as compared to English, translation of readings into local languages should be a priority.

- In order to reduce the academic isolation of teacher education institutes it is important to strengthen linkages with institutes of higher learning other than those involved in teacher preparation. Teacher educators should be encouraged to attend and participate in talks, seminars and workshops organized by departments of political science, sociology, psychology and languages etc. Resource persons from such faculties can also be invited for talks and for help in development of courses in areas like contemporary India and Sociology of education.

- The teacher educators can be encouraged to take up action research projects in the schools where their students go for their school internship. This will help them in understanding school as an institution and in forging linkages with the community. This will enable them to provide better guidance to their students after having understood the context themselves.

- In order to activate the dysfunctional departments of DIETS such as CMDE, Education and Technology, Work Experience, Programme and Management etc, it is recommended that the vacant positions be filled up immediately followed by provisions of capacity building of inducted faculty members.

- There is a huge need to critically analyze, both, the earlier textbooks as well as those prepared by the expert committee in terms of age appropriateness, relevance and representation of different groups in the content. Since textbooks are perceived as the main source of officially validated knowledge, such analysis is important. This may be followed by preparation of text books which are more children - centred.

- It is important to have institutional participation in the task of text book preparation so that the learning from the process is passed on to any such exercise taken up in future.

7. Bridging Gender and Social Gaps: SCs, STs, Muslim community, Girls

7.1 Context: Child centred education is necessarily founded on promoting 'equity and inclusion', equity requires every child's potential for learning and development is facilitated through adequate systemic support; and inclusion requires the education system incorporates and responds to the knowledge base of every child and shares them with and for all children. The two

dimensions are key to being sensitive to the needs and perspectives of the marginalized and vulnerable child. The JRM attempted to examine if TE and Curricula are gendered and inclusive with special reference to article 29 and 35 of RTE.

In this context, the JRM team in our visits explored with children, teachers, student-teachers, teacher-educators and the administration regarding the diversity of children and the variety of their socio-cultural contexts, how these variations are reflected in the class-room/school spaces and how these may impact children's participation, relationships, learning and personality development. Throughout our discussions, it was reported that West Bengal (WB) is very different in its development trajectory and socio-cultural differences were not principal vectors in the social organizing in the state. Members in various forums shared that 'class differences' constituted the prime axis on which the WB society is organized and other diversities are not important. Class differences was explained to create 'social distances' between teacher-taught with negative impact on learning. Members were also concerned about regional variations, where some regions lagged behind others in their literacy rates and in children's learning. There was some recognition that children with disabilities needed special support. However, there was no recognition of gender or social identities that may impact children's learning opportunities and outcomes. It is to the credit of the state that visible forms of social exclusion or discrimination as reported from many states in school seating, mid day meals, during school assembly or in other interface between teachers and children and across children are not overtly visible; though it must be recognized that such a short visit does not provide adequate time and space to explore in depth.

There are however, insights and concerns that the team shared in various interactions and in the debriefing with the authorities about 'equity and social inclusion' in education and their nuances for the state. Given 65% of children in the government/government aided elementary schools belong to hitherto excluded and socially marginalized communities, an in-depth recognition and sensitivity to their issues will promote more conducive learning environment for these children in the schools and better social integration for all children. One of the Joint Directors holding charge of the Madras education board shared how having the board promoted greater attention and sensitivity to the education of Muslim children. In this context, what one of the boys doing his B.Ed. training in the David Hare Institute for Advanced School Education (IASE) shared poignantly captured these nuances and opportunities embedded in identities:
'For the first time, in this institution, I sat on the first bench,
For the first time, in this institution, I discussed my life aspirations with a teacher,
For the first time, in this institution, I sat equal to my teacher in a taxi,
For the first time, in this institution, I played 'anthakshari' with my teacher,
For the first time, in this institution, my teacher came on my face book.
On 26th January, we all came together to do something for our college'.

7.2 Little recognition of the diversity and identity of learners in the education system:
Provisional census for 2011 shows the population of WB to be 91,347,736 with sex ratio of 947, an improvement from the 934 in 2001. The state has the highest density of population in the country at 903 per sq km.
2001 census showed the population distribution in the state to be 25.2% Muslims, 23% SCs, and 5.5% STs. Further, enrolment data shows higher proportion of children from these communities in the elementary schools-SC children at 26.55% of all enrolled children, ST children at 6.87%

and Muslim children at 31.67%.[1] Thus 65.09% of all children in the elementary schools come from the marginalized and vulnerable sections. Historical and current day social exclusion and marginalization faced by these children and their communities in the education system and its negative impact on their learning are documented and acknowledged widely. However, in discussions with the education department authorities or teachers and student-teachers in the state, there is little recognition or acknowledgement of the socio-cultural context of these children. It would seem that these children do not face any additional constraints or barriers in accessing education owing to their particular social identity or status in society. While the state does collect disaggregated data on SC, ST, Muslim children and girl children for the DISE, these do not seem to be at the forefront in state planning, strategies or provisions.

7.2 Silence on identity issues

While discussing with student-teachers at the DIET in Murshidabad, the students reiterated that there is no discrimination be it of girls or children from marginalized communities either in the teacher education institutions or in schools. When discussing further taking the example of constraints and barriers faced by girls in deciding upon the course of their studies, how far they could travel, whether they had the freedom to deny household chores owing to their professional work, they agreed to structural and societal barriers based on gender. However, these do not seem to be issues for discussion and there was an overt consensus that there is no discrimination in the state. Class division was recognized principal social exclusion vector. Thus there was **'silence'** on specific identities of communities and their historical or current exclusions in society. There also were very vibrant mainstream cultural practices that were attributed to have the consensus of 'ALL' and thus did not need further discussions, such as the Durga Puja, and Saraswati worship.There did not seem to be any discussion on how different members/groups perceived or participated in this.

In this context it may be useful to look at the work of 'anti-caste struggle committee' and 'movement to eliminate caste system' in Andhra Pradesh since 2000, a welcome initiative after decades of denial about the importance of these factors in society. Other stakeholders working on education in the state have recognized identity related issues in the state as seen:

'In West Bengal, like elsewhere in India, there is reason to be worried about the condition of the socially and economically underprivileged communities, particularly the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and religious minorities. Often children from underprivileged communities suffer most- both from the lack of accessibility and the poor quality of education'.[2]

"the level of literacy, enrolment, and or retention/drop out, is dependent not only on the delivery system, but also upon societal factors. Thus gender, caste/community, and occupation and

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[1] Flash Statistics 2010-11, DISE

[2] Kumar Rana, Samantak Das, 'Status of Primary Education in West Bengal', Economic and Political Weekly, 31st May, 2003

rural/urban inequalities all affect education. Available information reveals that poverty and illiteracy are particularly prevalent among Muslims"[3].

Hence it is important to recognize the multiple and complex issues that may result in unequal opportunities or particular barriers and constraints in education for sections of student-teachers, teachers and children and how these need to be addressed. In addition, such a silence or naturalization may also lead to children from these communities not able to raise any specific issues they may have in the schools. The team is of the opinion that the state planning and monitoring processes further reflect on these issues so that no child will face any form of discrimination, '**intentional or default'** which will limit their opportunities and choices in education.

The JRM team had the impression that the education system in the state was of the strong opinion that social and gender identities do not influence the schooling of girls or children from marginalized communities. Despite this differential education access and performance for girls, SC, ST and Muslim children (as broad categories) is reported and captured in the education data sets. Given the mandate for quality elementary education for ALL children, the JRM would like to pursue this discussion from two dimensions: i) the need to explore with those children and their communities/civil society organizations, the specific constraints of children who show poorer education indicators so that these inequalities and their causes can be addressed; ii) education system and schools take actions to promote greater sensitivity, understanding and integration of diverse groups of children in the state towards ensuring Constitutional values of social justice, equality and fraternity. The JRM team feels that teacher education needs to focus on both these dimensions and have specific modules in pre-service and in-service teacher education. Neglecting this dimension leaves sensitive teachers confused and de-skilled to address the issues of children who need their support most, and non-sensitive teachers will continue to hold their bias and escape their responsibility in educating ALL children under their care. Such focused attention in the opinion of the JRM will go a long way in confronting biases and opening up the space for dialogue and debates and opportunity for those 'affected' children/communities to present their view too.

