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Executive Summary

1. Introduction

The Government of West Bengal through an official order (No. 423-ES/O/P&B/10M-26/10) engaged the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta (IIMC) to conduct a study on 'Restructuring of School Education System in West Bengal' in August 2010. The study encompassed pre-school to high school education. The study focussed on three aspects of school education: (a) The implications of the Right to Education Act (RTE) vis-à-vis Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) /Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA); (b) The administrative set up and governance structure of school education; and (c) The delivery mechanism and in-class transactions in schools.

2. Methodology and Sample

We have opted for separate sample designs for conducting surveys in rural and urban areas of West Bengal. A stratified circular systematic sampling design is used for rural areas and stratified simple random samplingis used for urban areas without replacement. West Bengal consists of 20 districts (including the DGHC) of which the district of Kolkata is exclusively urban. For the rural sample the state has been divided into four regions, and two districts were chosen from each region. Within a district six villages have been selected through systematic circular sampling methods, in two interpenetrating subsamples of three each. The sample consists of 335 schools across West Bengal, 3437 households, 96 Sishu Shiksha Kendras (SSK), 8 Madhyamik Shiksha Kendras (MSK) and 126 Anganwadi Centres. In addition the survey covers a cross section of functionaries involved in school education at the state/district/circle level. We have also visited four states– Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Kerala to understand how these states have implemented the SSA/RTE norms.

3. Right to Education Act vis-à-vis SSA/RMSA

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is an effort to universalise elementary education by community ownership of the school system. The main objective of SSA is to provide useful and relevant elementary education and ensure retention for all children in the age group of 6-14 years by 2010. Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) is an extension of SSA that promises universal access to secondary level education to all children of 15-16 years by 2017 and universal retention by 2020. While SSA and RMSA offer an operational framework for universalizing education, its provisions were used as general guidelines by each state to interpret and implement the schemes. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE) makes the implementation of compulsory education legally binding on all states/ union territories. SSA had been launched in 2001-02 and since then various states havestarted implementing the mission of SSA by setting up necessary infrastructure and providing operational guidelines. When the RTE was enacted in 2009 the various states faced numerous challenges in realigning the existing rules and guidelines under SSA with the requirements of the RTE act.

A comparative analysis of the various provisions of SSA and RTE throws up the following challenges before the State:

(a) The first step towards the implementation of RTE in a state is the notification of State RTE Rules in the official state gazette. Such State RTE Rules may be framed in the lines of Central RTE Rules which have already been notified. The State RTE Rules must also cover provisions for pre-primary schools/Anganwadis.

(b) Every unaided school imparting elementary education is to be registered with the appropriate authority (e.g. District Inspector's Office) within a given timeframe.

(c) Unaided schools are required to reserve 25% of the seats for children belonging to weaker sections of society and disadvantaged groups in the neighbourhood.

(d) The State RTE Rules should specify the limits of neighbourhood unambiguously for primary and upper

primary schools.

(e) Pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) is to be aligned to meet the guidelines of RTE. The SSA framework mentions that there should be at least two teachers in every primary school irrespective of student enrolment, but the RTE rules link the number of teachers to the student enrolment.

(f) Every primary school must have provisions for a library, games equipment, and playing material for children. Neighbourhood school norms would require revaluationof the present system of SSKs at locations currently not covered by them.

(g) The RTE Act mandates that eventually elementary education must be provided by formal and recognised schools. All existing Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) centres (Sishu Siksha Kendra(SSK) and Madhyamik Siksha Kendra(MSK) in West Bengal) should be converted to regular schools or closed down when children are transferred into mainstream neighbourhood schools.

(h) The primary responsibility of monitoring the quality of education in a school rests with the School Management Committee (SMC). All other school committees (e.g. PTA, MTA) are to be dissolved.

(i) No teacher without the minimum qualifications as per NCTE notification can be appointed to a school after August 2010.

(j) RTE (section 26) requires that the vacant posts of teachers in a government school or government aided school should not exceed 10% of the total sanctioned strength. Thus the State needs to arrive at the sanctioned strength based on enrolment and fill up vacant positions to ensure that the vacant positions do not exceed the prescribed threshold.

(g) RTE maintains that school teachers should not engage in non-academic activities, especially private tuition. They may however participate in census, election and disaster relief operations.

4. Problems Highlighted

The project directors and their associates met a cross section of the functionaries involved in primary education at the district/ circle level like District Inspectors (DI), Assistant Inspectors of School (AIS), School Inspectors (SI), head teachers and Sikshabandhus. Major problems reported by them are mentioned below:

(a) Teacher Accountability:

- *Teachers do not regularly spend the allotted five hours on the school premises on every working day.*
- *They often do not take classes as per schedule.*
- *Unit tests are not always conducted as per the annual calendar.*
- *Class schedules compulsorily include a games period every week yet it is not implemented in the majority of schools.*
- *Sometimes teachers take leave for long durations without a leave petition.*
- *A lot of teachers come to teach from areas located far from the school and hence are in a hurry to leave the school as early as possible.*

(b) Teachers' Appointment and Transfer:

- *There are many schools with one or two teachers where the student enrollment demands the appointment of more teachers.*
- *The concept of sanctioned posts per school does not exist for the primary schools. The present practice of transferring teachers do not follow the current ruleand should to be curbed.*
- *Another instance of irregularity is the service/drafting transfer (which is a temporary arrangement). Such temporary arrangement is renewed year-after-year to bypass the existing rules and thereby making it*

quasi-permanent.

(c) *Teaching and Training: Classroom teaching gets hampered due to:*

- *Teachers involvement in census during working hours.*
- *Involvement of the teachers for preparing the payroll and other paperwork to help the district office which often faces a staff crunch.*
- *The present practice of compulsory 20 days/year training for every teacher adds to the staff crunch.*
- *Teachers training programmes are not well planned (e.g. same subject / topic is repeated in successive training programmes for many years. There are several agencies providing training leading to a lack of cohesive training.*
- *Many teachers do not attempt to implement the new pedagogy learnt during training for class room teaching as they feel that training is not always effective or relevant.*

(d) *School Inspection: Major functions of the SISs(Sub Inspector of Schools?) are supposed to include inspection of schools, monitoring of classroom teaching and evaluating teaching effectiveness. Each SIS has more than 80 schools to supervise, and SI positions remain vacant for long time. In Murshidabad there are 100 schools per circle. Out of the 41 circles in Murshidabad, 19 SIS posts are vacant. The SIS officesare equally understaffed. In Murshidabad 14 group C and 12 Group D positions are vacant. SISs spend a lot of their time in attending various meetings often at short notice (e.g. on health awareness programmes, disaster management etc.) These meetings are not organized during the school vacations but throughout the year. This creates lot of problems in discharging everyday responsibilities for the SISs. SISs need to fill up a variety of evaluation forms many of which are cumbersome. SISs are also responsible for the maintenance of service books of primary school teachers and the disbursal of their salary and pension. A considerable amount of timeis spentfor managing the paperwork for such and related queries. As a result SISs fail to discharge their primary duties – the inspection of schools. There are instances where an SIS fails to visit most of the schools even once a year. Also the SISs /AISs (Assistant Inspector of Schools?) do not have any power to take disciplinary actions against errant teachers. SISs are also not given feedback on the action taken against their written complaints, thus hampering their work. As a result the authority of the SISs is under question and the education delivery system in the schools suffer immensely.*

(e) *Mid-day Meal Administration: There has been a general consensus that the mid-day meal scheme has achieved, to a very large extent, two major objectives:*

- *Improved attendance in the schools*
- *Removal of the caste/religion barrier amongst students and the community.*

The Block Development Officer (BDO) is the executive head of mid-day meal scheme in a CD? Block. However, SISs are required to monitor the implementation of the scheme. There is, however a lack of coordination between office of the BDO and SISs. SISs are not invited to any meeting concerning the mid-day meal scheme which may be convenedby the BDO though it is the duty of the SIS to file an FIR about the relevant agencies if any irregularity is observed. Many head teachers of schools complained that mid-day meal money/materials are not received regularly by their schools even after the submission of regulations. The quality of rice supplied is reported to vary between urban and rural schools greatly. Another problem faced by the teachers is that they are unable to retain students in the school after the mid-day meal is served.

(f) *Para-teachers and Sikshabandhus: While the role and importance of para teachers is well accepted, the duties and responsibilities of Sikshabandhus are not specified clearly. Many sikshabandhus are not clear about their responsibilities. Many SISs feel that the Sikshabandhus' job is mainly to liaise between school and CLRC/DI? office. However the Sikshabandhus believe that they can contribute more effectively by engaging in improving the learning environment in the school. Sikshabandhus claim that the introduction of this cadre has helped to improve teachers' attendance in the school due to their ability to exert moral and social pressure on the teachers to perform optimally. Since the Sikshabandhus are drawn from the immediate locality, they understand local issues and can hence help to solve problems involving the local community. However Sikshabandhus face many infrastructural bottlenecks. They have no separate room/ place to sit in at the CLRC/CRC office. Wherever they do get to sit, they do not have adequate furniture like tables and almirahs to carry out official work. No formal training is imparted when a Sikshabandhu joins duty except for filing of DISE data. Sometimes Sikshabandhus are asked to perform functions of group D staff. While it is expected that Sikshabandhus and SISs should pay regular visits to schools, they are not given any transport facilities or allowance.*

(g) *DPSC and DPO: In most of the districts theposition of the DPO (District Project Officer) is held by part-time employees and their offices are usually not co-located in the DPSC office. This results in poor coordination between DPSC and DPO.*

(h) *School Management Committees:The Managing Committees do not spend sufficient time on academic issues instead choosing to spend most of the time on matters concerning physical infrastructure. VEC-level monitoring has been a failure. There are instances where a parent-teacher meeting/ Academic Council meeting is not conducted even once a year. However, MTA meetings are more effective and it is observed that where MTAs are active, the teaching quality in that school improves.*

(i) *Governance and Legal Matters: The head-teacher or head-master in a school is often not aware of the latest government notifications or orders as they do not reach the school. The district offices are usually heavily burdened with dealing with court cases. The officers in the district office are often not competent in handling legal problems.*

(j) *Private Tuition: This trend is more evident in urban areas. Availability of private tutors is low in rural areas. It has been reported that poor teaching in the school is not the main reason for sending one's ward for private tuition. Parents send their children for private tuitions for better results and academic guidance. It is empirically found that the tendency to send children for private tuition has low correlation with the quality of teaching in the school. The reasons for private tuition, particularly at the primary/upper primary levels, are not related to quality of education imparted in the schools, but remain in the broader socio-economic domain.*

5. Summary of Recommendations

5.1 Access to Elementary Education: Need for Additional Schools (Ref: Chapter 6; para 6.1)

(a) *The requirements of additional schools:*
New primary schools required: 1557
New upper primary schools required (including upgradations): 14934

(b) *The RTE Act mandates the formalization of Shishu Siksha Kendras (SSKs) and Madhyamik Siksha Kendras (MSKs). It is suggested that all MSKs (1911 in number) be upgraded to upper primary and*

secondary schools. Only those SSKs having a minimum number of 40 students may be converted to a formal primary school with the necessary infrastructure. The remaining SSKs may either be closed or used as pre-school (Anganwadi) centres.

(c) *The need for opening new primary schools would reduce in the future. Presently 51016 government primary schools cater to a population (age group 5-9 years) of 72.86 lakhs – which gives a ratio of 143 children per school. If this average ratio is maintained in future there would not be any need for setting up additional primary schools in the state for the next 15 years.*

(d) *The existing SSA norm mandates availability of primary schools within 1 km of every habitation. In the absence of a notification defining neighbourhood schools, if one goes by the SSA mandate, it is observed that there are 16 districts in West Bengal wherein there are places which do not have any primary school/SSK within 1 km of habitation (Table 6.3). The Central RTE rules also states that the area or limits of a neighbourhood for setting up a primary school (class I-V) shall be within walking distance of 1 km of the neighbourhood. The estimate shows that there is a need to setup 1557 new primary schools in designated areas to bridge this gap and thereby ensure adequate access.*

(e) *Using SSA criterion, there is a need for setting up additional 14934 upper primary schools in the state. However a separate survey (Table 6.4) shows that the number is 14165 using a neighbourhood definition of 2 km. The revised SSA norm provides that new upper primary schools/ sections would be opened in the campuses of existing primary schools so they become integrated elementary schools from class I-VIII. This way of addressing the gap in upper primary schools would also hopefully reduce the students' dropout rate. Hence it is necessary to identify primary schools which can be upgraded to upper primary schools to take care of the issue of access to primary education. Such an exercise would however be contingent on sufficient land being available with the primary schools for the upgradation.*

5.2 Social Access (Ref: Chapter 5; para 5.6 and Chapter 6; para 6.1.1)

(I) The SSA Framework for Implementation states that school mapping would include the following steps:

(a) *Environment building in the village.*
(b) *Conduct of a household survey.*
(c) *Preparation of a map indicating different households, the number of children in each household and their participation status in the school.*
(d) *Preparation of a village/school education register; such register should contain record of all children from their birth till they attain 14 years.*
(e) *Presentation of the map and its analysis to the people.*
(f) *Preparation of a proposal for improved educational facilities in the village; which would form the basis of the School Development Plan mandated under the RTE Act.*

(II) Children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups should not be segregated from the other children in the classrooms nor should their classes be held at places and timings different from the classes held for other children.

(III) In West Bengal, the Village Education Register needs to be created/maintained which should include information on out-of-school children as well. This would have to be updated on an annual basis.

(IV) While tracking children in rural areas require special attention, urban areas have special challenges in tracking street/ homeless children, children working in urban households/tea shops, etc. Local municipal

authorities and NGOs have helped many states identify these children and ensured their enrolment in schools.