It is suggested that in the pre-service course curriculum the modules under 'Contemporary India' includes specific sections on historical and current day social, economic and educational contexts of SC, ST and Muslim children/communities with particular focus on the multiple marginalization of girls and children with disability in these contexts. It is suggested that work experiences include opportunities to engage with these communities, do action research on relevant issues. In work experiences, arts and aesthetics – the culture, music, songs and arts of these communities can be incorporated.
During in-service trainings, it is suggested that every session includes discussions on specific constraints faced by these children and teachers are encouraged to share their difficulties and positive experiences. It is suggested that external persons from civil society or others from these communities be actively engaged for such processes to be able to provide a reality check. It is

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[3] IIM Calcutta study on education, 2010 (1.21), commissioned by the Government of West Bengal.

also recommended that both pre and in-service trainings include hands-on skills and techniques for teachers to promote greater integration in their schools.

7.4 Default segregation along language divisions:

The Muslim population in the state speaks and is keen to learn Urdu and Arabic. In addition there are population groups that speak Nepali, Santhali and also smaller portions who speak other Indian languages. The JRM members visited schools which were 100% or near about 100% Muslim children. It was reported that schools for tribal children were opened so that they can study in Santhali. The expert committee developing the text books reported that the text books have been translated from Bengali to Hindi, Nepali, Santhali, Urdu and Arabic. Thus it was evident that children's home languages in the state were being recognized and efforts were taken to incorporate them in the school system. However, the predominant language in majority of schools was Bengali, even when children came from Muslim or other communities. In addition, there are tendencies to segregate schools on the basis of language like separate schools set up for Santhali children. However, this goes against Constitutional mandates and the larger objectives of social integration and national harmony. The RtE too recognizes the need for children from diverse backgrounds study together in schools, to promote inclusion.

The JRM team also found that sufficient focus and effort is not put into the 'non-mainstream' languages to promote them. Student-teachers who had opted for Urdu and Arabic reported how they did not have full time teachers to teach them in DIETS and IASE. When these students are not trained in the particular language they fail to transact the proper curriculum and pedagogy to their students, further marginalizing the language. There was also the perception that 'non-mainstream' languages were of short duration in the school curriculum and children do not have to pass in these languages having no examination till 8th. Hence there was considerable neglect of languages that were taught as 3rd languages, and most of these were languages of minority communities in the state. These again result in systemic exclusion and discrimination against marginalized communities and children. Also a form of automatic segregation takes place as it is more convenient to put children of the same language together. This needs to be recognized and addressed. A study by Pratichi[4] recognized this as '*the gaps in 'organic communication' between schools/teachers and children who have different languages and dialects – tribal children and those from disadvantaged communities. Teachers do not often understand the language spoken by the tribal or the 'so-called' low caste (SC) students'*. A Professor in the IASE expanded this '*there are more than 167 forms of Bengali, but teachers owing to their class background and the larger ethos make use of only the standard Bengali language'*.

7.5 Institutional Shortcomings/Discriminations

The state has a huge shortage of upper primary schools; the IIM study commissioned by the state in 2010 estimated more than 14000 upper primary schools need to be set up. This is a concern particularly for children from marginalized sections who depend upon state provided schools for their education. It is of importance that upper primary schools are set up on priority basis, in habitations/circles/districts with high proportion of marginalized communities. Upper primary schools near the habitations will facilitate girl children's access to schools. It needs to be

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[4] Pratichi study 2002

recognized that the lack of adequate numbers of upper primary schools in the state will exclude large numbers of eligible children. Their role in promoting better opportunities, equity and inclusion in education need also be recognized.

The lack of teachers in Arabic and Urdu is yet another institutional shortcoming that needs to be addressed to provide equal opportunities to large numbers of children who desire to pursue these languages.

Government of WB launched the 'Shishu Shiksha Karmasuchi' (SSKendras) in 1999 under the Ministry of Panchayati Raj and Rural Development, to bring the SC, ST and Muslim children into the fold of the primary schooling system.[5] Various institutional shortcomings/discrimination are found in the organizing of the SSKs- teachers were not paid regularly, not respected and recognized as teachers but only as 'sahayikas', they do not get the same amount of training as other teachers/para teachers. SC, ST and Muslim children predominantly study in the SSKs and MSKs (the upper primary level). SSKs need to be integrated into the education system conforming to all norms under the RtE so that these children enjoy quality learning and access opportunities.

The School Management Committees (SMCs) are envisioned as legal bodies to promote community participation in planning and oversight for schools. The current Village Education Committees (VECs) are not school specific bodies, but formed at the gram-sansads, largely headed by and composed of members from the powerful sections of society-leaving out the underprivileged. While the upper primary schools in the state have formed SMCs, the primary schools are yet to do so. It is recommended that SMCs be also formed at the primary schools and adequate training and handholding support be provided to members, particularly those from marginalized communities to fulfill their roles and responsibilities. In a study by Pratichi, an overwhelming majority of parents welcomed the idea of school specific bodies with legal authority to oversee school grants and development, and suggested that these committees must have representation from all sections of society–on the basis of class, caste, gender and so on.[6]

An important reason for poor participation and performance of children from marginalized communities cited by teachers was the lack of awareness among the parents. The child mapping process under RtE is also envisaged as a strategy to engage the community into school processes. The mapping includes –environment building, household survey, mapping of children and their participation in schools, village register of children till 14 years, discussing the map with community and developing a plan for the school. The register should include all Out of School Children and migrant children. Further focus on these processes with particular attention on parents from marginalized communities would create better participation in the school system.

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[5] Economic Review, 2001-02, Government of WB

[6] Kumar Rana, Samantak Das, 'Status of Primary Education in West Bengal', Economic and Political Weekly, 31st May, 2003

RtE also mandates 25% reservation of seats in unaided private schools to promote greater social integration among children and communities. Given the great resistance of private schools to implement this, all unaided schools may be brought under the purview of the Director of School Education through a due recognition process. Necessary procedures may be set up for the implementation of the same.

Only 41 upper primary schools in the state are fully government schools while the large are government aided schools. The state contributes the salary costs for these schools, while the schools have additional costs. These costs are partly met by fees/contributions from the children in addition to voluntary donations to the school. Given the poverty status and economic constraints of some of the communities/families these may result in the child not accessing elementary schooling. The large numbers of drop outs at class V and class VIII where children were reported to take up work to contribute to family expenditure is a reflection of the same. Going by the mandate of RtE to provide 'free and compulsory education' to all children, it is recommended that primary and upper primary schools should not collect any fees in whatever name – expenses for festivals and celebrations should be met out of voluntary contributions or contingencies. All costs to children under RtE should be removed as these disproportionately affect the education and opportunities of marginalized children.

RtE mandates that the SCPCR/NCPCR function as oversight bodies to the implementation of the RtE. However like many other states, WB has also not put in place a 'grievance redress mechanism' which allows parents and communities to register their complaints and seek redress. While the Act mandates 'no discrimination, no corporal punishment, no fear and trauma' for children, there are no clear mechanism to monitor their implementation or redress any violations. Having an effective grievance redress mechanism will increase parent's confidence in the system, particularly the marginalized parents, who may have several complaints against the system.

7.6 Address multiple vulnerability and deprivation affecting education among specific social groups

'while in many villages, particularly among the general caste communities, we noticed a dislike of and inhibition towards the food served in the ICDS centres. It was just the opposite in villages inhabited by the scheduled tribe communities. In one village despite the presence of an SSK, children above the age of six years were kept out of the schooling system by their parents. The reason given by the parents was that the child admitted to SSK stood to lose the food (a little pulp made of flour) she received at the ICDS centre, hence she was kept at the anganwadi well beyond the age when she should have been admitted to the SSK'.[7]

Child labor similarly is response to the complex deprivation experienced in some families. Cases of child trafficking are also reported, particularly to Delhi, Mumbai and Gujarat. In one of the schools visited, the head teacher reported that there is considerable drop out of Muslim children after class VIII, when they migrate to Gujarat and Mumbai for work. This phenomenon was so

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[7] Pratichi study 2003

natural to the teachers that they did not question it or why certain specific groups of children lose out on education through child labor. Teacher education need build understanding and sensitivity to the realities that keep different groups of children deprived of meaningful education that can make difference to their lives.

7.7 Enhance social exclusion-inclusion content and dialogue in teacher education

The two year D.El.Ed. course (ODL) mode has two papers on 'understanding children in inclusive context' part 1 and II. Part 1 includes concepts regarding the physical, intellectual, emotional, social growth of children; the levels of education applicable to different stages of growth; the processes of learning; and teaching skills. Part II is all about recognizing and promoting education of children with special needs (disability). Thus while 'inclusion in education' need to recognize the diverse groups of children in society and promote their recognition, participation and benefit sharing from the education system, it is now limited to recognizing children with disability (Children with Special Needs-CWSN). Here an opportunity is lost to promote greater sensitivity and draw in the resources from various groups of children into the education processes. As teachers are not oriented to this, they are not able to transact the same to the children.