(V) In order to ensure that children from weaker sections and disadvantaged groups are brought to the school and are not denied admission even in unaided private schools, the village schedule must be regularly maintained and updated as mentioned in Para 5.6 of Chapter 5. All unaided schools must be brought under the supervision of the Directorate of School Education through a due processof recognition.

5.3 Recognition and Tracking of Unaided Schools (Ref: Chapter 5; paras 5.3 and 5.5)

(I) If an existing unaided school fails to obtain the recognition certificate within the given timeframe, the school would be asked to close down. Similarly, no new unaided school can be opened in the state unless recognised. Such recognition of unaided schools needs to be reviewed periodically (e.g. after every three/five years). The recognition certificate would be subject to the following conditions:

(a) The school shall give admission to a minimum of 25% of the children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups in the neighbourhood in class I. In the case of aided schools, they are required to provide free and compulsory elementary education to such proportion of children admitted therein as its annual recurring aid or grants received bears to its annual recurring expenses, subject to a minimum of 25%.

(b) The school shall notify the fees to be charged from the children every year before the commencement of the academic session.

(c) The school shall have to maintain norms and standards as specified in the RTE Act.

(d) The school is open to inspection by any officer authorised by the State Government / local authority and the school shall furnish such reports and information as may be required by the State Government.

(II) In order to ensure that unaided schools (and also partially aided schools) meet the norms and standards of the RTE Act (and Rules), the following information may be maintained for every unaided (also partially aided) school:

(a) Name of the cluster/block

(b) Name of the school

(c) Name of the neighbourhood village/town as per definition

(d) Total number of children in the neighbourhood belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups (this information would be available in the village education register or similar register)

(e) Target enrolment of children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups in the school in Class I

(f) Actual enrolment

(g) Name of the official-in-charge

5.4 Neighbourhood Limits(Ref: Chapter 5; para 5.4)

It may so happen that the prescribed neighbourhood limits may not have enough number of children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups to fill up the 25% reserved seats in unaided schools. In such a situation, extended limits of neighbourhood may be prescribed for filling up the required percentage of seats.

5.5 Mainstreaming Informal Schools (Ref: Chapter 5; para 5.8)

(I) The RTE Act mandates that eventually elementary education must be provided by formal and recognised schools.All existing EGS centres like the (Sishu Siksha Kendra(SSK) and Madhyamaik

Siksha Kendra(MSK) in West Bengal) would be required to be converted into regular schools or closed down when children are mainstreamed into neighbourhood schools. The process of upgradation of such centres (kendras) to regular schools must be completed within two years from the date of the commencement of the RTE Act. Accordingly, no new EGS centres may be opened after 2010-11.

(II) The SSA would provide necessary financial support to such schools for the period of two years. If it is economically unsound to upgrade any of such schools into a formal school, the centre must be closed. The SSA would not provide any financial support after the mandated period of two years.

5.6 Student Enrolment, Retention and Teacher Requirements(Ref: Chapter 5; para 5.7; Chapter 6; para 6.3)

(I) Thus, as per the RTE, it would be perfectly within law if a primary school, with sixty students, has two teachers (including a head teacher) and two class rooms, even if the school runs all the classes.

(II) Special efforts need to be made to enrol out of school children in age appropriate classes. The RTE requires designing special training programmes (e.g. bridge courses) for such children.

(III) The GER amongst primary schools is the highest in Uttar Dinajpur (146.82) and the lowest in Kolkata (113.99). In case of NER, Nadia shows the highest figure (99.95) and Uttar Dinajpur shows the lowest figure (93.92).Table 6.18 also highlights that the ratios are significantly poor at the upper primary level. This reinforces our observation on lack of access to upper primary schools. There is an urgent need to set up a large number of upper primary schools in the state.

(IV) We recommend the following:

(a) There is an urgent need to restructure the primary and upper-primary classes. Like in many other states and as prescribed in the RTE, primary school should comprise of class I-V. Upper-primary level should comprise of class VI-VIII. This restructuring will help in two ways: better retention ratio and rationalization of teacher/infrastructure requirements. However, there will be a need to construct additional class rooms in stand-alone primary schools.

(b) Primary and upper primary schools should not charge any fee, irrespective of category. Expenses for any festivals should be met out of voluntary contributions / contingency funds.

(c) As schools do not provide notebooks, textbooks and associated stationary, textbooks in the primary and upper primary schools should be designed in a manner to minimize the use of separate answer books/ notebooks. Additional (blank) pages should be provided in the text book/ exercise book for the students to answer in.

(d) Mid-day meal should be compulsorily served on all working days (including Saturdays). Mothersof children who volunteer may be involved in the cooking/ management of mid-day meals.

(e) SMC, VEC and the local authority (e.g. Gram panchayat) should develop programmes to track children in respective areas to ensure 100% enrolment and retention. The village education register has to be comprehensively maintained to this effect.

5.7 *SchoolManagement and Monitoring (Ref: Chapter 5; para 5.9, Chapter 6, para 6.7)*

(I) The RTE Act mandates, under section 21, that every school (other than an unaided school) must set up a SMC within six months of publication of the RTE rules by the state. Such a SMC would be required to be reconstituted every two years. The State RTE Rules should specify the size of the SMC. Three-fourths of the members of the SMC are required to be from amongst parents or guardians of the enrolled children. Rule 13(3) of the Central RTE Rules states that the remaining one-fourth of the SMC members shall be chosen from amongst the following persons:

(a) One-third of the members from amongst the elected members of the local authority, to be decided by the local authority.

(b) One-third of the members from amongst teachers of the school, to be decided by the teachers of the school.

(c) The remaining one-third from amongst local educators/children of the school, to be decided by the parents of the SMC.

(II) The SMC is required to elect a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson from amongst the members of the Committee. The head teacher or the senior most teachers may be the ex-officio secretary of the SMC. The SMC is required to meet at least once a month. The SMC is required to ensure implementation of clauses (a) and (e) of section 24 and section 28 of the RTE Act, ensure enrolment and continued attendance of children, monitor implementation of the mid-day meal in the school, and monitor regularity and punctuality of the teachers of the school. The SMC would have to prepare a three-year school development plan. The school development plan would contain estimates of class-wise enrolment for each year, additional teacher/infrastructural requirements and hence additional financial requirements. School grants under SSA would be made available to the SMC based on the school development plan. Any money received by the SMC would have to be credited in the account of the Committee. The account should be a joint account of the Chairperson and the member secretary of the Committee.

(III) The next tier of school monitoring is prescribed at the block and cluster level. The RTE Act prescribes that every Assistant Education Officer (or an officer with similar designation) should undertake at least two visits to every school each year. Additionally, staff members at the BRC (Block Resource Centre) and CRC (Cluster Resource Centre) should visit each school at least once in every two months or every month if the circumstances so demand.

(IV) The officials at the district level may also occasionally undertake independent field visits to monitor school performance.

(V) The State Executive Committee of the SSA should monitor, through periodic meetings, the performance of all schools providing elementary education in the state.

(VI) A set of quality monitoring tools (QMT) have been developed in collaboration with the NCERT to provide information on quality of education at schools. Such quality related indices cover issues relating to student enrolment and attendance, pupil achievement, teacher availability and teacher training, classroom practices, academic supervision of schools by BRC/CRC etc.

(VII) *The RTE Act prescribes that there should be only one management committee of the school, the SMC. The SMC would have specific roles and responsibilities as defined in the State RTE Rules.*

(VIII) *It is thus recommended that MTA, SDC, and PTA (Parent Teacher Association) be merged with the SMC*

(IX) *It can also be seen from Table 6.35 that at present only MTA has been active. Hence it is recommended that mothers should have significant presence in the re-constructed SMC.*

(X) *The School Management Committee should be responsible to ensure that classes are regularly held and all SSA and state government schemes are properly implemented. In addition to school headmaster, representative of SMCs would interact with the AEOs at cluster level whenever necessary.*

(XI) *All funds under SSA would be routed through SMC. A separate bank account is to be opened with two members of SMC as signatories.*

(XII) *The SMC would also prepare the School Development Plan (SDP) and such plan should be entered in the MIS at the cluster level in Cluster Education Centre (CEC). The SDPs so collected will be collated at the block level and forwarded to the district project office for necessary action. The entire exercise has to be completed before the beginning of the financial year for which it is meant.*

(XIII) *Once the SMC is adequately strengthened, the VEC will be responsible in ensuring: (a) That all schools under its jurisdiction are appropriately managed; (b) that all common concerns (e.g., infrastructure-related, training-related) affecting schools are addressed; (c) that all complaints by the teachers are addressed and acted upon; (d) that mid-day meal and other welfare schemes are properly implemented; and (e) that enrolment and retention ratios in schools under its jurisdiction are maintained at 100%. VEC should generally meet once in every three months. However, an emergency meeting may be convened by the Chairperson of VEC anytime with a notice of 10 days time.*

5.8 *Teachers Qualification and Training(Ref: Chapter 5; para 5.10;Chapter 6; para 6.4)*

(I) *Teachers are required to satisfy three criteria for being eligible for recruitment in schools imparting elementary education:*

- *(a) Secondary/ senior secondary/bachelor degree; and*
- *(b) 2-year Diploma in Elementary Education/4-year Bachelor of Elementary Education/ 1-year Bachelor of Education; and*
- *(c) Pass in the Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) to be conducted by the state government in accordance with the guidelines framed by the NCTE.*

(II) *The minimum qualification criteria as per the NCTE would not be applicable for;*

- *(a) Teachers appointed before September 3, 2001 (the date on which the NCTE (Determination of Minimum Qualifications for Recruitment of Teachers in Schools) Regulations 2001 came into force);*
- *(b) A teacher appointed in class I to V after September 3, 2001 provided he/she possesses a B.Ed (Special Education)/D.Ed (Special Education) qualification and is willing to undergo an NCTE recognised 6-month special programme on elementary education;*
- *(c) A teacher of class I to V with B.Ed qualification who has completed a 6-month Special Basic Teacher Course (Special BTC) approved by the NCTE.*

(III) *No teacher can be appointed after August 2010 who does not possess the minimum qualifications as per NCTE notification.*

(IV) *In-service teachers' training is essential to continuously improve the quality of teaching.*

(V) *The state-level training institutions (DIETs) should be primarily responsible for providing pre-service and in-service training.*

(VI) *Resources at BRCs/URCs and CLRCs are effectively used to provide training and on-site support to schools and teachers.*

(VII) *Data collected from SSA office (Table 6.26) shows that there are 1327 primary schools in the state which are single teacher schools. The RTE rules prescribe a minimum teacher strength of 2 per school. The serious problem of teacher shortage can be solved through the following measures:*

- *(i) The concept of a certain number of sanctioned posts per school should be introduced.*
- *(ii) Shortfall of teachers in a school should be met initially by transferring appropriate teachers from schools having surplus teachers in the same district.*
- *(iii) Fresh appointment should be made only to fill up the vacant positions.*
- *(iv) As a policy the transfer of teachers from other districts should be avoided.*

(VIII) *We have been informed that at present there are about 75000 'untrained' teachers in primary and upper primary schools in West Bengal. All these teachers need to acquire D.Ed/ B.Ed qualifications within 31st March 2015. There are currently 80 PTTIs (Primary Teacher Training Institutes) in West Bengal which can enroll only 50 candidates for a D.Ed course per year. Following the normal process only 20000 teachers can be trained in next five years. The other teachers can be trained in the following ways:*

(a) The Education Department may write to NCTE/ other appropriate authorities and get an approval to offer D.Ed courses through distance learning mode from the 80 DIETs (i.e. PTTIs). Madhya Pradesh has done likewise and gotten similar approval. If the Department can enroll an additional 200 teachers per PTTI for the D.Ed course per year, one can easily train another 60000 teachers in the next four or five years. As Madhya Pradesh has already gotten such an approval, we hope that there will be no problem in getting a similar approval.

(b) The Department may write to IGNOU for offering similar correspondence courses. The classes may be held in different IGNOU centres.

For in-service training, the following model is recommended:

(a) Training should be held in such a way that classes are not affected.

(b) SSA mandates 20 days training per teacher every year. This can be divided into two modules: 10 days of a refresher course for each teacher during the summer vacation (it may be called vacation training). Such training should be held at PTTIs/DIET. Necessary arrangements for accommodation and other facilities should be made.

(c) The training for the remaining 10 days should be held at BEC (Block Education Centre)/UEC (Urban Education Centre)/CLEC (Cluster Education Centre) on one Saturday of every month.

(d) An envisioning workshop may be held for three days in the first week of April every year to finalize the training calendar. This workshop will be organised by WBCERT at its state headquarters. Members (may be called State Resource Group) attending the workshop may be drawn from the West Bengal Council of Educational Research and Training (WBCERT), eminent faculty of PTTIs/DIET, one eminent teacher (to be nominated by the district administration) from every district. The workshop will finalize the annual training calendar as

well as the curriculum. We believe the participative method of curriculum development would have a greater impact.

(f) The PTTI faculty would provide vacation training to all school teachers under their jurisdiction.

(g) The BEC/UEC /CLEC trainers would conduct the Saturday training sessions at block/cluster level.

(h) The BEC/UEC /CLEC trainers would also regularly visit schools to help teachers improve their classroom teaching.

5.9 *Accountability of Teachers (Ref: Chapter 6; para 6.5)*

(I) The Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) as per RTE norm is 30. Although the average PTR based on our survey was 30, there is a significant difference between Kolkata and other areas (see Table 6.29). This difference has to be kept in mind while formulating the recruitment and transfer policy of teachers.

(II) We recommend that the district school administration be empowered to take disciplinary action (excluding dismissal from service) against teachers. The aggrieved teachers should also be given the opportunity to appeal to the concerned VEC against the action. VEC can conduct periodic grievance redressal meeting with the district/block administration, as the case may be, to sort out the matters. Disciplinary action amounting to dismissal from service can only be taken by the State administration on the recommendation of the VEC.