The B.Ed. teacher education curriculums too do not recognize the diversity and complexity of the various population groups/children and their context. A review of the compulsory elective papers, where each student is to select one subject does not include any dimensions about caste issues, ethnicity issues, religious issues. The syllabus would be enriched and become more meaningful and address present issues if more contextual education and social realities are incorporated in them. Possible areas are - looking into education inequalities and their causes/impact, enquiring into subaltern histories, exploring knowledge and learning patterns among marginalized groups, language and dialect diversities, exploring Constitutional provisions with social justice dimensions, and promoting greater community engagement in the work experience sessions.

Perspective with which certain contents are taught also need review – what is being taught under 'caste system, karma and re-birth' – are they taught from the lens of communities that have been negatively impacted? What is the linkage between these beliefs and education deprivations and disabilities today? Thus we would argue for the need to incorporate the perspectives of the marginalized children into teacher education and its curriculum, providing adequate space for debates and dialogue.

7.8 Develop contextual schemes to address education inequalities with equity fund, SCSP, TSP and funds for Muslim children:

The equity fund in the SSA is a unique opportunity to take up need based and innovative programmes for local schools. In addition, the Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP), Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) and Minority funds in education needs to be more strategically used to address some of their specific constraints in education. The current practice of accounting this money as being spent in proportion to the proportion of children from these communities attending schools is not in keeping with the original mandate of these funds. The funds were explicitly strategized to provide individual/family need based schemes and to fill gaps in order to overcome education

inequalities. These children have equal right to those provisions that state provides to all children and this fund is to be spent to reduce inequality and meet the specific needs. Schemes may be evolved to promote additional residential facilities, additional community level coaching/mentors, provide community resource centres/libraries, additional personality development and confidence building, compensate opportunity costs for families, additional coaching for SC, ST, Muslim teachers to prepare for TET and similar others based on a thorough needs assessment.

7.9 Enhancing Financial Equity for children from marginalized communities: A review of education related scholarships for SC, ST, OBC children from the Backward Classes Welfare dept. show the amounts to be wholly inadequate given today's costs. It ranges from Rs.20/- annum upwards. These scholarships cover both pre-matric and post matric studies. Given that majority of secondary and higher secondary schools are government aided beyond primary schools, all children who attend these schools, including poor and children from marginalized communities have costs to bear. A related issue is the income ceilings relating to different scholarships. It is found that family income ceiling varies from Rs.36,000/-year to Rs.200,000/- year for eligibility of scholarships. This ceiling, to say the least, is not practical and is way too low for a family to survive today, leave alone educate their children. In addition, there does not seem any rationale for differing income ceilings if one is concerned that children from these communities will access the highest possible education levels and the education gaps between them and other communities are eliminated. It is recommended that a study on current day schooling costs is undertaken and the scholarship amounts rationalized to ensure that these children do not drop out, but complete school education without financial burdens. It is also recommended that the issue of income ceiling also be revised and rationalized.

7.10 Promoting Human Rights Education:

The state has initiated the human rights education programme, currently developed by the Institution for Human Rights. It is recommended that anchor teachers are identified from every school to be trained and promote human rights education among children. It is recommended that each school develop human rights clubs which provides content and practical ways to appreciate the socio-cultural context of different groups of children and build cooperation among children.

7.10 Promoting Social Justice through Child Cabinets

The members were impressed with how children who had recently been oriented to child cabinets were playing their roles with gusto. The Prime Minister and the various ministers could narrate their roles and also took efforts in the school to promote specific areas like health, hygiene and nutrition under the mid day meal, promote school environment, cultural programmes etc. It was encouraging to see children taking interest in various activities of the school. Given that social inclusion and integration are central concerns in schooling, it is recommended to have additional position of 'social justice' Minister in the cabinet.

7.11 Recommendations

Immediate

1. Include contextual issues of children from SC, ST, Muslim communities and other marginalized children in teacher education curriculum and training modules both at pre and in-service levels. Ensure adequate reading materials for student teachers in teacher education institutes, ensure reading materials in school libraries, invite leaders from these communities to talk to student-teachers and in schools to enhance understanding and sensitivity.

2. Promote open healthy environments for student-teachers to discuss issues of SC, ST, Muslim children, girl children as well as their communities with regard to accessing education in respectful manner, creating opportunities to interrogate their own perceptions and beliefs.

3. Expand understanding on the 'social exclusion-equity-inclusion' dimensions of quality education building conceptual clarity, curriculum, reading materials in teacher education. Expand the concept of social inclusion beyond inclusion of children with disability to include diverse groups of children who face education deprivation. The SCERT may set up a unit on 'Equality and Social Justice' to study these issues in relation to school structure and culture, teacher-student relationships and quality in education and guide the DIETs in their trainings.

4. Use the human rights education process to sensitize both teachers and children on contextual issues of social exclusion, inequalities, equity and social inclusion. Institutionalize human rights understanding through promoting human rights clubs in schools and social justice minister in the child cabinets.

5. Promote social justice concepts in schools through expanding the current child cabinets to include Minister and Deputy Minister for social justice to highlight specific issues of marginalized children, girl children, CWSN. The child cabinet should also promote inclusion activities in schools in more conscious manner.

6. Track disaggregated data on various dimensions at state level and also at local levels and use them for planning and monitoring.

7. Utilize additional financial resources under equity funds, Scheduled caste sub plan, Tribal sub plan and Minority funds strategically to remove specific barriers like migration, child labor, and address the educational inequalities through additional coaching, community facilitators, community library cum reading rooms etc.

Medium Term

8. Address institutional shortcomings/discriminations on priority basis for marginalized children and communities like provision of upper primary schools, providing adequate teachers for Urdu/Arabic, integration of SSKs and MSKs along RtE norms, electing school management committees and facilitating their effective functioning, setting up grievance redress mechanism etc so that all children enjoy equal opportunities for learning.

9. Ensure 'free education' under RtE by removing all school costs for children up to elementary levels including in government aided schools. Under take study on current

day school costs and review education related scholarships provided to SC, ST, Muslim children, girl children, children with special needs. Also review the income ceiling related to different scholarships.

10. Re-visit teacher education curriculum and reading materials from the marginalized perspectives and include curriculum to create better understanding and sensitivity. Review how specific contents like caste system, theory of karma etc are taught in the B.Ed. course and ensure that perspectives of the marginalized communities are brought in.

11. Map civil society organizations and build collaboration at all levels at state, district and cluster to both contribute to quality education as well as building organic linkages with marginalized communities to enjoy their right to education.

12. It is recommended that some of the efforts and actions necessary for promoting equity and inclusion may be designed and piloted as part of the UNICEF-government engagements.

8.Civil Society Organizations

The JRM team met with civil society organizations at the state level. The meeting was held along with SCERT, SSA and officials from the education department. The organizations included i) Child in Need Institute (CINI), ii) Loreto Day School, iii) Pratichi, iv) Vikramshila, v) Science Communicators Forum (SCF).[8] CINI worked on issues of child protection, trafficking, education support in schools and in developing learning materials for 'Out of school children'. Loreto school has been in the forefront for promoting inclusion in education bringing together children from diverse economic and social backgrounds to study together in the same classroom. In addition they have developed learning materials for OOSC and also evolved effective ways in supporting children in the urban bastis to learn. Pratichi has done many studies on various dimensions on the status of education in the state. Vikramshila has been engaged by the state in preparing the OOSC materials as well as a pilot on education to employability. The Science Communicators Forum, a forum of teachers promote science education and its practice among children through adopting schools in five districts.

These organizations are well known in their innovative work in different dimensions of education. There was good relationship between the organizations and the state. The state engaged with them to draw upon their expertise and incorporate it into state strategies. Many of them were engaged in promoting learning among OOSC and their mainstreaming in schools. The experience of Sr. Cyril in promoting inclusion in education is recognized across the country too. This thus provided an excellent collaboration where the strength of these organizations could be expanded to scale by the state.

While the above provided a good collaboration model between state and civil society organizations, a further engagement that could prove beneficial is to engage with civil society organizations which are closely linked to marginalized communities, are even set up by them.