5.10 *Quality of Education and Teachers' Incentive (Ref: Chapter 6; para 6.6)*

(I) In order to improve the quality of teaching in schools, the role of WBCERT assumes prime importance. WBCERT should be the nodal centre for curriculum development, innovation in pedagogy, development of reading materials in the form of text books and CDs, and designing training programmes for the teachers. SSA funds available under innovation and computerisation should be utilized to develop effective e-learning modules.

(II) We recommend the following to improve the teaching quality in primary and upper primary schools:

Primary Schools:

(a) Schools may be encouraged to follow activity based learning methods. Classrooms in primary schools should be specially designed for this purpose. WBCERT should be entrusted with the responsibility of preparing appropriate materials for Activity Based Learning (ABL). We have observed that ABL has two merits – (i) each student can learn at his/her own pace; and (ii) it ensures greater participation of the children in the class.

(b) While children should not be burdened with excessive homework, it cannot be denied that a child's understanding and comfort with quantitative subjects like mathematics can only improve through practice. Hence a significant part of the classroom time should be devoted to solving problems in mathematics.

(c) Language subjects should give more emphasis to oral and written skills. Every child, by turn, should be asked to read a portion of the text loudly and the teacher should give particular attention to the pronunciation and spelling.

Upper Primary Schools:

(a) *The use of electronic study materials and lecture sessions should be vigorously pursued in all upper primary schools. As the quality of students vary from one school to another, the quality of teachers also vary. We recommend the use of the 'Flip Method' in teaching science and mathematic in upper primary schools. The 'Flip Method' proposes flipping or reversing the traditional teaching model of learning inside the classroom and practicing learning outside the classroom. In the 'Flip Method', most of the subject learning happens outside the classroom and the classroom time is used for practicing problems and undertaking interesting experiments. It is proposed that as a pilot case 500 upper primary schools are initially selected to impart education through the 'Flip Method' on two subjects: mathematics and science. The 'Flip Method' can be implemented as below:*

i. *WBCERT identifies 10 best subject teachers (for mathematics and science) for each class (Class-VI to Class-VIII). DIET can help WBCERT in identifying those teachers. The selected teachers should have good communication skills. The syllabus of a subject will be divided into appropriate modules and a specified number of lectures will be identified for each module. The selected teachers will be asked to prepare lecture notes for each session of a subject. The lecture note will be vetted and approved by a committee of experts setup for this purpose. The teachers, who have prepared these lecture notes, will then be asked to record these sessionsonto a VCD.*

ii. *The subject VCD so developed will have these lecture sessions by the best of teachers and sufficient copies of the VCDs will be sent to all upper primary schools.*

iii. *The computer room in each upper primary school should have a sufficient number of computers so that there is one computer for every 5 students in a class. For example if the average class size of an upper primary class is 40, there should be at least 8 computers in the school. Each computer should have a speaker to listen to the audio of the lecture session.*

iv. *Each subject should have an adequate number of lectures and practice sessions. Each practice session will be preceded by one or more lecture sessions. Every student will be asked to go through the recorded lecture sessions as per their class schedule. This will help every single student, irrespective of the location of the school, to learn the subject from the best of teachers.*

v. *The role of a class teacher in a particular school for a particular subject (mathematics or science) will be more of a facilitator or tutor. During practice sessions students will be given problems/tasks of varying difficulty levels. The class teacher should be a keen observer and should monitor the progress of each student in the session. The teacher should intervene/facilitate in the learning process only when he/she thinks it is necessary.*

vi. *The performance of each student should be evaluated on a continuous basis through specially designed tests after every module.*

(b) *We recommend that for subjects like history and geography, Active Learning Method (ALM) or any other similar method be used. ALM, as followed in Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh, has many advantages. It encourages students to learn in groups and go beyond what is mentioned in the text books. However one of the critiques of ALM is that it does not allow flexibility in learning and at times discouragesthe creativity of students. The alternative to ALM could be to develop textbooks in such a way that each book can be unique to a particular student. For example, the history textbook can be designed in such a way that after every chapter, a list of reference materials will be mentioned and a few blank pages will be given. The school library must have the reference materials mentioned in the textbooks. Each*

student will be asked to use the reference materials (this task has to be carefully assigned by a subject teacher so that no two student write on the same topic) to prepare a write up as an additional learning for that chapter and reproduce it in the blank pages provided in the textbook. This exercise will encourage students to be creative, expose students to reference materials and therefore broaden their perspectives. We recommend that schools should be given the option of choosing a particular pedagogy (ALM or the other alternative).

(c) While teaching language subjects adequate emphasis should be given on oral and written skills.

(III) The education of a child will be incomplete unless one can impart social awareness and basic ethics in every child. Students should also learn to work in groups/teams. These soft skills should be imparted informally rather than through formal classroom lectures. We propose four schemes in this regard:

(i) Every child in a primary class will be asked to maintain his/her attendance record for a particular subject for the whole year. A class teacher will periodically (for example, fortnightly) verify the child's attendance record with the teacher's attendance register.

(ii) Every upper primary school can have a 'shopping' period once a week. During the shopping period a designated classroom can be converted into an unmanned Kirana Store where a select consumable item of a reasonably low price will be kept. The price list will be displayed in a prominent place in that classroom. Any student can enter the store and pick up an item after paying the listed price in a box kept for this purpose. This exercise will help the students learn how to be ethical. If any student is found cheating, the fellow students should bring it to the notice of concerned teacher.

(iii) Every upper primary school should organise social awareness programmes (eg.A cleanliness drive, medicine collection, waste paper collection etc.) in a collaborativeeffort with NGOs/ Social Organizations twice a year. This should be done in such a manner that every student participates in at least one such programme per year.

(iv) Every student of an upper primary school should be a member of the school house/club. The school should organize debates, essay competitions, sports and other cultural activities among the houses/clubs.

(IV) It has been observed that in case of several States appropriate incentive systems positively affect the quality of education. Incentive schemes may be developed for students as well as teachers. We recommend the following:

(a) The State can introduce a merit scholarship examination in class V. This would in a way provide a check on the quality of education at primary level and would also provide an incentive to children to perform well in their studies. The scholarship amount may be paid out of funds available under the LEP (Learning Enhancement Programme) in SSA.

(b) Teachers have a major role to play in maintaining and improving the classroom transactions and thereby enhancing student learning capability. An incentive scheme (in the lines of Pratibha Parv in Madhya Pradesh) may be launched for the teachers in primary and upper primary schools. The incentives may be paid out funds available under the LEP (Learning Enhancement Programme) in SSA.

5.11 *School Inspection (Ref: Chapter 6; para 6.8)*

(I) In order to ensure that classes are held regularly, students' attendance and academic performance improve, it is necessary to strengthen the school inspection setup at the grass root level.

(II) It is recommended that the school inspection setup is significantly increased at the cluster and the block levels. This will have three advantages – (a) close and continuous monitoring of the quality of education; (b) timely and quick response to address any problems and (c) relieving the district administration of substantial pressure.

(III) It is suggested that the state government allocate additional funds to augment the school education system.

(IV) It is recommended that the designations of inspectors be changed as below:

(a) Sub-inspector of Schools be re-designated as Assistant Education Officer (AEO)

(b) Assistant Inspector of Schools be re-designated as Block Education Officer (BEO)

(c) District Inspector of Schools be re-designated as District Education Officer (DEO)

(V) The District Education Officer will be responsible for overall management and administration of school education of the district. The DEO may not personally visit schools as a routine activity. However he/she may visit schools whenever necessary. The primary responsibility of a DEO would be the following:

(a) Facilitate teacher recruitment process in the district.

(b) Help WBCERT in organising and conducting teacher training programmes.

(c) Periodically interact with VEC/SMC to review administrative issues.

(d) Co-ordinate with the district project officer to ensure proper implementations of SSA programmes.

(e) Monitor and review performance of children and take appropriate actions whenever required.

(f) Monitor and review attendance, transfer and other issues concerning teachers.

(g) To facilitate and participate in periodic student evaluation programmes.

(VI) In order to discharge the above functions, each district should have 6 DEOs/ADEOs to look after elementary and high school education. The suggested staffing of DEOs/ADEOs in a district is as follows:

Elementary Education:

(i)District Elementary Education Officer and under him:

- *Assistant District Elementary Education Officer (Training)*
- *Assistant District Elementary Education Officer (Academic)*
- *Assistant District Elementary Education Officer (School Management and Administration)*

High School Education:

(iii) District Education Officer (Training & Academics) and under him:

- *Assistant District Education Officer (Academic & Administration)*

Considering the 20 districts (including DGHC) in West Bengal, the above arrangement would require 120 DEOs/ADEOs in the state. The present sanctioned strength of District Inspector of Schools (including ADI and ADSE) is 120 and hence there is no need for creating additional posts. All vacancies should therefore be filled up as early as possible.

(VII) There is a need of creating of 50 additional posts for BEOs.

(XIV) Our recommendation suggests a more than 3 fold increase in the sanctioned strength of Assistant Education Officers (3411 from the present strength of 999). This would ensure that each school gets adequate attention and timely intervention by the school administration.

(XV) The AEO in a particular cluster will look after secondary schools if any. The role of an AEO would also include continuous interaction with CRC co-ordinator to ensure timely collection of DISE and other data for MIS purposes

5.12 *Governance Structure (Ref: Chapter 6; para 6.9)*

(I) *We recommend that the functions of WBPE be subsumed in WBCERT. However any activity relating to teachers' appointment and transfer will be handled by the Personnel & Supervision arm of the Directorate.*

(II) *If RTE is fully implemented, our estimate show that there will be around 78,000 schools imparting elementary education in the state. Hence a separate directorate for elementary education is necessary. Similarly the directorate of the district unit of the school education should have two wings – elementary education and high school education.*

(III) *It is therefore necessary to strengthen the directorate with appropriate staffing of Law Officers at the state as well as at the district level.*

(IV) *The functions of directorate at the state level are divided into three segments – Personnel & Supervision, Academic and Appointment. While the Personnel & Supervision section looks after administrative issues related to schools and teachers and the monitoring of teachers' attendance and accountability; the Academic section of the directorate will be the main focal point of the school education system.*

(V) *The present West Bengal Board of Madrasah Education and Rabindra Mukta Vidyalaya (West Bengal Council of Rabindra Open School) will be retained.*

(VI) *Therefore it is proposed that the West Bengal School Service Commission be entrusted with the additional responsibility of conducting TET. This will ensure uniformity in the teacher recruitment process to a greater extent. It is desirable that at the elementary level of education, teachers are recruited from the same/nearby villages where a school is located. Hence while the TET can be conducted at the state level once a year, the interviews can be held at the district offices of the directorate to avoid inconvenience to the applicants.*

(VII) *Similarly at the district level, the directorate of school education can be divided into two broad wings – elementary education and high school education. The district inspector of schools may be called District Elementary Education Officer (for elementary education) and District Education Officer (for high school education). Such district education officers will monitor school administration and management and co-ordinate teacher training programmes in consultation with the DIET. We propose a strong block education office at the block level. The administrative head of the block education office will be Block Elementary Education Officer (for elementary schools)/ Block Education Officer (for high schools). Each block education office will have five resource persons (Block Resource Persons) specializing in different subjects taught in elementary schools.*

(VIII) *Each block office should also have two Group-C staff (Computer literate), two Group-D staff and one Block Accountant.*

(IX) *The Cluster Education Centre (currently called Cluster Resource Centre) will be housed in one of the bigger schools in the cluster. Ideally the school chosen for locating the Cluster Education Centre should be a secondary level school with adequate space. Each Cluster Education Centre will be headed by an Assistant Education Officer (presently called Sub-Inspector of Schools). The MIS activity (including compiling DISE data) of schools within the cluster will be managed at Cluster Education Centre. Accordingly one MIS person-cum-clerk may be appointed in each cluster to help the Assistant Education Officer.*

5.13 *Role of WBCERT Redefined (Ref: Chapter 6; para 6.10)*

(I) *It is proposed to significantly strengthen the WBCERT.*

(II) *The WBCERT is to be construed as independent academic body with the following explicit functions:*

(a) Curriculum development

(b) Text book preparation and printing for formal as well as non-formal education

(c) Development of innovative learning techniques and tools

(d) Designing, administering teacher training programme and development of appropriate training materials.

(e) Conducting research in the area of school education.

(III) *The WBCERT is required to be appropriately staffed in order to effectively handle the responsibilities. The working environment of WBCERT should be similar to a university and hence the career path of people involved in the academic wing of WBCERT should be appropriately structured. In view of enhanced responsibilities of the WBCERT, separate administrative and finance and accounts sections are also to be created. It is proposed that an academic advisory board be formed to guide the WBCERT in its academic functions. Such an academic advisory board may comprise of the following members:*

(a) Experienced professors in colleges (two members)

(b) Experienced teachers from government schools (three members)

(c) Representative of NCERT (one member)

(d) Representative of an NGO involved in school education (two members)

(e) Director – WBCERT, member secretary

(f) Chairman, West Bengal Board of High School Education

(IV) *The advisory board would be an independent body comprising of people connected with schools/college education. The independent character of the board is to be maintained.*

(V) *DIET and PTTIs are to be brought under the WBCERT. All in-service teacher training programmes will be designed and coordinated by the WBCERT and administeredthrough DIET/PTTIs. Therefore each district of the state should have a DIET to facilitate teacher training programmes.*

(VI) *We feel that if WBCERT takes care of curriculum development and text book preparation of school education, there is no need to have separate boards for Secondary and Higher Secondary examinations. It is therefore proposed to have only one board to take care of Secondary and Higher Secondary examinations. We proposed that the present West Board of Secondary Education and West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education be merged into a new board called West Bengal Board of High School Education. The activities of board will include:*

(a) Regulation of admission to schools

(b) Conducting secondary and higher secondary examinations

(c) Preparing annual work plan for secondary and higher secondary schools

(d) Conducting scholarship examination

(e) Managing ICT schemes

(f) Verification of educational documents and issuing of transcript

(g) Recognition of schools

The curriculum and textbook developments for secondary and higher secondary schools will be the responsibility of WBCERT.

5.14 Resource Persons (Ref: Chapter 6; para 6.11)

(I) We recommend that the Shikshabandhu cadre be abolished and the resource person cadre be strengthened. Each BEC will have five resource persons. Such resource persons may also be called Subject Experts. The primary responsibilities of Block Resource Persons will be as follows:

- *(a) Imparting teachers' training for 10 days based on modules developed by WBCERT/DIET. Such trainings should be conducted in a structural manner covering subjects taught in the schools.*
- *(b) Providing teaching support to one or more schools in a block which experience poor performance of students.*
- *(c) Helping the school in ensuring 100% student enrolment.*
- *(d) Coordinating with the CLEC, wherever required, in school related matters.*

(II) Such Block Resource Persons could either be retired teachers or selected through School Service Commission. Resource persons should also be placed at the PTTIs to help with in-service teacher training programme.

In order to ensure minimum hardship while phasing out the shikshabandhu cadre, the following strategy may be adopted:

- *(a) Those who fulfil the eligibility criteria should be absorbed as primary/upper-primary teachers.*
- *(b) Those who have reasonable computer proficiency, but who do not fulfil the eligibility criteria of becoming a school teacher, should be absorbed as MIS-cum-clerk at the cluster/block level education centres.*
- *(c) Those who do not possess any of the above qualification (as mentioned in (a) and (b) above) should be asked to leave.*

5.15 Abolition of District Primary School Council (DPSC) (Ref: Chapter 6; para 6.12)

We have proposed the following:

- *(a) The School Service Commission will periodically conduct TET.*
- *(b) The District office of the school directorate will constitute an independent selection committee (comprising of retired high school teachers, retired college teachers, head of the local authority) for conducting interviews and selecting teachers in the respective districts.*
- *(c) Teachers will be selected against respective schools, based on vacancies thereof.*
- *(d) All administrative matters concerning teachers (including transfers) will be handled by the district education office and the personnel and supervision section of the school directorate.*
- *(e) A grievance redressal cell of the VEC/ education wing of the local authority will hear and dispose all teachers' complaints in a transparent and non-partisan manner.*
- *(f) The present set up of DPSC be abolished.*

5.16 Management Information System (Ref: Chapter 6; para 6.13)

(I) The functions of the present school portal of the State need to be substantially augmented to make the portal an interactive one. The school portal should have a scalable architecture to accommodate more applications and users.

(II) Records of every child, school, and teacher should be gathered and mapped in the mother database in such a way that every child and teacher is mapped to a school. Every teacher should additionally be mapped to a CLEC.

(III) The management information system (MIS) should be an integrated State-wide information system. The

MIS should be used to identify vacancies/requirements of teachers at every school and similarly the surplus of teachers in schools. The system should also have data on student enrolment and class-wise performance. Such MIS should be independent of DISE.

(IV) The MIS should have the following details of the teachers:

- *(a) Name and address*
- *(b) Photograph*
- *(c) Academic qualification*
- *(d) School attached*
- *(e) CLEC attached*
- *(f) Date of joining*
- *(g) Salary details*
- *(h) Leave details*
- *(i) Provident fund details*
- *(j) TDS details*
- *(k) Other service records*
- *(l) Date of birth*
- *(m) Marriage day (if applicable)*
- *(n) Achievements, if any*

(V) The portal should capture school-wise subject-wise results of monthly/periodic tests to assess competency level of students in the elementary schools.

(VI) The portal can also be used to manage out of school children by having data on registration, follow-up and tracking.

(VII) The monthly salary bill of the teachers of all schools under a cluster would be prepared at the CLEC in the school portal. The CLEC coordinator and AEO of the cluster would certify the monthly salary bills of all schools of that cluster and submit the same online to district administration.

(VIII) The portal should also be effectively utilized for two more important purposes: (i) project management and (ii) financial management.

5.17 Teacher Transfer (Ref: Chapter 6; para 6.14)

The teacher transfer policy can be monitored through the MIS. At the beginning of each academic session, cluster-wise vacancy/surplus positions in schools would be drawn from the system. The teacher transfer programme can be designed as below:

- *(a) The present system of appearing in the SSC examination for seeking atransfer should be stopped.*
- *(b) Teachers can apply for transfers in a prescribed form to the CLEC. All applications will be time-stamped. The AEO will screen all such applications and forward the same to the district office. All applications submitted up to September of any year will be considered for transfer in the next academic session.*
- *(c) Teachers from 'teacher-surplus' school will be compulsorily transferred to appropriate 'teacher-deficit' schools in the same district. Exceptions can be made for senior teachers (more than 55 years of age) and women teachers with children below 5 years.*

If after the above two steps are implemented and no vacancies are left in a district, only mutual transfers will be allowed within the district. However, the net shortfall in a school in a district will be filled up either through fresh recruitment or through voluntary transfer from other districts based on applications made as in (b) above. While

implementing such inter-district transfer, first-apply-first-serve method will be followed. It is also to be ensured that if the transfer is sought outside the district, a minimum of 5 years of teaching experience is required in the present district.

5.18 Project Management (Ref: Chapter 6; para 6.15)

(I) The delay in the construction of new schools and additional class rooms (ACR) is a major concern for the State. It is therefore suggested that the State Project Directorate should have a separate wing for infrastructure.

(II) We propose that the infrastructure wing of the SPD should have one State Project Engineer (in the rank of executive engineer) who would look after all expansion activities. The SPE should be a permanent employee of the government and not contractual staff as is the case now.

(III) The DPE (District Project Engineer) will also be responsible for the maintenance of existing schools.

(IV) The SMC should have a Civil Works Sub-committee (CWC) headed by the chairman of the SMC with the head teacher of the concerned school, representative of the local authority, two parents of students, and one mason of the village (co-opted) as members. The CWC would procure materials and engage labour contractors to execute the civil work.

(V) In the school portal, all civil works will be categorized as per types and mapped with the DISE code of schools. Monthly progress of work, including physical and financial progress, revised sanction details, completion details, photographs of completed/ work-in-progress constructions can be uploadedto the portal.

5.19 Financial Management (Ref: Chapter 6; para 6.16)

(I) Primary and upper-primary schools should be treated as separate schools for the purpose of school grants even if they are functioning from the same premises.

(II) We propose that a block accountant be appointed for each block. The block accountant should be computer literate. The block accountant should be responsible for collecting information on grants received and utilisation of funds from every school under the block. The block accountant would also be responsible for entering all data in the MIS.

(III) The school should not get involved in procuring items like uniform, bicycles etc. The SMC should identify some shops in the local area which can provide school uniforms and bicycles. Expenses for uniforms and bicycles should be reimbursed to the parents of the children on production of necessary bills/invoices from the designated shops. Such payments would be disbursed by the clerk of the CLEC as per the schedule drawn by the AEO.

(IV) The block accountant would maintain records of all transactions with the civil contractors and enter the necessary data in the MIS.

(V) The head teacher of the school will only maintain a cash book to record receipts and payments of contingency and maintenance grants.

(VI) The grants for mid-day meals (MDM) should also be directly sent to the bank account of the SMC. The head teacher of the school should not be involved in the administration of the MDM except for certifying the quality of the meal and the number of students who availed of the meal.

5.20 Rabindra Mukta Vidyalaya (Ref: Chapter 6; para 6.17)

(I) It has been observed that the quality of learning and evaluation of students in RMVs is poor. Therefore children who could have joined main stream schools take the easier route and enroll themselves in RMVs. In order to arrest this trend it is proposed that the minimum age of admission in RMVs should be raised to 18 years. This policy will ensure that only adult citizens can participate in the open schooling system.

(II) In order to strengthen the open schooling system the following is suggested:

- *(a) The responsibility of curriculum design and preparation of textbooks should be given to WBCERT.*
- *(b) WBCRMV would approve the curriculum and textbooks designed by WBCERT.*
- *(c) One or more upper primary schools in a cluster should be used as study centres. Such schools should be compensated reasonably for the use of their space. However the laboratory of a nearby higher secondary school will be used for conducting practical classes.*
- *(d) WBCRMV should prepare a cluster-wise resource person bank for teaching in the study centres. Such resource persons should ideally be retired high school teachers.*
- *(e) The resource persons will be given necessary training by WBCERT.*
- *(f) The WBCRMV will be mainly responsible for managing admissions and the examination system. For this purpose the council should be appropriately staffed.*
- *(g) The present system of allowing 5-6 attempts to clear an examination should be stopped. Instead students should be given upto 3 chances to clear an examination.*
- *(h) The school education portal should contain student related information (registration, performance and tracking) for open schools and should contain all announcements to make them easily accessible for open school students.*

5.21 Proposed Areas for Intervention at the organisational level (Ref: Chapter 7; para 7.2.11)

(I) The Secondary Board and Higher Secondary Council could come together to form a single organisation.

(II) All work should be done at two levels: one for routine work (like upgradation, recognition renewal, issuance of permission for new subject, etc) and ongoing process of syllabus change, publications, etc which should be the mandate of the WBCERT.

(III) More number of Regional Offices (ROs) are required for both. Preferred areas could be the districts of Nadia, Bankura, and Darjeeling.

(IV) The number of teachers needs to be increased for both.

(V) Decentralisation to ROs would be crucial. This should include

- *(a) The mandate for upgradation and recognition, including the renewal of recognition (guidelines need to be given to the RO)*
- *(b) Mandates for human resources (like approval for overtime payment)*
- *(c) Admission intake increase upto a percentage of ten*
- *(d) Issue of duplicate mark sheets*
- *(e) Creation of database for migration, which will enable same-day issuance of migration certificates*

(VI) The above decentralisation would not require new staff but there should be provisions for training, especially for the use of computers at every level.

(VII) Warehouse decentralisation for books should be done.

(VIII) A Deputy Secretary needs to be posted at all Higher Secondary ROs. At the Secondary ROs, DS should be provided with the power of delegating service when s/he is absent. Currently, s/he is the single signatory, and her absence often makes a lot of routine work impossible.

(IX) Laboratory grant for schools should be increased, along with proper monitoring from the RO.

(X) School inspection through cluster visits should be done immediately.

(XI) Teacher sanctions for subject-wise distribution should be done by the RO with DI office liaison.

(XII) Internet account facility should be provided at the RO for monthly/ annual statements.

(XIII) The web portal needs to be regularly updated with circulars.

(XIV) Internet should be provided in all ROs at all levels.

5.22 Proposed Areas for Intervention at the school level (Ref: Chapter 7; para 7.2.11)

(I) Every school must have separate room for teachers and Headmaster or Teacher-in-Charge.

(II) Every school should have a library and office room and computer.

(III) Every school should have computers for students.

(IV) In rural areas all schools must have a electricity connection.

(V) There is a need for an increase in the number of clerks and Group-D staff in schools.

(VI) Most of the teachers come from beyonda 10 k.m. radius from the school. The appointment of teachers should be preferably from the same district.

(VII) More schools should provide vocational training to their students.

(VIII) School Management Committee should be formed and encouraged in all rural and urban schools; in rural areas almost no schools have Parent Teacher Associations, and they should be actively encouraged to set up such.

(IX) Irrespective of area division, a cluster of schools should come together to arrange health check-up camps.

(X) A large number of schools offering secondary education only need require additional infrastructure.

5.23 Proposed Areas for Intervention Concerning MSKs (Ref: Chapter 7; para 7.3.11)

(I) Along with the formation of School Management Committee, the frequency of AEO visits to MSKs should be increased.

(II) MSKs need infrastructural improvement in a big way. Investment is required in almost all the areas: a) increasing the number of class-rooms; b) teachers' room c) kitchen; d) library facilities e) office room; f) computer laboratories; g)water; h) sanitation facilities such as toilets for both teachers and students and i) electricity.

(III) MSKs need sufficient teaching staff and teaching / learning materials to address the problems of drop out and low attendance rates.

(IV) There is a need to appoint support staff such as clerks and Group-D staff so that teachers can pay full attention to their primary responsibility of classroom-based teaching activities.

(V) *Since a large number of MSK teachers (75.6%) do not have any kind of professional training, they should be prioritized in the teaching programmes of the state government otherwise the gap in terms of quality of education in MSKs and secondary and higher secondary schools will remain insurmountable.*

Chapter 1

The State of West Bengal: Evaluation of School Education

1.1 As per the census data of 2001, West Bengal, spread over 88,752 sq kms had a total population of 80,176,197. Total male population was 41,465,985 and total female population was 38,710,212. The provisional census data of 2011showed that the total population in West Bengal now stands at 91,347,736 comprising of 46,927,389 male and 44,420,347 female. The sex ratio has slightly improved to 947 in 2011 compare to 934 in 2001. In terms of total population West Bengal holds the fourth rank among the states in India. The population density is 903 per sq km. which is highest among all states in India. As per the census data from 2001, Scheduled Casts constituted approximately 23 percent (total SC population is 18,452,555) of the total population and in the case of Scheduled tribes this figure is approximately 5.5 percent (total ST population is 4,406,794) of the total population.