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[8] List of organizations attached

These organizations have wide rapport and reach among these communities and are good interface to disseminate state messages, provisions and policies with these communities and facilitate better access for them. This is particularly important as critical information did not reach them and they did not have adequate connections to access the available provisions. Locally situated organizations also have the advantage of continuing their community engagement beyond project cycles. Hence it is recommended that small, locally situated organizations which have long term stakes with the community are engaged to promote education among these communities. This would also be a way of expanding the stakehold in education which after RtE has to be owned and taken forward by different groups in the community.

A two-fold strategy may be adopted in CSOs engagement in promoting education – i) collaboration with education related experienced CSOs to build innovative models, ii)partnership with CSOs who may not be education related, but have good rapport with the society to bring perspectives from the marginalized communities and can take messages to the communities.

Recommendation:

1. Map civil society organizations, particularly those closely associated with marginalized communities at all levels from circles, districts and state and identify organizations that can contribute through a) bringing their technical expertise and experience in education, b) can take the education policies and provisions to the community.
2. Develop a GO-NGO collaboration model to implement the RtE Act in the state. This may include communication strategies, monitoring strategies, handholding SMCs, tracking and re-admitting child labor and migrant children etc. It is suggested that each of these interventions are taken as state strategies and implemented in scale to create vibrancy across the state and with the poorest communities and in the remotest corners of the state. Such interventions have been taken up during the total literacy drive at the national level as well as by different states and lessons can be drawn from these.

9.UNICEF's partnership with School Education Department: 2013-2014

The Education Programme in West Bengal would support government's effort to provide quality, education, by reducing social and gender disparities. This would promote improved retention and learning outcomes by age appropriate quality education for out of school children, special focus on educationally backward district and DUC, quality school readiness intervention for early childhood education through evidence based advocacy and capacity building , promoting child friendly learning environment , RTE compliance schools with improved learning achievement by scaling up reading promotion programme and systems in convergence with CP and WASH. Education Programme would also strengthen State level teacher education plan by demonstrating by planning, capacity building and demonstrating good practices on early grade learning, accelerated methodology, protection issues through improved teacher preparedness. Education would also contribute to strengthen MIS system , improve data analysis and management , development of district EDI.

Education Programme work towards smooth transition to secondary by improving data, knowledge management, capacity building, develop adolescent friendly indicators, life sill curriculum.

10. Capacity Building and Leadership in TE

Capacity building should be the key-word for West Bengal in TE for the next few years at all levels. Since the administrative structure is fragmented and controlled by different stake-holders, it has resulted in shying away from owning programs and activities within the government segment itself. Everyone has a set of alibi that this is being "taken care of not by me, but by some other body (x y z….)". To attain the mandate under RtE and restructured TE policy, West Bengal has a lot to grapple with quantity and they have absolute deficit in human resources, again, at all levels.

SCERT has got mandate as Academic Authority granted by State Government recently at the tail-end of last financial year. This can be seen in a very positive light because this sole initiative would lead to many new windows to strengthen TE in the State. The impressions, duly backed by presentations and other materials the team has gathered is that SCERT till now was performing as State partner to National level bodies or working with a small number of projects sanctioned under PBSSM. It has no independent work. SCERT has not designed any pedagogic interventions based on the needs of the State. This sudden found authority calls for effective management of teacher-education in the State. SCERT needs high voltage capacity building to perform. They are left with no buffer time. Under proposed activities of SCERT, only two activities are of this category. One is "Managing Change: capacity building of SCERT and DIET personnel". This is to be done by outsourcing expertise of British Council. The other one is "Strengthening of relationship between DIET and SCERT". During interactions, we came to know that State has signed a MoU with Intel- India to conduct Intel's basic capacity building program in ICT.

SCERT has drawn a plan to execute INSET, and they have plan for capacity building of teacher-educators by organizing a series of workshops. This plan proposes to include academic officers of SCERT, DIETs, SPO, DPO, and functionaries from cluster levels too targeting large scale systemic changes by focusing on good interfacing with diverse stakeholders.

IASEs and CTEs in the State are functioning, have comparatively well maintained premises, infrastructure, administrative and academic staff. IASEs/CTEs are not handholding DIETs and PTTIs under their catchment areas. Capacity of teachers thru INSET needs focus on pedagogy and methodology. Class-rooms need more vibrancy, more flexibility in setting up formats.

State has started capacity building by declaring SCERT administrative head of all Teacher-training institutions in the State. Teachers were given Special Trainings to deal with new text-books. But Teacher-educators were kind of left-out. They are the one who carry out In-service teacher training so their orientation in entirety is essential. Proposed capacity building trainings for Teacher-educators can bring passion and pinch of professionalism amongst TEs. But at present, scenario is rather depressing. Team found them over-burdened and much in constraints of different orders. They need to learn to handle it in more professional way. TEs needs booster in content, pedagogy, and good high order personal management thru soft skills to cope up with

challenges of multitasking. Besides, they need an assimilative understanding of their roles and responsibilities what RtE, NCF, and revival in TE policy demand out of them. State has revised D.El.Ed. curriculum, and also have new sets of text- books. DIETs are not at all capable of carrying their responsibilities with the current pace, despite best of their intentions and dedications.

Once recognizing diversity in children, including issues of SC, ST, Muslim minority children, girl children, children with disability, children in various difficult contexts like conflict, disaster, special mental-physical status etc. a more understanding and sensitivity to inter-sectional exclusions need to be integrated in training modules of the teachers, and teacher educators also need to be fully oriented to recognize these concerns within class-rooms. TEs are not equipped to deal with new responsibility. Though DIETs were involved marginally with special trainings on text- books, Team doesn't find it sufficient. This requires a massive holistic planning interlinking all TEIs right from CRC/CLRCs to IASEs and SCERT too. It needs support from all possible sources and also from all sides covering pedagogy, methodology, ICT integration understanding of roles in the whole picture, getting innovative with implementations.

Functional Autonomy is a major concern. DIETs we visited were not able to point out even a single program they did on their own. They all await instructions. Roles of DIETs/CTEs /SCERT are to supporting and hand-holding other functionaries, so they need exhaustive sensitization thru out the year both on academic content and pedagogic expertise. Having focus on personal capacity building, team- management etc. is fine, but this would not be suffice when we see the "training impact" of recent years and challenges ahead.

Even Senior lecturers do not appear to have an idea as to what kind of capacity building they need for themselves. The team had similar impressions in the DIETs visited. At CTE, they had certain demands like exposures visits etc. as part of capacity building program. There is need for greater exposure to good practices happening around in the world. Good interactive sessions with faculty at State level to stir up their desire for add on in their own capacity. A teacher at higher secondary shared that all teachers do not get opportunity for capacity building, as it mostly depends on school-Head to select. 'What class a teacher is teaching' also becomes a factor in selection, she confided.

Recommendations:
SCERT and DIETs have got new supporting and reporting roles. SCERT requires good exposure both in administration, management, and in academic understanding and vision of the new structure. They need to address the needs of teachers and teacher-educators both at the same time.
1-State needs to design and develop a road-map of TE in West Bengal, as part of policy initiative. This will lead to an overall coverage of entire sector. Road map will guide to strategize on challenges.
2- Continuous teacher/ teacher-educator's professional development focusing on various capacity building exercises to enable them to be directly address key quality and substantive issues of teacher development.

3-Capacity building in using technology in governance to deliver fast and on-time, to integrate it in making communication subtle and impressive, and learning to share experiences with global community. Every teacher educator should get basic training on computer machine.

4- Teachers should get training on use and integration of technology during their class-room transaction.

5-TEs need to understand the problems teachers face in schools and in class-rooms. DIETs should have a plan of attaching TEs for a stipulated period in schools. This can be taken up as start-up project initially. Their presence in certain schools may definitely systematize PST internship and mode of training patterns by instilling finer understanding of "other side of the story"

6-During an interaction with TEs in a DIET, they were kind of demanding for M.Ed. courses, and exposures to best practices within and outside State.

7- Team felt that TEs were not very articulate to spell out their own needs in majority of the cases generally. State can organize a structured interactive sessions with TEs to get a feel of their needs.

8- Libraries as Resource Centre were not in place. Number of books may impress one, but they are not assessed in terms of relevance. Library needs to be strengthened.

9- It would be a welcome step to provide all Policy documents to each TEIs and other institutes of similar nature, so that TEs have access to documents.

10- Leadership needs to be encouraged in all formats. It is recommended to locate good practices amongst teachers, and well-document them. Also TEs, who are working and delivering in adverse circumstances need to be acknowledged for their contribution.