1.2 West Bengal shares its boundary with Orissa, Bihar, Jharkhand and Nepal in the West, Sikkim in the North, Assam, Bhutan and Bangladesh in the East and Bay of Bengal in the South. Because of better job opportunities and a better standard of living, a large migrating population from the states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and Orissa come into this state. West Bengal still holds its position as an important commercial hub for the whole eastern and north-eastern region of the country. This state also plays a crucial role in business and trade for neighbouring countries like Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh. So many people, not only from neighbouring states but also from neighbouring countries, particularly from Bangladesh, migrate to this state. Economic, social and cultural bonds are still strong with Bangladesh and they are also Bengali speaking so they have a natural advantage while migrating to this state. The average annual exponential growth rate in West Bengal is 1.31% which is less than the all-India figure of 1.64% and the decadal growth rate is 13.93% (all-India figure 17.64%) as per the provisional census data of 2011. 99.39% of the total population of West Bengal speak in scheduled languages. However, 85.34% of the total population speak in Bengali.

1.3 The urban population of West Bengal is 22,427,251, which is about 27.97% of the total population which is more than the all India average of 27.81% of the total population. The total number of villages in the state is 40,783 according to the

census of 2001. The number of class I cities with a population 100,000 and above rose from 42 in 1991 to 58 in 2001 and the number of class II cities with a population between 50,000 to 100,000 decreased from 30 in 1991 to 19 in 2001. This indicates a rapid urbanization across India.

1.4 West Bengal is one of the five states which has shown a maximum decline in the absolute number of the child population in 2011 in comparison with the figures of the census of 2001. As per the provisional census data of 2011, the child population in West Bengal now stands at 10,112,599 comprising of 5,187,264 males and 4,925,335 females. West Bengal has been witnessing a negative change in population in the age group 0-6 years since 1991. The decadal change in child population (age group 0-6 years) was -148,075 in 2001 and -1,301,623 in 2011. Percentage of children (age group 0-6 years) of the total population is 11.07 in 2011 as compared to around 14% in 2001. This decline in child population of the age group 0-6 years has profound implications for the implementation of RTE norms.

1.5 Administratively West Bengal is divided into 19 districts including Kolkata and 341 Community Development Blocks. Each district is divided into many sub-divisions. Economically, politically, and culturally, the undivided Bengal province used to hold a leading place in the country. But its preeminent place began to decline since the 1940s. First, there was the World War II which in its wake brought the infamous Bengal famine of 1943. The famine took a toll of millions of lives. This was followed by the communal riots in 1946 and the partition in 1947, violently shaking the whole social foundation of the Bengali community. Waves after waves of refugees migrated from East Bengal (now Bangladesh) to West Bengal, a process which continued till 1971 streching the resources of the new state to its limits. The unsettled conditions, aided and aggravated by many other complex politico-economic factors, contributed to a process of decline both in the industrial and agricultural sector which led to decades of intense social strife, the marks of which have left indelible imprints in the social and cultural sphere of the community.

1.6 Politically too, the state had been very restive. The last fifty years may be conveniently divided into two periods. From 1947 till 1967 the Congress government which was in power had to face the crisis emerging from the partition and consequent social unrest, shortages of food and agricultural commodities, and very high incidences of underemployment and unemployment. There had been recurring political unrest culminating into the now famous Naxalbari movement that shook the social fabric to its

core. The decade between 1967 and 1977 witnessed severe competition for political power that brought in its wake governmental fragility, administrative uncertainties and a lack of direction of public policy. Against this background, the emergence of the Left Front in 1977, and more than three decades of stable rule in the state had imparted a degree of stability to public organizations and provided a scope for meaningful and development oriented public policy and their implementation.

1.7 One such major policy was the implementation of the land reform programmes including "Operation Barga" with simultaneous emphasis on redistribution of land and augmentation of agricultural production. These have yielded results. West Bengal had also introduced the system of decentralized governance through the three-tier *Panchayati Raj*. Elections to the Panchayat bodies were held regularly, developing a local level of leadership and strengthening local self-government institutions. Much of the state's development expenditurewas incurred through these politically elected bodies. Panchayat institutions are still associated with most of the development activities. The 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution of India have further expanded the scope of activities of the Panchayats, and have provided an opportunity to these institutions to be more self-reliant.

1.8 However, stability does not rule out the possibility of confusion in policy matters. Nor does it ensure efficiency. While the agrarian unrest and conflict that characterized the rural areas in the late 60's and the 70's have subsided substantially, new types of conflicts are taking place in the countryside that mostly originate in the atmosphere of intense political competition over power, pelf and scarce resources. In the urban areas on the other hand, economic recession, failure to withstand competition, transfer of capital and absence of proper incentives for new investments have continued to make the industrial sector sluggish with little hope of quick recovery, leading to a climate of depression and despondency among the urban youth.

1.9 Coming to the issue of primary education, it may not be out of place to recall here that Article 45 of the Constitution of India lays down that "The State shall endeavour to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years". Furthermore, the very next article states: "The State shall provide with special care the educational interests of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular, of the Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes....". Pressures at the national level and the international consensus on the need to eradicate illiteracy, led the central government to

draft a Bill in 1997, namely the Constitutional 83rd Amendment Bill, 1997. The draft bill laid down that "the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all citizens of the age six to fourteen years". To fulfill this goal the central government passed the “Right to Education Act” in 2009. The RTE Act ensures the right to free and compulsory education for all the children of the age between six to fourteen years.

1.10 Following the recommendations of the Kothari Commission, the Government of West Bengal restructured the educational pattern to the 10+2+3 system of which the stage of Primary Education consists of the first half of the ten years of schooling. More specifically, it consists of the classes I to V, which is followed by the Junior High or Upper Primary level from class VI to VIII. A child enters the system at the completed age of 5 years and should continue without interruption at least till the age of 9 completed years so as to complete the primary stage. (If the constitutional mandate is followed, the child is to be retained in school till the individual has at least crossed the upper primary stage.) It is more important to ensure that during this period the child should at least attain the Minimum Level of Learning (MLL) prescribed for the primary stage. Thus, we can identify at least three parameters for the measurement of the efficacy of the primary education system. The first is quantitative - whether all children have been enrolled in primary schools. According to the census of 2001, children in the age group of 5 to 9 in West Bengal was about 94.91 lakhs which was roughly 11.84 % of the total population. The male population in the age group 5 to 9 was 4851125 and the female population was4639483. To ensure their total enrolment, it is necessary to have, apart from the generation of a demand for education, the required number of schools with adequate classrooms and an adequate number of teachers.A favourable teacher-student ratio as per the norms accepted by the state should be 1:40.Secondly, to retain most of them in school for a continuous period of eight years and ensure their regular attendance it is necessary to make the school environment attractive mentally as well as physically and also to ensure a stimulating atmosphere both in the classroom and outside.The participants and their guardians must feel that the time spent by their wards in the school is not a waste of time that could be fruitfully utilized otherwise. Here the infrastructure of the schools, the incentives provided, as well as the quality of inputs and the agents providing them play a major role. Lastly, there is the crucial issue of the attainment of a particular level of learning which is a function of the motivation and the quality of teachers, their training and the nature of interaction between the teacher and the students and the number of working days spent in the school. In all these aspects, and particularly in the first and the second aspect the role of the community is very important in creating an atmosphere of a learning society and in the planning and the

management of education. The efficiency of the administrative structure and the monitoring process and the effectiveness of academic and other material inputs acquire meaning and significance only in relation to the three major parameters identified above.

1.11 On the 2nd of February 1995, the Government of West Bengal established a registered organization named 'Paschim Banga Rajya Prathamik Siksha Unnayan Sanstha' as an autonomous and independent body for implementation of the elementary education project in West Bengal and it seemed to function as a societal mission for bringing about a fundamental change in the basic education system. The implementation of the SSA in the State was assigned to this Sanstha on 14thMarch 2001 with some alterations and the name of SIS (State Implementation Society) was also changed to 'Paschim Banga Rajya Praramvik Siksha Unnayan Sanstha' (PBRPSUS). On 31stOctober, 2006 this name was again changed to 'Paschim Banga Sarva Siksha Mission'.

1.12 The 86th amendment to the Indian Constitution [Constitution (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act, 2002] inserted Article 21-A in the Constitution which provided for 'free and compulsory' education of all children in the age group of six to fourteen years as a Fundamental Right. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE) is the consequential legislation envisaged under Article 21-A. Thus, RTE makes implementation of compulsory education legally binding on all states/ union territories.

1.13 Education is a multi-faceted programme. Any education system involves not just the teachers and the students but society as a whole. Universalization of primary education would depend on three main attributes: universal facilities, universal enrolment and universal retention. The first implies the delivery system that includes the provision of primary education, supply of teaching-learning materials and the desired quality of teaching – learning in schools. These may be regarded as the major prerequisites for universal enrolment and retention. But enrolment and retention also depend on structural and attitudinal factors. These include both social and economic constraints. Thusan evaluation of the existing status of primary education in the state involves not just evaluating the school system but also its relationship with the socio-economic conditions of the population.

1.14 The delivery system involves directly the policy makers, the bureaucracy, and teachers, creating proper motivation, providing the right guidance, necessary infrastructure, and development of the proper objective and subjective environment to impart knowledge to the recipients. Proper monitoring of the delivery system is crucial at every stage. At the primary level, thisis particularly important, as the recipients, children in the age group 5-6 to 8-9 years, are not in a position to feel the need for education, leave alone articulate the deficiencies in the existing system. On the receiving side, the parents thus have to play a great role in inducing their children to go through the learning process. In a country like India, where a large proportion of the adult population remains abysmally poor and illiterate, the need for education of the children is often not felt by the parents. However, it is widely accepted that, *ceteris paribus*, a better delivery system induces new demand for education. To intervene meaningfully in engineering an essentially social process, it is imperative that an assessment is made of the existing condition. It is here that an information gap remains for most of the states in India including West Bengal.

1.15 In the present exercise, we are mostly concerned with the first two. But before making a realistic estimate of them, it may be profitable to take a quick look at the major policies and administrative measures initiated by the government and their impact on the educational scenario. According to the DISE (District Information System for Education) Flash Statistics data for the year 2009-10, the number of primary schools in the state is 74,678 (it was 51,021 in 1995-96) and the enrolment of students upto class V is 10,545,319; up from 8,500,000 in 1995-96.

1.16 As per DISE data on an average each primary school in the state had 3.4 teachers for the year 2009-10. The pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) in primary schools was around 34; the percentage of trained teachers was 53.21% and the figure for teachers who received in-service training was about 42.12%. These figures are for all the schools.

1.17 An efficient delivery system also depends extentsively on proper mobilization of physical and human resources and the development of a well-structured management and administrative system. Adequate allocation of funds is a precondition for developing the delivery system.

1.18 In 2009-10, the estimated spending on primary schools was Rs.4,94,25,000 and estimated spending on teachers training amounted to Rs.21,25,59,000. Total estimated expenditure on teachers' salary was Rs.4,91,39,000. On the other hand, the estimated

spending on school building repairs was about Rs.1,85,75,000. Total estimated expenditure on non-formal elementary education was about Rs.5,62,000.

1.19 It is necessary to have not just an adequate number of teachers in the schools but also an adequate training of these teachers to undertake their duty meaningfully. The minimum level of learning (MLL) of the students depends, among other things, to a great extent on the teachers' ability to impart knowledge.This, in turn, depends heavily on the teachers' knowledge, skills and motivation, all of which are to a great degree, functions of proper training.

1.20 The West Bengal Board of Primary Education is aware of the problems and has taken a number of steps for the improvement of quality of the teaching-learning process in the schools. A special programme called Joyful Learning (*Ananda Path)* has already been launched in a number of districts in the state with the help of UNICEF. It is primarily aimed at improving the quality of teaching at the primary level through special training of teachers and by improving the teaching aids and other materials and the physical infrastructure of the schools. Base-line studies are also being conducted in these districts to keep track of the development of the students brought under the programme. Compared to the Ananda Path, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) lays more emphasis on the teaching-learning process through improvement of the quality of the textbooks and the use of teaching-learning materials.

1.21 The level of literacy, enrolment and or retention/drop-out, are dependent not only on the delivery system but also upon social factors. Thus gender, caste/community, occupational and rural / urban inequalities all affect education. Available information indicates that poverty and illiteracy are particularly prevalent among Muslims who form a large segment of the population.All our household based analyses, hence, have been done at multiple levels. We have not only tried to capture the features of gender inequality by disaggregating our information for males and females for all strata, we have also given all the information separately for the broad social categories, *i.e.* scheduled castes and tribes, minority community and the general population. Kolkata, being a cosmopolitan metropolis, has its own unique features. No other town/city in West Bengal is comparable with the city in terms of the size of the population and complexities related to a cosmopolitan metropolis. We have therefore considered Kolkata separately within the urban framework.

1.22 It will be appropriate at this stage to inform the reader about our survey design and method of analysis. We had organized a survey of all the households and the schools situated in 45 villages and 9 Urban Frame Survey Blocks selected as samples from all the districts of the state. The details of the sample design and the methodology are described in Chapter 4 of this report. We thus covered nearly 700 households consisting of nearly 3428 people spread all over the state. Attempts were also made to collect information from all the schools situated in the sample villages and the urban blocks considered. So far as the field surveys were concerned, the major task was to identify an adequate number of surveyors from each of the districts and urban areas. We had prepared coded questionnaires separately for the households and the schools to be investigated. It was necessary to have sufficiently educated investigators to understand the process of codification to conduct the survey meaningfully.We had also to ensure that the surveyors/investigators did not have any motivation to hide the "truth". The investigators chosen had to fulfill two important requirements – all of them had to be sufficiently qualified to handle the complexity of the survey, and they were not predisposed to create serious investigators' bias.