11. ICT and MIS in Teacher-education in West Bengal

11.1 Context: ICT is still standalone concept in all TEIs. DIETs have multimedia lab. Even running a presentation is seen as the responsibility of the computer operator of the organization. Faculty members are uncomfortable with the idea of learning to run a machine. They need orientation to explore multiple usage of ICT in their day to day work.

At higher secondary level, CAL project is on and running. Teachers who are responsible have undergone training, but rest of the teachers are not being oriented. As told by a Principal in a higher secondary institution, computer labs are mostly used by students in vocational courses because they get opportunity for lateral entry in Polytechnics later on. There were a few VCDs of different presentations in DIETs. DIET, Hooghly has done good integration of ICT in day to day. Such models need to be followed by all TEIs. CTE, Banipur. This institute has a Smart Classroom, a new add-on. The set up was partially ICT-enabled. It was a pleasure to find it in remote part of West Bengal and demonstrates that it can be done in all TEIs. CTE, Banipur and DIET, Nadia worked extensively with ICT. CTE, Banipur can, with assistance from DIET, Nadia take the lead to improve upon the structure and instilling of technology into routine work to strengthen office automation in the DIETs and other TEIs in the vicinity. Similar clubbing can also be done in the State with CTE, Belur. In DIET, Nadia, CCE training was ongoing with 50-60 teachers, and the team found the conference room fully operative on ICT, and training was done using technology whenever needed. CTE, Belur, has an impressive computer lab, and ICT-enabled class- rooms. They have an impressive digital Library. Team did see a demonstration of

the same by locating books and sorting in different ways. They have created a few teaching learning materials and produced video lessons. The team met several tech- enthusiasts there. CTE, Belur, has a functional website which can be improved by posting "notice board", uploading of their own material etc.

11.2 Policy context: Information and Communication technology is a powerful tool to enhance quality, range and reach in the education sector. It can transcend biases and prejudices prevalent in society. ICT can help to leap frog over rural-urban divides, the divides due to diverse languages, traditions, socioeconomic structures. It generates entirely new world of possibilities in planning, processes, research, documentation, assessment and data base creation. The IT policy in school education recommends promotion of universal, equitable, open and free access to state-of-the-art ICT and ICT enabled tools and resources to all students and teachers. It further recommends development of localized high quality content to enable students and teachers to partner in development and sharing digital resources through professional networks of teachers, resource persons, to catalyze and support resource sharing, content for education, guidance and counseling, academic support, management and networking of school managers and administrators. The Information and Communication Technology Policy in School Education 2009 (Draft) http://digitalknowledgecentre.in/files/2012/02/National-Policy-on-ICT-in-education.pdf provides useful ideas for ICT which are applicable to teacher education. A case-study of ICT in School Education has been undertaken recently and is available at www.infodev.org/en/Document.873.pdf. These projects were part of two major CSS, namely Education Technology (ET) and Computer Literacy and Studies in School (CLASS) starting in 2004. In West Bengal, Policy on IT was made in 2003, and it was re-visited as West Bengal Policy on Information and Communication Technology-2012 and West Bengal ICT Incentive Schemes, 2012. Unfortunately, this new policy on ICT does not include education as part of Focus Area though it covers setting up of new hardware units, rural industries, animal husbandry, local entrepreneurship, IT parks, global marketing of handicraft, fisheries, etc.

11.3 Concerns:

Major concern is related to State Policy perspective regarding integration of ICT in Teachers' training and in School education. ICT bridges the rural-urban divides in more subtle way. It's most "inclusive'' approach to reach out people cross cutting all kinds of exclusions based on caste, creed, economic status, gender etc. It is high time to realize the worth of integration of technology in delivery mechanism in TTIs. Technology can never replace a teacher, but it can certainly make teaching and learning process more focused and interesting in the class-room if a teacher is empowered to use it with regular lessons.

13.4 Recommendations:

1. State can choose to revisit its ICT policy in the context of Teacher Education and School education and prepare a road map to take technology-access far ahead through children.

2. Team was told about SCERT's MoU with Intel-India to provide trainings programs to TEs in 2013-14. It would be pretty innovative if the trainings of such nature can be taken to DIETs and CTEs as venue instead of calling TEs to State HQ.

3. Identifying TTIs, who are more operative in technology to lead other institutions in the vicinity.

4. Identifying and creating a pool of TEs and Teachers in the State who are good at using technology on their own, so that they can be encouraged to use their talents in their working areas.

5. During interactions with Teacher-trainees, Team found a few of them pretty comfortable with technology. These trainees can be encouraged to prepare ICT-supported lesson plans/ projects.

6. All libraries should be organized. A digital software for libraries can be used to catalogue them. **Digital Library** would soon weed out irrelevant books that they have no idea of any such numbers of books. This would lead way to hit 'refresh button' in all libraries.

7. State can aspire to create a **Teacher Training Management Software** to regularize teacher-training area. This would create a dynamic data base of teachers in the State to identify their training needs, based on their academic profile, and also their interest in other co-curricular areas to make training more interesting and need-based.

 8. Develop Comprehensive dynamic MIS in Teacher Education

11.5 Computer Aided Learning (CAL)

The objectives of Computer Aided Learning is to provide lively, multi-modal interactive lessons to children for better visualization and understanding of key concepts in the lesson, joyful and self-learning opportunities, minimizing learning gaps across the learners with differing endowments, enhanced motivation & academic achievement and better school attendance and participation in the class. For teachers, it is expected to provide on-line resources for multi-media classroom presentations and ensures parity of educational deliverables in all sections of a class or across schools in the state. 22 Upper Primary Schools (including Madrasas) in each district are under CAL programme. In 2012-13, total 442 Upper Primary Schools including Madrasa have been provided computer along with other accessories. 1768 teachers underwent training on CAL. 2,25,714 students have benefited under CAL programme. 1768 hardware system have been provided to schools under CAL.

Table 12: Physical and Financial achievement in ICT in West Bengal 2012-13

No. of schools Approved	Achieved	Approved teachers for training	Achieved	Approved budget	Achieved
440	442	1760	1768	`1000.00	1000.00

Table 13: Cumulative achievement till 2012-13

Schools covered under CAL	No. of children covered	No. of teachers trained on CAL

2993	1428801	10221

Table 14: Activity wise breakup

Details	Physical Target (schools/district)	Financial Target (in lakhs per school per district)
3 Windows XP Microsoft Office latest version desk top Computers, 3 speaker system, 0.6 KVS 3 UPS , 2 LCD Projector from suitable branded with ceiling mounted, 1 head phone	25	1.93 L;`48.25 L/ district
2500/- would be provided for Broad Band Internet connection for one year.	25 schools per district	1.125 lakhs per dist.
Computer table @ `1500 per table for 3 Computers	25 school per district	3.75 lakhs
Two days Orientation of the HMs & DRG members of the CAL UP schools at the State level. 6 days KRP training with the district CAL Coordinators at BITM Kolkata. 7 days teachers training for rest of CAL teachers at district level at BITM district Science centre and DIET or other Govt. organization 6 days Advance training for the selected 200 KRPs who are trained in 2011-12 & 2012-13. Refresher training for rest of the selected / interested teachers in the previous CAL covered schools.		Capacity building activity under PM head
Monitoring by DRG and SRG		Monitoring under PM head

Study by institution university & others		
	Total	50 lakhs /district.

The JRM is of the view that an evaluation of the CAL initiative needs to be undertaken to ascertain to what extent children's learning has benefitted through CAL.

Annexure 1

Meeting with Civil Society Organizations, SPD, SSA, SCERT on 8 April 2013 7:15-9:00 PM

Name	Organization	Contact	Activities
1.Manoj Kr Sircar	Child in Need Institute (CINI) – WB, Jharkhand	09883295469	Child protection, trafficking, education support in schools, OOSC materials
2.Soumitra Bhattacharya	Loreto Day School, MWI	09163416595	Has developed lots of materials for OOSC learning which is used by UNICEF
3. Sr. Cyril Mooney	Consultant, SSA – Kolkota, Loreto		Setting up rainbow schools fully funded by government currently Need for education planning by teachers
4.Arindam Sengupta	PGT in English,	Hare School, 09831189809	Government school teacher, resource person for English teaching. Problem of quality trainers not reaching the end delivery person in cascade model, teacher has no support to implement, parents not taken into confidence about changes in education
5.Margaret Waterworth	Education consultant, teacher trainer	09836671049	Teacher from UK, working with Sr. Cyril
6.Nilanjan Bala	SCERT	09433336933	
7.Debashis Sarkar	Directorate of School Education	09433190866	
8.Dr Chandra	Director, SCERT,	09830583527	

Ray	WB		
9.Shubhra Chatterji	Director, Vikramshila	098302 55631	Teacher training, education to employability project with SSA
10.Abhijit Bardhan	Teacher, Science Forum	kolkota.scf@gmail.com 09433013243	Worked with Anil Sadgopal and Hoshangabad Experiment in Science Teaching teacher training, modeling in 100 schools
11.Sangram Marokhoju	Pratichi Institute	Sangram0404@gmail.com 09433505305 Pratichi website	Education support, research studies – Muslim dominant area has poor infrastructure

Annexure 2:

The officials who attended the meeting at 05-00 p.m. on 12th April, 2013 in the Conference Hall of State Project Office:

1. Shri Arnab Roy , Secretary, School Education.
2. Shri. Kalyanmoy Ganguly Administrator, West Bengal Board of Secondary Education,
3. Prof. Aveek Majumdar, Chairman Expert Committee,
4. Prof. R.N. De Member Secretary & Ex Director, SCERT & other members of Expert Committee
5. Amrita Sengupta, UNICEF along with members of the Joint Review Mission.

Annexure 3: Field Notes

April 10th, 2013

District-Nadia, Mohanpur Haringhata Junior High School

We reached the school around 12:30pm. There are a total number of 103 students in classes V to VIII. There are no regular teachers, but only two guest teachers who teach all the four classes. Since appointments have not been made by SSC, retired teachers have been re – employed as guest teachers. About 90 percent of children who come to the school were reported to be from SC, ST background.The teacher in – charge of the school is also a retired teacher.

The problem of absenteeism in the school is quite severe.

Questions to be explored:

- How diverse are the schools in terms of students' backgrounds?

- What impact will this have on their education?
- Do the attention (in terms of teacher recruitment, infrastructure, facilities) that schools get from administrative authorities vary in terms of location, children's backgrounds etc?
- Systemic negligence?

April10th, 2013

DIET, Nadia, Time – 11.30am

A district level workshop on CCE was happening in the DIET. The participants said that they have no clarity about the CCE which has been in a way imposed upon them. According to them formative assessment was a problem as they had to cater to 80 to 120 children in a small sized classroom. One teacher asserted "we are not prepared to accept this challenge, mind set needs to change". He further added that formative assessment is a continuous process which becomes all the more difficult because of factors like: delivery of textbooks is not on time, teacher pupil ratio, first generation learners who are not able to write even their name till class 5 or 7, absenteeism dropout due to early marriage and child labour.

The principal, Mr. Shomnath Roy, was conducting the workshop himself. He showed a power point to the participant and had also prepared a module for explaining the concept.

I interacted with children of class 9th and class 6th. Both these classes had a strength of about 40 children each.On asking the children if they go for tuition after school, all the hands shot up.Some children confided that their school teachers hold classes after school and they go there.
This culture of coaching needs to be also correlated with the kind of textbooks that are being used in schools.The books have concepts which are not age appropriate and hence only add to the load of non - comprehension. I interacted with children of class 9th and class 6th. Both these classes had a strength of
about 40 children each.On asking the children if they go for tuition after school, all the hands shot up.Some children confided that their school teachers hold classes after school and they go there.
This culture of coaching needs to be also correlated with the kind of textbooks that are being used in schools.The books have concepts which are not age appropriate and hence only add to the load of non - comprehension.

JRM visited couple of schools, two such schools[9] have unfinished buildings. Principal reported that funds were intially paid to them for building but was discontinued even before the completion. One of the school building is not being completed because they do not have prescribed open space as per RtE norms and the principal was anxious that where from the required space can be made avaialble for enable them to complete the construction work. There are specific problems of the schools that JRM felt may be looked into and addressed for setting aside children to be ill with due to these administrative hassels. The classification of schools also

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[9] Sugandhya High School (H.S), District: Hooghly

need to be done so as to fullfill RtE norms, clarity on administrative control of the boards and accordinlgy the qualification for teacher training courses and teacher eleigibilty qulaifications, all these aspects be seen as an issue holistically, rather than dealing with them as separate issues.

The schools varied in their infrastructural facilities and upkeep, two primary schools visited in Howrah and Hooghly district were completely different from one another. One of the school (Barlinanpara Junior basic school) had brilliant presentations based on BALA, had open air classroom, barrier free toilets, some teaching learning material and aesthetic appeal where as in other (Jagatballavpur Sahapara Primary School, Howrah) they were missing except that one could see some presentations on the building following BALA, corner of the floor of the principal's office was being used for serving the snacks to JRM. However building of both was old, classrooms were not evenly sized,children were sitting on the floor, few classroom had desks, for may be 60% of the children and pedagodical practices were in didactic mode.Teaching learning material used by the trainess were charts. In one of the upper primary school it was obesrve that the teacher was struggling to display the chart, which had a picture of a charkha, that did not even seem to be of any relevance for explaining the concept and the teacher must have wasted a lot more time which could have other wise been used more fruitfully if the pedgaogical principles were aligned with NCF 2005. Such as planning for hands on experiences, for making teaching learning participative. There was no dearth of open spaces in almost all the educational institutions except one upper primary school. There were separate rooms for mid day meal, for serving food to children in each school is a feature worthy where all children irrespective of caste, class ate together.

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दिनांक – 10 अप्रैल 2013
स्थान – चुआँपुर विद्या निकेतन
गर्ल्स हाई स्कूल
भाकुड़ी - प्रथम
बरहामपुर , जिला मुर्शिदाबाद
पश्चिम बंगाल

घनी आबादी वाला क्षेत्र है । सड़क को दोनों ओर मकान ही
मकान और बीच-2 में इक्का दुक्का वृक्ष भी हैं , ऐसी घनी
आबादी वाले क्षेत्र में एक खुले हुए शाटर के आगे गाड़ी रुकती
है , कहीं से आभास नहीं होता कि यहाँ कोई विद्यालय भी होगा
हाँ , अंदर से लड़कियों की आवाजें आ रही हैं -- एकटा, द्वि
उससे पता चला कि हम चुआँपुर विद्या निकेतन गर्ल्स हाई
स्कूल के मुख्य द्वार पर खड़े हैं ।
खुले हुए शाटर के भीतर घुसते हैं तब परिदृश्य अचानक
बदलता है आयताकार आकृति में विद्यालय भवन साक्षात
खड़ा है । तीन मंजिला भवन है, ये भवन तीन ओर से तिमंजला
है, एक तरफ दीवार थोड़ी सी टूटी हुई है और टीन की मदद
से उसे ढकने की कोशिशें की गई हैं । दीवार के उस पार
काफी बड़ा जलखण्ड है जिसे यहाँ के लोग वाटरलैंड बोलते
हैं , अधिक नमी के कारण दीवार इधर-उधर से अक्सर
टूटती रहती है और मरम्मत के लिए 'फंड' की कमी
हमेशा बनी रहती है ।
शाटर के भीतर घुसते ही बाईं ओर दो छोटी-2 अंधेरी सी
कोठरियाँनुमा कक्ष हैं , एक में प्रशासनिक व्यवस्था

1)

संभालने वाले कर्मचारी बैठते हैं, दूसरे मे प्रधानाचार्या। प्रधानाचार्या विद्यालय के रिकार्ड दिखाने को आतुर हैं जबकि मेरा मन कक्षाओं में जाने को व्याकुल है। विजय उन्हीं की लेती हैं।

स्टॉफ, विद्यार्थियों का नामांकन, फंड इत्यादि से जुड़े रिकार्ड दिखाए जाते हैं, पता चलता है कि विद्यार्थियों की संख्या की तुलना में स्टॉफ बहुत ही कम है। यह स्थिति कमोबेश हर साल ही बनी रहती है। इस अकादमिक वर्ष में स्टॉफ न होने के कारण दर्शनशास्त्र और अर्थशास्त्र दो विषय छोड़े गए हैं जबकि इन्हें लेने वाले विद्यार्थियों की संख्या पचास से ऊपर थी।

यह विद्यालय 'गवर्नमेंट रेडेड विद्यालय' की श्रेणी में आता है, कोई भी अकादमिक वर्ष ऐसा नहीं गया जब इन्हें फंड की कमी से न जूझना पड़ा हो।