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

1.24 A major vexing phenomenon observed mainly in the low literacy regions, in the country and elsewhere, is the high rate of dropouts at a very early stage of education. In fact, the primary education policies in different parts of the world are aimed at reducing this high dropout rate by creating incentives for the students and the parents to keep the children in the school till they complete the desired level of education. The present study

particularly looks at dropouts at certain threshold points (e.g., class II, class V, and class IX)

Chapter 2

Review of Literature: Contextualising the Issues

In the recent past, school education has been at the centre of public policy discourse in the country. Given the immense public policy significance of education in the context of developing economies like ours, it has engaged the sustained attention of planners, policy makers, social science researchers, management consultants and independent professionals. Expectedly, there is an abundance of literature which deals with different facets of the school education system in the country. On one hand, this literature brings out the lacunae and bottlenecks in the system; on the other, it also brings out the accomplishments and opportunities. This literature review draws upon such previously published reports undertaken by academic institutions and non-governmental organisations concerning the educational landscape in West Bengal as well as other parts of the country. Besides, it makes use of literature available in scholarly journals which mainly comprise academic research conducted by independent researchers. At places, references are made to empirical material dealing with countries of the developing and the developed world to the extent that they form the basis of inferences and insights drawn by various scholars depending on the particular aspects of the problem they were investigating.

The purpose of this literature review is to contextualise the challenges faced by the school education system in West Bengal. It promises to offer us a comprehensive framework for analysing the primary data collected through school and household surveys. It has the added advantage of providing us with a comparative frame of reference against which an assessment of the school education system in West Bengal can be fruitfully made. It does not merely contrast the performance of the state on different parameters against the national average but also brings in insights culled out from the experiences of other states. In this sense, the literature review presents a set of issues which need to be addressed in order to restructure the present system to ensure universal reach of quality education in the state. In the interim report, these issues have just been flagged and they will be elaborated upon in the final report. The review of literature is thematic in organisation and adheres to the terms of references of the research project as agreed upon between the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta and the Government of west Bengal. We wish to further explore the issues within the current context of West Bengal, and relate them to our primary findings in the final report.

2.1 Universalization of primary education

2.1.1 Effective integration of formal and non-formal education

The non-formal set up for education focuses on the education of school dropouts, working children, girl children and all those of school-going age who fail to attend formal schools owing to a variety of circumstances. It also includes in its scope the non-literate adults. Its mandate is to cater to those children who could not get access to schools in and around their locality whatever be the reason for their not being part of the formal set-up. In fact, the quality of non-formal system of education and its compatibility with the formal system feature in the National Policy on Education, 1986 (henceforth NPE) which recommends inclusion of different 'modern technological' (NPE, 1998:14) means to achieve an improved educational environment at the Non Formal Educational (NFE) Centres. It suggests hiring of well-trained young people of the adjacent locality as instructors for effective and quality instruction in such centres. Besides, the NPE (1986) suggests a host of measures to enhance the quality of the NFE so that it can be comparable with the formal one and also to facilitate seamless movement between the two systems. Measures to improve the quality of the NFE include the framing of a planned curriculum, synergy of the national core curriculum with the learners' need and the local environment, provision of free of cost and high quality learning equipment, creation of 'participatory learning environment, and activities' (NPE, 1998:15) such as excursions, games, cultural programs, etc. The same policy provides the opportunity of lateral entry into the formal schooling system for the children with NFE.

As per official records, 30% children dropout at an early stage without completing the first five years of schooling and 50% children drop out during the period of eight years of compulsory schooling.[1] The integrated 'micro-planning' and 'grass roots level' (NPE, 1998:15) networks between the formal and non-formal schooling are necessary to solve the problems of dropouts. That type of integration with the NFE also helps to achieve free, compulsory and quality education for all the children below 14 years. According to the NPE (1986), the government is responsible for the NFE through different means like the

[1]Reddy, A.N., Sinha, S.,*School Dropouts or Pushouts? Overcoming Barriers for the Right to Education.* National University of Educational Planning and Administration.(NUEPE). New Delhi. Create Pathways to Access, Research Monograph No. 40.Research commissioned by the Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transition and Equity (CREATE). University of Sussex. UK. July. 2008.

Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and it also encourages different volunteer organizations to work on that issue.[2] In this regard, different government initiatives like the State Resource Centre for Adult Education take over the responsibility of the training of the District Resource Persons (DRP) and the Master Trainers (MT) to accelerate and improve the adult education program under the NFE. [3]

2.1.2 Adult education

According to the 2001 Population Census the literacy rate of India is 65.38%. To achieve the goal of Education for All (EFA), the situation needs a two faceted action, i.e. encompassing adult literacy and to promote primary education for all children of a specific age group. The National Literacy Mission promises the education of adults especially for those of 15-35 years of age through the 'total literacy campaign' (NPE, 1998:11*)*. That type of adult education through the non-formal set up needs a growing awareness of the target population about their present socio-economic condition and their firm belief and confidence in the probable ways that can put an end to the disadvantageous condition of the non-literate. Adult education programs should also include the vocational training, practical skills, competencies and knowledge along with promotion of literacy. To organize a successful NFE program and adult education, it needs wholehearted support from different parts of society, like different educational institutions, mass media, teachers, youth, students, voluntary agencies, etc. The adult education program also includes further educational facilities for the neo-literate and primarily educated adults. That may help them to access an upgraded lifestyle and comfortable work atmosphere. Some possible and popular ways of adult education may include different measures; such as: a) the learner's opportunity to choose her/his educational parameters, b) establishing educational centres, c) providing books and other study materials, d) option for workers' education with the help of the particular authority and the government, e) use of mass media and culture for education, f) forming learners' community or group, g) enabling distance learning programs, etc.

2.2 Language and pedagogy

[2]National Policy on Education 1986 (as modified in 1992) with National Policy on Education, 1968. Government of India, Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, New Delhi. 1998.
[3] Chattopadhyay, R., Chaudhury, S., Ghosh, S.K, et.al. *The Status of Primary Education in West Bengal.*IIM Calcutta. 1998.

2.2.1 Language and communications problem

In West Bengal, the most common languages are Bengali, Hindi, Santhali, Urdu and Nepali. Approximately 98% (or more) of the population of the West Bengal is covered under one or more of these five languages.[4] It goes without saying that primary level education and proper learning needs frequent interaction between teachers and students that goes beyond the standard use of the formal language of instruction in a classroom setting. It is a well-known fact that along with teacher- student interaction, the delivery system and different social factors also positively influence the enrolment rate, literacy rate and drop-out rate of the pupils. To be sure, the ease of communication between the teacher and the taught creates a conducive learning ambience in a school. As discussed in the Pratichi Report, 2009, in general, those teachers, who travel to the school from a distance, somehow fail to establish an interactive bond or link with the 'local community'.[5] The lack of organic communication is, however, not simply a matter of lack of physical proximity or geographical distance. It is a function of class that gets translated into the visible gap in terms of language barriers between the teachers and the students. Teachers' class backgrounds predispose them towards teaching in the mainstream and standard Bengali language which would generally be devoid of colloquial expressions and local/regional linguistic variations. This becomes acute in the case of tribal children and children coming from disadvantaged social backgrounds without much exposure to the formal system of schooling. According to the Pratichi Report (henceforth PR) (2002), teachers do not often understand the language spoken by the tribal or the so-called 'low-caste' (SC) students (Mohan, 2005:5). Such differences in the use of language adversely affect the learning process. The students from these categories (for example the 'Adivasis') usually face an uncomfortable situation in the classroom[6] which lowers their participation level in the learning processes.

Historically, tribal groups have suffered on account of their geographical and cultural isolation. The cumulative disadvantages that they had to suffer make it incumbent on us to include them in our idea and practice of inclusive education. This realisation calls for an added sensitivity to their languages keeping in mind their specific socio-cultural backgrounds. So, it is necessary to develop the initial study materials and curricula in the tribal languages. This should be done in such a way that the students can gradually shift to

[4] Chattopadhyay, R., Chaudhury,S., Ghosh, S.K, et.al. *The Status of Primary Education in West Bengal.*IIM Calcutta. 1998.
[5]Rana,K., Sen, S. Sarkar, M, *et al.The Pratichi Education Report II—Primary Education In West Bengal: Changes and Challenges*. Pratichi (India) Trust. Delhi. Dec. 2009.p.61.
[6]Jha, J. Primary Schools in West Bengal.*Economic and Political Weekly.* July.2003.

the regional languages.[7] For instance, in West Bengal, a large number of people belong to the scheduled tribes like Santals. It would be erroneous to assume that Santal children will have same felicity in Bengali as those of Hindu upper castes. Educators at the primary level have to be conscious of the difficulty these children routinely face in understanding the Bengali language in government primary schools. The increasing use of the Santali language as the medium of instruction in the Santal-dominated schools of West Bengal could be a step in the right direction. Unfortunately though, even the available textbooks in the Santali language are not used in many schools.[8]

The NCERT suggests a 'three language formula' (NCERT, 2007: ix) for developing the language skills of the students. Obviously this emphasises on the mother tongue of the students as the easiest teaching and educational medium. This attempts to solvethe problem of a language barrier faced mostly by tribal students. The three language formula suggests that with the help of the characteristic resources of such a multilingual country like India, a skilful multilingual efficiency can be built up among the children. It may also help to develop accomplishment of English language skills through proper curriculum development.[9]

2.2.2 Teachers' perception

Consequently the language problem has a direct and negative impact on the perception of teachers. Jha (2003) mentions, on the basis of the report "The Delivery of Primary Education: A Study in West Bengal" (The Pratichi Education Report, 2002), most teachers belonging to the general caste, had a 'poor opinion' about the education of SC, ST and Muslim students. The teachers usually fail to recognize the language difficulties of these children. The same PR report cites that a teacher in Birbhum opines that the Santali children cannot just understand the instructions and study books though the teachers interact with them on a regular basis. Among teachers belonging to the high and intermediate caste groups 75% perceive that the SC and ST students lack the intelligence and motivation to study (PR, 2002:32). Some teachers however hold a different opinion. They feel that Santali speaking students need Santali knowing teachers. Jha (2003) reports that a few exceptional teachers are also trying to overcome these language barriers.

[7] National Policy on Education 1986(as modified in 1992).Government of India, Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, New Delhi. 1998.
[8]Mohan, D. *Education as Regulated Means of Representation: Methodological Failures in the First Pratichi Report, 2002.*Conference on Religious and Social Fragmentation and Economic Development in South Asia, A D White House, Cornell University.Oct. 2005.*pp*.5, 6, 15.
[9]National Council of Educational Research and Training, *National Curriculum Framework 2005, 2007* (Kolkata), vii-ix, xi.

2.2.3 Possible ways to overcome the language problem

To overcome these barriers of communication the resolution of an "equity policy" is important. According to Sapon-Shevin (1999), the division K of the American Educational Research Association approved the "equity policy" in 1998, which states that the 'teacher education programs' should be communicated to all the students for their improvement.[10] It has been observed that qualified teachers can improve quality of students. Besides, teachers' characteristics also directly influence the teaching method and the instructional process. [11] But in many cases teacher characteristics bear no relationship with the quality of teachers. In that case, reward on the basis of teachers' characteristics may be much more effective rather than the reward on teacher's quality. According to Victor Lavy (2002), performance based payments and incentives for teachers positively affect the learning process in Israel.[12] Hanushek (2006) opines that the idea of performance based payments and incentives for teachers can be fruitfully extended to other countries as well. Stotsky (2006:257) suggests that with 'generic professional knowledge', teachers should also acquire 'license-specific pedagogical knowledge' for improving their quality.

The quality of the delivery system and the teaching-learning process are both important for universalization of primary education (UPE). At the primary level, as per the IIM Calcutta Report on Primary Education (1998), children of the age group of 5-6 to 8-10 years are unable to feel the urgency and necessity of the education. They just enter the system of primary education without much consideration on the part of the parents and the adult members of the family. Expectedly, children's education comes to depend on the efficiency and quality of schools as institutions as the other institution – family – takes a back seat in the case of the poor and the marginalised. Reasons are not far if sought. In India, a large proportion of the adult population is non-literate and do not have the competence to calibrate the educational needs of their children with the quality of the available schools even if they have the material resources to facilitate their children's education. In such a critical situation, students have to totally depend on the teachers for the requisite motivation to learn, to attend classes regularly and to be part of the school in an organic manner. For first generation learners, the teachers' role is crucial so the availability of locally recruited teachers is seen as an advantage. The decentralized recruitment procedure of the SSKs which makes it mandatory to recruit a SSK teacher (sahayika) from that concerned or

[10] Stotsky, S. Who Should Be Accountable For What Beginning Teachers Need To Know?*. Journal of Teacher Education.* Vol.57,No.3. American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE). 2006.
[11] Hanushek,E. Rivkin,S.G, *Handbook of the Economics of Education*, Vol2; Elsevier B.V. 2006.
[12]Rockoff, J.E. The Impact of Individual Teachers on Student Achievement: Evidence from Panel Data. *American Economic Review.*Vol 94.No.2. American Economic Association. May.2004.

adjacent area is inspired bythisidea. The expectation is that the local teachers would be well-equipped to interact with the students in a socially compatible fashion such as the use of the local dialect, the familiarity with the socio-economic backgrounds of the children's families and other relevant social coordinates. Even as the PR (2002) suggests that the language problem requires sincere and urgent attention it needs to be underlined that language is an important ingredient of the much aspired cultural capital that the first-generation learners sorely lack.