बारहवीं तक पहुँचते-२ लड़कियों की संख्या तीन सौ से पचास-साठ तक रह जाती है।

दसवीं कक्षा वाली छात्राओं का कहना था कि हममें से बहुत सी लड़कियाँ शुरू से ही यहीं पढ़ रही हैं। पहले इस स्कूल में सिर्फ १२ कमरे थे, लड़कियाँ अधिक। इसलिए एक कमरे में दो-दो अनुभाग की छात्राएँ बैठती थीं। समय के साथ-साथ पहली मंज़िल बनी कमरे तो बन गए पर खिड़कियों के पल्ले व दरवाज़े नहीं बने। फिर भी अलग-अलग बैठना संभव न हो पाया क्योंकि 'मेडमों' की कमी थी। अब तो तीसरी मंज़िल भी बन गई है पर 'मेडमें' अभी भी पूरी नहीं हैं, खिड़कियाँ व दरवाज़े भी नहीं लगे हैं, इसलिए

ठुसम ठुसम कर बैठना पड़ता है।"

इससमय विद्यालय में कुल १२६६ लड़कियाँ नामांकित है
२५०-३०० से अधिक लड़कियाँ साइकिल से आती है । सभी
साइकिलें हॉल के नीचे बने 'पार्किंग स्थल' में कतारबद्ध खड़ी थी
और लड़कियों के आत्मनिर्भर होने, सफलता की ऊँची उड़ान भरने
की कहानी कह रही थीं ।

सबसे पहले छठी कक्षा में जाने का मौका मिलता है जो
बरामदा शुरू होते है ही कोने मे है । भरी हुई कक्षा, बैंचों पर
लड़कियाँ सट सट कर बैठी हुई हैं । इतनी सटकर कि एक हिले
तो पूरी पंक्ति हिल जाए ।

सभी कुछ बंगला में हैं परन्तु यह जरूर पता चल गया कि
भूमध्यरेखा, कर्क रेखा शीतोष्ण प्रदेश आदि पर बात चल
रही है । श्यामपट पर मानचित्र सा बनाने के लिए कुछ
रेखाएँ उकेरी गई हैं । श्यामपट के साथ लगी कील से एक
नक्शा टँगा है वह भी हाथ से बना हुआ है । अध्यापिका धारा-
प्रवाह बोले-२ आ रही है । विद्यार्थी एकटक उसी ओर देख
रही हैं । वे कितना समझ पा रही हैं और अध्यापिका की गति
का कितना अनुसरण कर पा रही है यह सब रहस्यमय सा लग
रहा या । अचानक अध्यापिका के प्रवाह में अवरोध आता है,
वह कोई सवाल पूछती है । कुछ हाथ फुरती से उठने की
कोशिश करते हैं । उनकी फुरती के आड़े आता है उनका सट-२
कर बैठना । एक-दूसरे को जैसे धकेलना पड़ा हो हाथ उठाने
के लिए । एक लड़की उठकर आगे आती है, उसे आगे आने के
लिए बहुत मशक्कत करनी पड़ी है । वह नक्शे में आकर
दर्शाती है । अध्यापिका पहले तो उसे रोकती है कि उसे

नक्शे पर कुछ भी दर्शाते समय छड़ी के ज़रिए संकेत करना चाहिए न कि उँगली से । फिर उसे शाबासी भी देती है। अगली बार अध्यापिका जी भी सवाल करती है, उत्तर देने के लिए किनारे बैठी लड़कियों को आमंत्रित करती है जिससे उठकर आने में परेशानी न उठानी पड़े

ऐसी स्थिति में समूह बना कर या कुछ चलने फिरने वाली गतिविधियों पर सवाल खड़े हो जाते है। अध्यापिका का कहना था कि सेवाकालीन प्रशिक्षण में सौर मंडल आदि विषयों को लेकर कई गतिविधियाँ सीखी थी पर स्क का भी उपयोग नहीं कर पाई है । इक बार विद्यार्थियों को हॉल में ले आने का प्रयत्न किया । पूरा सत्र तो उन्हे हॉल तक ले जाने, वहाँ व्यवस्थित करने में लग गया । मुझे लगा कि ऐसी स्थिति में दो सत्र अपने नाम करवा लेने चाहिए समय सारणी में । "

छठी कक्षा के बाद सातवीं कक्षा में जाना हुआ । भाषा की घंटी थी । कोई व्याकरणिक अवधारणा समझाई जा रही थी । प्रधानाध्यापिका ने मुझे हिंदी में बताया कि 'कल' सिखाए जा रहे है । श्यामपट्ट तरह-२ के उदाहरणों से अटा पड़ा था । अध्यापिका उनके अतिरिक्त भी उदाहरण देकर समझा रही थी, विद्यार्थी फुर्ती से वह उदाहरण कॉपी में लिख रहे थे । उदाहरण देने में उनकी प्रतिभागिता कम ही नज़र आ रही थी । उनका समूचा ध्यान अध्यापिका द्वारा बोले गए उदाहरण को नोट करने में था ।

अध्यापिका से संवाद करना चाहा पर उनके हिंदी व मेरे बाँगला ज्ञान के अभाव में संभव न हो पाया । प्रधानाध्यापिका के ज़रिए से बात करनी चाही जो बढ़ न सकी । मैं

उनसे पूछना चाह रही थी कि क्या उन्होंने संदर्भ में व्याकरण पढ़ाने की बात सुनी हैं ? उन्हें सवाल समझ में नहीं आया मैंने पाठ्यपुस्तक माँगी और एक पाठ का हवाला देते हुए पूछा कि आजकल तो पाठ के साथ-साथ व्याकरण पढ़ा देते है।

उन्होंने बताया कि ऐसा तो वे बहुत पहले से करती आ रही है। सभी व्याकरणिक अवधारणाएँ पाठ के हवाले से ही पढ़ाती है फिर पक्का करने के लिए अलग से भी पढ़ाती और लिखाती हैं। उनका कहना था कि कई बच्चे अलग से अधिक अच्छा समझ पाति हैं।

शेष कक्षाओं में बाहर से ही झाँक लिया। अध्यापक का पढ़ाना तो हर कक्षा में चल रहा था, सीखना हो पा रहा था या नहीं इसके बारे में कहना मुश्किल है। हर कक्षा में अध्यापिकाओं के ही स्वर गूँज रहे थे। छात्राएँ ध्यानपूर्वक सुन रही थी। (यह वाक्य आप से तीस साल पहले भी पाठ्ययोजना में लिखे जाते थे और अब भी लिखे जाते है विद्यालय में अब भी 'ध्यानपूर्वक सुनना' विराजमान है।

पुस्तकालय :– तीसरी मंजिल पर पुस्तकालय है बड़ा सा। बहुत ही करीने से सजाया हुआ। यहाँ पर बैठने की भी अच्छी व्यवस्था है। बहुत से नक्शे शिक्षण सामग्री बहुत कुछ अच्छे से दर्शाया गया है। पुस्तकालयाध्यक्ष उस समय कक्ष में नहीं थी। वह कक्षा में गई हुई थी। अध्यापकों की कमी होने से उन्हें भी पढ़ाने का अतिरिक्त काम दिया गया है। वे दिन में पाँच पीरियड लेती हैं। उस दौरान पुस्तकालय का काम

रूक जाता है । यूँ तो समय सारणी में आठों सत्र में भिन्न-२ कक्षाओं के अने का प्रावधान है पर अब पुस्तकालयाध्यक्ष कक्षाओं में अध्यापन के लिए जाती है तो इस काम पर रोक लगा दी जाती है । पुस्तकालय में साहित्य कथा कहानी संबंधी बहुत सी पुस्तकें हैं । छात्राएँ विषय संबंधी पुस्तकें कम पढ़ती है, कहानियों की पुस्तकें अधिक पढ़ती है । कई बार जबरदस्ती छोटे-२ समूह बनाकर जबरदस्ती जीवनियों वाली पुस्तकें दी जाती है । उन्हें बाध्य किया जाता है कि वे इस तरह की पुस्तकें जरूर पढें ।

पुस्तकें इश्यु करने के संदर्भ में बताया गया कि विषय आधारित पुस्तकें कम ही इश्यु करवाई जाती हैं । कहानियों की माँग अधिक रहती हैं । उपन्यासों की भी माँग रहती है पर वे पुस्तकालय में कम हैं । उपन्यास खरीदने के लिए उन्हें 'ऊपर' से अनुमति लेनी होगी और निश्चित रूप से फंड की भी अनुमति लेनी होगी और फंड का प्रबंध भी करना होगा ।