2.3 Primary Education and its Accessibility

2.3.1 Problem of school distance and accessibility

Achieving the goal of Universalization of Primary Education (UPE) needs a large number of schools and SSKs within an accessible distance. As per the IIM Calcutta Report on Primary Education (1998), requirement of primary schools in West Bengal was about 7,240 in number. In order to meet the need of additional schools, the State needs to make best use of the available resources for developing infrastructure and school buildings for the UPE.[13] The SSA Act suggests that schools may be made accessible by providing *one primary school within a kilometre of child's habitation*. After completion of five years of primary education, a student of nine-ten years of age is required to shift to an upper primary or secondary school. As per the SSA Act, there needs to be o*ne upper primary school within three kilometres of the student's habitation*. On the other hand, the RMSA Act suggests that *a secondary school should be within five kilometres of the habitation* and in the case of a*higher secondary school, it should be within seven to ten kilometres from the habitation*. The number of upper primary, secondary and higher-secondary schools needs to be proportionate in a way that the lower level feeds into the higher level without compromising the number of government funded schools at all the levels. In no case the lack of accessibility for higher level schools should turn out to be a factor behind the dropout of children at the transitional stage between two levels. Without meeting this fundamental requirement in terms of the number of schools, the vision of the RTE will remain a distant dream. Also a suitable school building is of utmost importance for effective and quality

[13]Chattopadhyay, R., Chaudhury, S., Ghosh, S.K,et.al.*The Status of Primary Education in West Bengal. IIM Calcutta.* 1998.

education. Good physical infrastructure facilities provide a comfortable learning environment, accelerate the learning process[14] and increase the students' interest[15].

It is widely observed that the quality of education and attendance rate of students is closely dependentupon the school infrastructure, like the seating arrangement, toilets, and playground facilities.[16] According to Jalan (2010), three-fourth of the primary schools i.e. approximately 240 schools in West Bengal have a permanent infrastructure, while one-fourth of the schools possess only semi-permanent structure.

2.4 Pre-school education and formal schooling

2.4.1 Background

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989) internationally as well as officially first emphasized the need to recognize children's rights (Rao, 2005). Later with many other UN declarations[17], the UN General Assembly (2002) also focused on the "Care for Every Child" and promised to achieve a "World Fit for Children". In India, the fundamental rights of young children are practically served by the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) program. The ICDS program promotes the survival, development and early education of young children (Rao, 2005).

2.4.2 The existing system and problems of pre-school education

"Pre-school education" actually designates an educational engagement, for a 'part-day' in different centres, specifically for the children above three to four years.[18] According to GOI (2001), there were 157.86 million children who are up to the age of six years. As per the 2001 Census, 14% of the total population of West Bengal was under six years of age, while this percentage was 16% for the country as a whole. The Ministry of Human Resource Development in collaboration with the Department of Women and Child Development

[14] Pritchett, L., Pande, V. Making Primary Education Work for India's Rural Poor: A Proposal for Effective Decentralization. *Social Development Papers, South Asia Series.* Paper No. 95. June. 2006.
[15] Iyengar, R. Why Do Children Go To School?.*Economic and Political Weekly.* June 26. 2004.
[16] Jalan, J., Panda, J. *Low Mean & High Variance: Quality of Primary Education in Rural West Bengal.* Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta. 2010.
[17] Rao, N. Children's Rights To Survival, Development, And Early Education In India: The Critical Role Of The Integrated Child Development Services Program.*International Journal of Early Childhood*. Vol.37, No.3. 2005.
[18] Boocock, S,S. Early Childhood Programs in Other Nations: Goals and Outcomes. *The Future of Children Long-Term Outcomes Early Childhood Programs.* Vol.5, No.3. Winter. 1995.

facilitates different 'government and government-aided programs' on the education and care of the young children (Rao, 2005:16). Early childhood care and education (ECCE) are important for children of three to six years of age, especially for the purpose of preparing them towards their subsequent participation in the schooling system. The Government of India promoted the ICDS schemes in 33 blocks in 1974 to fulfil the aims of ECCE. Now ICDS centres cover 5600 blocks in the country.[19] In 1995, only 12% of the children in India received the facility of an early childhood care and pre-school education program (Boocock, 1995). According to Swaminathan (1993, 1998), in India the Early Childhood services form a "dual track" (Rao, 2005:16). In the first track, the government funded programs promotes services especially for the socio-economically disadvantaged children. The second track refers to the services offered by the private sectors. Mostly children from the upper and middle class backgrounds avail of the latter.

The Pratichi Report (henceforth PR) (2009:61) brings out that mothers from poor socio-economic backgrounds generally express their eagerness and interest for pre-school education, apart from the SNP (Supplementary Nutrition Program) in the ICDS. The PSE (Pre School Education) gets the highest priority from 64.6% of the people, while for the SNP it is only 14.3%. In West Bengal preschool children usually learn rhymes, short stories, the Bengali alphabet, counting, etc. Some of the guardians contend that in some cases the PSE level at ICDS centres is higher than that of the other private kindergarten schools. Yet, tribal children face a language difficulty during the PSE program. This type of communication gap in the tribal dominated centres not only leads to poor implementation of the PSE program, but also discourages children from attending such centres. However, policy discussions do not recognize these problems seriously. Also, the quality of the PSE program depends on the efforts of the AWW (Anganwadi Worker), supervisor and CDPO (Child Development Project Officer). Sixty four percent of the mothers opined that the irregularity, half-heartedness and lack of 'seriousness and dedication' of the AWW affected the PSE program (PR, 2009:62). According to CDPOs and AWWs, the lack of infrastructure, economic resource and 'weak commitment' did not allow them to deliver a quality PSE program (PR, 2009:63).[20] Rao (2004) pointed out that the dull curriculum, 'poor learning environment' and ineffective teaching discouraged the children; as a result children want to get rid of the centres (Rao, 2005:28). Many researchers like Kaul (2002), Nair & Radhakrishnan (2004),

[19]Manual for Planning and Appraisal. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, A Programme for Universal Elementary Education. Ministry of Human Resource Development. Department of Elementary Education & Literacy. April. 2004.

[20]Rana,K. Sen, S. Kundu, M,et al.*The Pratichi Child Report: A Study on The Delivery of ICDS in West Bengal with a foreword by Amartya Sen.* Pratichi (India) Trust. Delhi. Feb. 2009.*pp.*10,61,62, 63.

Rao (2004) and Sharma (1998) reported that the ICDS failed to provide a high–quality pre-school education, and maintained that it could be improved greatly (Rao, 2005).

2.4.3 Improving the pre-school education

Ideas for improving the PSE may be obtained from successful programs running in different parts of the country. Since 1987, a successful pre-school education program is being conducted in the state of Uttrakhand by a NGO, namely, Uttrakhand Environmental Education Centre. Some of the reasons for the success of that program are as follows: decentralized participation of the local women as well as the community (National Policy on Education, 1998) in the program planning and implementation process; recruitment of local women as teachers, professional quality development training for the teachers, need identification and its fulfilment, etc. Recruitment of teachers from the concerned locality helps to develop a positive interaction between the teachers and the young children and to overcome the language barrier.[21]

For quality improvement, some researchers suggest the need to form small classes. According to Krueger (1999), the kindergarten students coming from small class sizes had better learning outcomes. The same study also revealed that teacher characteristics affected a little on the learning outcome at the kindergarten level.[22] As per the U.S. standards also, a small group size and a low child to staff ratio are the two most important quality determining parameters. For a better delivery of pre-school education some nations follow the child-centered or "developmentally appropriate" model (Boocock, 1995:110). New Zealand and some industrialized Asian nations do not accept the concept of free-play to achieve a quality PSE. Similarly in India, the National Policy on Children (1998) suggests the child oriented ECCE programs. Avoiding the formal methods, the policy focuses on the child's individuality and being engaged in play and games. In the national policy, the ECCE, first and foremost, tries to involve and develop those children who are first generation learners. Consequently, the pre-school education accelerates and strengthens the impetus for primary education.[23] Boocock (1995) cites a 1983 study in Singapore which asserts that the children, who attend pre-school education, perform better and easily handle the academic tasks in their future

[21] Sood, N. Early Childhood Care and Education, Reflections on an Innovative Programme.*Journal of Indian Education.*Vol. 32, No.1.NCERT. Feb. 2007.
[22] Krueger, A,B. Experimental Estimates of Education Production Functions. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics.* Vol.114, No.2. JSTOR. MAY.1999.*pp.*497-532.
[23] National Policy on Education 1986(as modified in 1992) with National Policy on Education, 1968.Government of India, Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, New Delhi. 1998.

formal schools. A study done in the context of Hong Kong corroborates the fact that pre-school education is a necessary first step towards the formal school, the latter being the most common way for the socio-economic mobility. In the Indian context, the Pratichi Report (2009:10) suggests the need for an organizational change for the purpose of making ICDS an effective programme. Such an organizational change has, of necessity, to seek the 'locally informed' arrangements rather than blindly following the 'globally theorized' ones.

2.5 Primary Education and its economic dimensions

2.5.1 Free and universal primary education

Bringing primary education within the reach of the common man is the avowed goal of the Right to Education Act. Yet, people from all classes and socio-economic backgrounds spend a 'considerable amount' of money for the education of their children. According to Tilak (2002), the "free" education is a misnomer in the Indian context given the economic barriers to its accessibility. A host of factors such as household income, household expenditure, and educational qualifications of the head of the household, demographic burden, caste and religion impinge on the educational expenditure. Likewise, availability of a school in the neighbourhood, distance of the school from home and various incentives (namely mid-day meal, distribution of text-books, school uniforms) directly influence the quantum of educational expenses.[24]

More importantly, the widely prevalent practice of private tuition has added to the quantum of educational expenditure. SCERT (2009) refers to Pratham and states that in West Bengal a large portion of the students under the age group of six to fourteen years are quite habituated with private tuition. The same report of SCERT also reveals that the rate of private tuition simultaneously increases with students' upgradation from primary to the secondary level. Students' and parents' responses indicate several causal orientations for an increased interest to private tuition. These are: A) most of the students do not get any sort of educational guidance from family. So private tutors help and guide the students in their study. B) Private classes help the students with their assigned home tasks of schools. C) Students can easily communicate with private tutors. They can ask frequent questions to solve their difficulties and queries. D) Students opine that the guiding procedure of tutorial classes helps them to acquire high marks in the examinations. Students also claim that a suggestive set of probable questions for examinations also helps the students to prepare

[24]Tilak B.G. Jandhyala; *Determinants of Household Expenditure on Education in Rural India*. Series.No.88. NCAER, New Delhi. Aug. 2002.

forthe examinations.[25] In the Pratichi (India) Report, 2002, Amartya Sen writes that the "evil of private tuition" perpetuates the 'class divisions' in an uninterrupted way. It also violates the commitment of the Indian Constitution for "free education".[26]

2.5.2 The effects of existing class and economic barriers

Arguably, the visible and not-so-visible constraints on the availability of "free education" 'disproportionately' affect the students from lower socio-economic backgrounds and disadvantaged classes such as daily wage-earners, SC, ST, low castes and Muslim students. Exceptions apart, in general, scheduled caste and scheduled tribe students suffer more than the students belonging to the Hindu general category. As per the NSS data (GoI, 2006b), in the rural areas, 36.5% of the SC population and 45.9% of the ST populations are below the poverty line. In urban areas, these percentages are 38.5% and 34.8 % respectively. In particular, the proportion of the Muslims in West Bengal is comparatively larger than in the other states of India, e.g. Uttar Pradesh, and Andhra Pradesh. Also, Muslims in West Bengal suffer from severe economic handicaps. Their insolvent family backgrounds and poverty accelerates the low participation level at school and leads to their higher dropout rate.[27]

According to the Pratichi Report (December 2009), there are also minute differences across socio-economic categories in terms of ability and efficiency among the students of class III and IV. The figures show that 13% of the SC students, 29% of the ST students and 25% of the Muslim students of these classes are unable to read. On the other hand, 13% of the SC students, 43% of the ST students and 27% of the Muslim students do not have the requisite writing skills, only 8% students of the 'other'/ 'general' community are lacking in reading and writing skills.[28]

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[25] State Council Of Educational Research And Training (W.B),Department of School Education, Govt. of West Bengal, *Implications of Private Tuition in West Bengal*, *2009* (Kolkata), 1,95, 170-171.
[26]Mohan, D. *Education as Regulated Means of Representation: Methodological Failures in the First Pratichi Report, 2002*. Conference on Religious and Social Fragmentation and Economic Development in South Asia, A D White House, Cornell University. Oct. 2005.*p.*1.
[27]Govinda.R, Bandyopadhyay .M. *Access to elementary education in India: Country Analytical Review*, National University of Educational Planning and Administration.
(NUEPE). New Delhi. Research commissioned by the Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transition and Equity (CREATE). University of Sussex. UK. July. 2008.
[28]Rana,K. Sen, S. Sarkar, M, et al.*The Pratichi Education Report II—Primary Education In West Bengal: Changes and Challenges.*Pratichi (India) Trust. Delhi. Dec. 2009.*pp* 12-25.

2.5.3 The ideal of equality

The present situation, regarding the class and economic barriers, is not incidental. Rather it bears the burden of a long consequential historical background. In the Indian case, class divisions have been actually intermeshed with “caste-based categorization” (Pratichi Report, 2009:12).

To overcome these disadvantageous conditions, students from these backgrounds need special care and attention. Well-calibrated learning procedures and the requisite sensitivity on the part of the teachers can largely mitigate the adverse impact of class distinction and disadvantageous conditions on the learning of the children. To provide equal opportunities for learning despite class differences remains the foremost challenge of the day. The role of home, social relations between the teacher and the students, the teachers’ perception of the taught, the degree of priority, attention, delivery, accountability of the teachers, work environment, accessibility of the school are important parameters of the schooling process.[29]

2.5.4 Resources for primary education

From the coefficient of elasticity, it is clear that the government expenditures on education and the household expenditures on the same are complementary. Logically, it is important for the government to assign more funds for the education so that it gives fillip to the ‘mobilization’ of household educational expenses. To fulfil the goal of universal elementary education (UEE), as well as to eradicate the socio-economic barriers to school education, it is necessary to augment the investment of public resources in education and strengthen the nature of public spending. An efficient and optimal public spending for education is non-negotiable.