शौंचालय :- बरामदों के दोनों छोर पर एक-एक शौंचालय है । एक स्टाफ के लिए और एक विद्यार्थियों के लिए 1266 विद्यार्थियों की तुलना में यह बहुत कम है प्रधानाचार्या का कहना था कि थोड़ी-२ देर में वे यहाँ स्वयं आकर सफाई करवाती हैं । हॉल के पास वाली जगह पर शौंचालय की नींव तो रख दी गई हैं, फंड अने पर बनाया जाएगा तो नीचे वाले अनुभागों को बहुत सुविधा हो जाएगी । सफाई के लिए तेजाब, फिनायल आदि की वे कमी नहीं होने देती । सैनिटरी नैपकिन आदि डालने के लिए ढक्कनदार कूड़ादान रखे हुए थे ।

विद्यालय में संगीत कक्षा,विज्ञान कक्ष, चिकित्सा कक्ष सभी थे, सभी में उपकरण इत्यादि पर्याप्त मात्रा में नहीं थे पर यह लगता था कि जितने भी है उनका भरपूर इस्तेमाल हो रहा है। तानपुरा, वीणा व सितार के लिए बहुत मांग रहती है पर तीनों ही एक-एक है। इसलिए विद्यार्थी तो केवल छू भर सकती हैं।

प्रधानाचार्या के अनुसार समीपस्थ बस्तियों में ज़ोरदार तरीके से 'प्रवेश रैली' निकालती है। उनके अनुसार बस्ती की कोई भी लड़की घर पर नहीं है। 1266 में से कोई भी लड़की विशेष आवश्यकता वाली श्रेणी में नहीं आती। (यदि होती तो उसके लिए विद्यालय में किसी भी तरह की सुविधा नहीं थी क्योंकि विद्यालय के कक्षा-कक्षों तक पहुँचने के लिए चढ़ना- उतरना बारम्बार होता है। बैठने के लिए भी लंबी-2 बैंचे हैं। एक बैंच पर सात या आठ लड़कियाँ इक्कठ्ठा बैठती हैं।)

सभी अध्यापिकाएँ प्रशिक्षित है और सेवाकालीन प्रशिक्षण कार्यक्रमों में भी जा चुकी है।

विद्यालय में खेलने का मैदान नहीं है। कुछ लड़कियों की इच्छा थी कि वे फुटबाल खेले पर इस तरह के खेल के लिए स्थान तो है ही नहीं। मध्यअवकाश में लड़कियाँ रस्सी कूद, खो-खो जैसे खेल खेलने की जगह बना ही लेती है। आस-पास ऐसी खाली जगह भी नहीं जहाँ इन्हें खेलने के लिए ले जाया जा सके। थोड़ी बहुत जगह है भी तो वहाँ साइकिलें खड़ी की जाती है।   7)

क्योंकि शुरुआती पृष्ठों पर चित्र थे फिर अक्षर शुरू हो जाते, बीच में गणित आ जाती फिर कुछ वाक्य व अक्षर । पुस्तक में अभ्यास के लिए पर्याप्त स्थान था ।

▲ शेष कक्षाएँ — दूसरी, तीसरी, चौथी कक्षा में अवलोकन कम समय तक किया पर जितना भी समय बिताया उससे यह तो साफ़-साफ़ पता चल रहा था कि अध्यापक गतिविधि आधारित शिक्षण करवाना जानते हैं । एक कक्षा में ग्लोब के इर्द-गिर्द घेरा बनाकर बच्चे खड़े थे और अध्यापक से सवाल-जवाब हो रहे हैं, ऐसे भी बच्चे थे जो ग्लोब का चित्र श्यामपट्ट पर बना रहे थे ।

एक कक्षा में रचनात्मक लेखन चल रहा था । बच्चे सभी लिखने में मशगूल थे । कुल 35 बच्चे थे, सभी लिख पा रहे थे । आम तौर पर देखा यह गया है कि बच्चे (कुछ) लिखने का कौशल हासिल नहीं कर पाते पर यह आश्चर्य (?) ही था कि सभी बच्चे लिख पा रहे थे ।

बच्चों की कापियां भी देखी । सिलसिलेवार बहुत सा काम करवाया गया था, बाकायदा जाँचा भी गया था । अध्यापक का कहना था कि बच्चे 'भाषा की घंटी' में बहुत रूचि लेते हैं । इस समय उसका प्रयास व संपूर्ण ध्यान बच्चों के पठन व लेखन कौशल को सुदृढ़ बनाने पर है, एक बार यह पक्का हो जाए तो फिर गणित व अन्य विषयों पर आना होगा । अध्यापकों का कहना था कि आजकल बच्चे कम रहे हैं तो गतिविधि शिक्षण करवाना आसान है वरना जब बच्चों की संख्या पूरी होती है तो उन्हें गतिविधि के बारे में

समझाना ही अपने-आप में मुश्किल काम हो जाता है, पर वे यत्न अवश्य करते हैं।

* मध्यान्ह भोजन — 'स्वयं सहायता समूह' द्वारा संचालित है। सफाई पर विशेष ध्यान है। ब्लॉक द्वारा पूरे सप्ताह का ब्यौरा (कब क्या बनाना है) पहले ही मिल जाता है। बड़ी-२ कढ़ाहियों में तेज़ आँच पर खाना पक रहा था, पकाने वालों की ओर से किसी भी तरह की कोताही नहीं बरती जा रही थी पर सवाल यह है कि क्या पौष्टिक तत्व बच पाते होंगे? क्या प्रशासन 'प्रेशर कुकर' जैसे उपकरणों की खरीद के बारे में सोच सकता है?

सभी बच्चे कतारबद्ध होकर हाथ धोते हैं और अपने-२ नियत स्थान पर बैठते जाते हैं, अध्यापक व बाल कैबिनेट के खाद्य मंत्री की निगरानी में खाना परोसा जाता है। सभी बच्चे खाना खाते हैं। यह बहुत अच्छा लगा कि बच्चे मिड डे मील के बाद घर नहीं भागते। जो आम तौर पर भारत की राजधानी के विद्यालयों का एक सामान्य सा दृश्य है।

* नामांकन, सामाजिक-सांस्कृतिक विभेदीकरण — जनसंख्या के सघन घनत्व वाली बस्ती का प्राथमिक विद्यालय था यह पर उस अनुपात में नामांकन बहुत कम था। विद्यालय निरीक्षक का कहना था कि आस पास और भी विद्यालय है इससे बच्चे बँट जाते है। लड़कों की अपेक्षा लड़कियों का नामांकन अधिक था। विद्यालय में चुनौतीपूर्ण / विशेष आवश्यकता वाली कोई बालक न थी। क्या बस्ती में भी नहीं है? लड़कियों की संख्या कितनी होगी लड़कों की तुलना में, इस बारे में सभी की अनभिज्ञता थी।

पुस्तकालय व अतिरिक्त पठन सामग्री

विद्यालय के पास इतने कक्ष नहीं थे कि अलग से पुस्तकालय का प्रावधान किया जाए पर यह ज़रूर था कि पुस्तकों की एक बहुत सीमित सी संख्या जुटाई गई थी और नियमपूर्वक वे पुस्तकें (बंगला में) बच्चों को पढ़ने के लिए दी जाती थी । अधिकतर पुस्तकें महान पुरूषों - स्त्रियों की जीवनी पर आधारित थी, भौतिक शिक्षा, वीर बालक जैसी कहानियॉं थी । अध्यापक अपने प्रयासों से कुछ पठन सामग्री विकसित करने की परम्परा का खुशी से निर्वाह कर रहे थे । हॉंलाकि नीति संबंधी विषयवस्तु यहॉं भी हावी थी ।

उन्हें सुझाया गया कि कुछ मज़ेदार कहानियों का भी संग्रह करें । आवश्यकतानुसार अनुवाद भी कर / करवा सकते हैं ।

प्रमुख अध्यापिका (इंचार्ज) ने बताया कि अभी हाल ही में उन्होंने राष्ट्रीय पुस्तक दिवस, निर्मल विद्यालय अभियान मनाया है । यह भी बताया कि १० - १२ प्राथमिक विद्यालयों की एक 'लिंक लाइब्रेरी' है, उसमें लगभग ३०० पुस्तकें हैं कहानियों की ज़िला स्तर पर एक कमेटी है जो पुस्तकों का चयन करती है । क्या पुस्तकें बच्चों को 'इश्यु' भी की जाती है, इस प्रश्न का संतोषप्रनक उत्तर नहीं मिल पाया ।