The 11th Five–Year plan had proposed that the funding pattern of the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) – a government program for the universalization of elementary education (UEE) - may be revised in a 50:50 funding proportion between the centre and the states. Some states like Rajasthan and Bihar have already opposed the proposal on the ground of increased funding burden on the states due to the ‘shortfall of funds’. Previously, the ratio was 75:25. According to the mid-term appraisal of the 10th five year plan such a ratio was

[29] Mehrotra,S. Reforming elementary education in India: A menu of options. *International Journal of Educational Development.* Vol. 26. Elsevier, 2006.

meant to accelerate and fulfil the objectives of SSA by 2010.[30] The tussle between the Centre and the states over the ratio of funding, and the enormity of resources required for the UEE, necessitates the continual public funding of primary education for a preeminent public good.

2.6 Primary education and community participation

2.6.1 The role of elected representatives.

An amendment to the Indian Constitution enhances the "strategy of so-called decentralization of educational management through the panchayati raj".[31] Certain problems of elementary education could indeed be attributed to the Panchayati Raj Institutions (ibid). Ghosh (2002) argues however, that PRIs have done a commendable job. They also serve as a tool for linking different grassroot level institutions to achieve the goal of education for all (EFA).[32]

Elected representatives of the panchayats help in carrying out programs for the identification of non-enrolled children and drop outs to accelerate the EFA program. This type of self initiated programs, of identifying the non-enrolled children and drop-outs, depict that these members can play a significant role in the functioning of schools. The Gram Sansads are responsible for ratification of the newly reformed school managing committees. In the present context, the universalization of elementary education (UEE) needs a prominent support from the Village Education Committee (VEC). Its active involvement in the awareness campaigns, for the ensured enrolment and retention of the children, and in other components of the UEE program is essential. However, the main problem remains that interference of elected representatives results in a political polarization among the teachers. In the worst case, it politicizes the school atmosphere and politically victimizes the teachers. The presence of such an unhealthy political climate lowers the attendance rate of students

[30]Elementary Education: A Sorry State. *Economic and Political Weekly.* July 14, 2007.
[31] Acharya. Education: Panchayats and Decentralisation, Myths and Realities' *Economic and Political Weekly,* Feb 23, 2003:788.
[32] Ghosh, B. Panchayats and Elementary Education. *Economic and Political Weekly.* May 11. 2002.

by three to four percent.[33] Excessive interference of the elected representatives can also destroy the comfortable and decentralized working atmosphere. In many cases, the concerned panchayat members are accused of producing false enrolment records. This false and increased enrolment status helps the members to get a spare number of allotted books, teachers and an unnecessary amount of ration. These supplementary funds and materials are sometimes marketed without a legal procedure. Involvement of the panchayats and the department of rural development in the functioning of primary schools sometimes give rise to a dilemma in decision making. Concerned decision making committees are usually bound to please every stakeholder of the school management body, which results in a lack of efficiency and problems with implementation.

2.6.2 Creating appropriate academic atmosphere in the schools

The school functioning system needs to organize a suitable working boundary to protect the schools from various political problems and to achieve an appropriate academic atmosphere with a proper decentralized management.[34]Rana (2003) also suggests that SSK and primary school governing bodies need a work environment free from the political and bureaucratic setup. It may be possible to form such an environment through the positive support and involvement of the local communities.[35]

2.7 Education for children with differential abilities or special needs

2.7.1 The existing system and problems of education

The objectives of SSA include equal opportunity and quality education for children with special needs (CWSN). Previous experience from the District Primary Education Program (DPEP) shows that it is possible to provide quality education for CWSN in formal schools

[33] Jalan, J., Panda, J. *Low Mean & High Variance: Quality of Primary Education in Rural West Bengal.* Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta. 2010.
[34]Chattopadhyay, R., Chaudhury, S., Ghosh, S.K, et.al.*The Role of the Panchayats in Primary Education in West Bengal. Extension of the previous study: The Status of Primary Education in West Bengal.*IIM Calcutta. 1998.
[35] Rana, K., Das, S, et.al.State of Primary Education in West Bengal. *Economic and Political Weekly.* May 31, 2003.

along with regular students.[36] Special children need to develop confidence and courage for their normal growth. The National Policy on Education (henceforth NPE) (1998) suggests that these qualities for normal growth can be best developed as an integral part of the existing system of education with normal children. The 'children with motor handicaps' and others with a low level of differential ability should have the opportunity to acquire education with other normal pupils (NPE, 1998:11).[37] Lacks of awareness regarding the capability of these pupils, deeply entrenched social attitudes, teachers' perceptions and their way of interaction and the sympathetic pathos towards these children make them socially excluded and marginalized. The SSA manual for planning and appraisal (2004) stresses the importance of CWSN inclusion under the regular educational system. To fulfil this objective, the SSA promises to follow the zero rejection policy which ensures the right to education to every CWSN. The SSA also agrees with the Persons With Disabilities Act 1995 (Equal opportunities, Protection of Rights & Full Participation Act 1995) and advocates the option of most comfortable educational environment for the CWSN as per their need, for example, home-based education, special schools and provision of effective inputs through the EGS & AIE (Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative & Innovative Education). In case of children with severe difficulties, the SSA has provision for special schools and hostel facilities at district headquarters.

The NPE (1998) also provides the opportunity for vocational training for those with differential abilities. In this regard, it positively encourages any kind of voluntary work for their integration in the regular educational system and the provision of vocational training for children with special needs.

2.7.2 Possible ways of reaching out

Teachers dealing with special children at the primary level need special training. Specialised training of such teachers may have a positive impact on the teacher-student interaction. Moreover, special study materials and resources, consciousness of the concerned community, early childhood care and education (ECCE), are bound to facilitate the learning abilities of these children.

[36]Manual for Planning and Appraisal. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, A Programme for Universal Elementary Education. Ministry of Human Resource Development. Department of Elementary Education & Literacy. April. 2004.
[37]National Policy on Education 1986(as modified in 1992) with National Policy on Education, 1968.Government of India, Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, New Delhi. 1998.

For improved learning outcome of these children, the SSA offers Rs.1200/- per annum for every special child. That amount may be spent on their particular personal educational requirements; special and alternative study materials, or on RCI (Rehabilitation Council of India) approved long term teachers' training programmes, organizational planning and arrangements at the district level, awareness campaigns, workshops, and development of special devices for training, etc. Lastly, the SSA manual (2004) suggests that district level planning may emphasize on the need identification, resource allocation and inclusive quality education of the CWSN as the most important issues rather than the admission of the differentially-abled children to the special schools.

Comparison with other States:

For all issues mentioned in the ToR, the IIM Calcutta team is also studying best practices from other parts of the country which have fared well to achieve inclusive education. The team is studying, for instance, Kerala, a state that shows effective decentralization of education through the 73rd amendment. Madhya Pradesh and Tami Nadu, both have done well in MIS and process changes. In this box, we focus mostly on the secondary data from Kerala. In the final report, we wish to focus on these three states to, which will also include first-hand experience of the study team from the state visits.

A dominant political participation is prominent in Kerala. With the presence of such a political scenario, however, Kerala shows a gap between the rhetoric and practical procedure of educational decentralization. Local Self-Government Institutions (LSGIs) were formed and strengthened as per the necessity of the state to empower the local bodies. In 1996 the state implemented the People's Campaign for Decentralised Planning (PCDP).Mukundan Mullikottu-Veettil and Bray Mark, *Decentralisation and Privatisation in Education,*ed. Zajda Joseph (Netherlands: Springerlink, 2006), 111-113. This reform program and functioning of the PCDP is a prominent example of the difference between the planning procedure and the actual functionary in reality. In this context of decentralization of education the Kunnur district shows the typical features of the state as a whole.

Kerala State Literacy Mission (KSLM) provides non-formal and 'life oriented education' for the neo-literates. These help the adults to learn and to join in the continuing education program. The Calicut University and National Service Scheme actively participate in these programs for non-formal and adult education <http://www.prd.kerala.gov.in/literacymission.htm>.

The major social groups in Kerala show some inter-relationship between the land-holding opportunities, class and economic conditions and educational opportunities.

The state provides pre-school education to children through the ICDS program since 2 October 1975. Pre-school education mainly aims at the mental and physical capability development. The method used for this purpose is the Thematic approach. Conversation, stories and songs are adopted as a more useful procedure to teach the children rather than the traditional reading, writing and arithmetic pedagogy at the pre-school level. At present there are 163 ICDS centers in Kerala <http://www.old.kerala.gov.in/dept_socialwelfare/Children.htm>.

There are specific schemes for education and care of differentially able children, such as Welfare Programmes for Differently Abled, Institutions for the disabled, Home for mentally deficient children, Care Home for differentially abled children, Pratheeksha Bhavan, Vocational Training Centres, Scholarships for differentially abled students, Scholarships for the mentally challenged, etc.<http://www.kerala.gov.in/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&catid=103:social-welfare-department&id=>.

The community participation and monitoring mechanism in the educational system here has been activated through the “People’s Campaign for Decentralized Planning” (PCDP) since 1996 to establish the “Empowered Deliberative Democracy” (EDD). (Ref. Mukundan, M. V. in Democratic Decentralization and Primary Education: A Comparison of Continuity and Change in Two Districts of Kerala).

Like many other states, accountability of the teachers depend on the teachers’ education, teachers’ training system and opportunities of the Probation of Teachers in schools and the inspection system. In case of the probationary teacher, one is asked to show and establish his / her efficiency in teaching within a period of one year. <http://www.slideshare.net/dhanurajd/pragmatic-paradigm-of-setting-up-school-kerala-experience>. Some sources also indicate that the teachers in Kerala are largely accountable and it needs to be maintained well.

More than 94% of the rural students accessthe primary schools within a distance ofone kilometer. About 98% of the students access the same within a distance of two kilometers.

96% and 98% of the rural population get opportunity to access upper primary and secondary schools within a distance of three kilometers and eight kilometers respectively.

2.8 Monitoring mechanisms

2.8.1 The existing system

For long, community participation has been viewed as an effective way of monitoring the delivery of quality education at the school level. It has been projected as a superior form of monitoring than the usual bureaucratic-governmental procedures of checks and balances and the standard procedures of teachers' accountability. Statistical findings have established that the participation of the beneficiary community results in improved service delivery and 'better project outcomes' (*p.*175).[38] Community participation and decentralized policies for school education are practiced in many nations like Peru (1972), Philippines (1974), Nigeria (1977), Chile (1980) and in the English-speaking nation-states. Grant (1979) argues that the joint initiatives of the community and the schools may together lead to some effective policy decisions and fruitful outcomes. In the Indian context, on the basis of the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution of India, Kerala has successfully utilized 35% to 40% of plan funds for community participation and Local Self Governments (LSGs) in the fields of education and health. The National Policy on Education (1986) emphasizes the role of community participation in decentralized planning and management of the educational system.[39] The planning and appraisal manual of the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (2004) suggests that the bottom-up approach, the interaction with the target group and community participation, may help the planning team to find out the actual problems of the target group. Such practices also offer possible ways for solving different problems related to weak performance, and help to improve the proposed interventions.[40] In fact, it may not be an

[38] Isham, J. Narayan, D. Pritchett, L. Does Participation Improve Performance? Establishing Causality With Subjective Data. *The World Bank Economic Review.* Vol.9. No.2. 1995. *pp.*175-200.
[39] Sankaran, P.N. Vijayakumar, B. *Local Self Governments and Educational Development in Kerala. Dimensions of Social Development*: Status, Challenges and Prospects. Social and Economic Change Monograph Series.No.8. Edited by Karanth, G.K. The Institute for Social and Economic Change. Bangalore. Mar. 2005.
[40] Manual for Planning and Appraisal. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, A Programme for Universal Elementary Education. Ministry of Human Resource Development. Department of Elementary Education & Literacy. April. 2004.

exaggeration to affirm that in most of the schools and SSKs, their weak performance is directly related to the absence of a social monitoring system and the lack of effectiveness of the existing governing mechanisms, and the inertia of departmental supervision.Moreover, NCERT (2007) recommends that an active involvement of the Panchayati Raj Institutions may help to grow interactive community participation. Such well formulated community participation adds a better quality and accountability to the educational procedure. At different block and cluster level a proper strategic planning, distribution of different activities, and quality improvements of educational outcomes mostly depend on school level leadership and 'academic planning' (NCERT, 2007: xi).[41]

To facilitate the scope of social audit and to enhance the efficiency of the educational system, the improved notification issued in August 2008 (No. 840-SE / Pry / 2D-1/ 2007, dated 07/ 08/08) on the Village Education Committee (VEC) stresses on parents' participation in the VEC and in the governance mechanism by forming school specific committees. It suggests school specific committees consisting of ten members out of which 50% members could be parents. There is also a provision for forming a mother-teacher committee in each school. In spite of such excellent recommendations, opportunities for the proper functioning of these committees remain few and far between. In practice, only 35% of the parents know about the existence of such committees in the SSKs and only 31% for the primary schools. Ensuring greater and meaningful public participation remains a challenge in many areas. Factors such as class barriers between the teachers and the parents, the timing of the meetings, teacher's attitude towards the less educated or non-literate parents have a discouraging effect on community participation.

2.8.2 Strengthening the monitoring mechanism

Any strengthening of community participation as a monitoring mechanism calls for innovative thinking and new measures. More than new and improved procedures and schemes of participation, there is a need for fundamental changes in teachers' attitude vis-à-vis communities with whom they work. No doubt the formation of functional school specific committees and increased legal governing power for such committees may enhance the sense of participation and 'ownership of the schools' (*p.*93) among the parents. [42] Community participation combined with an active teachers' union may help strengthen the

[41]National Council of Educational Research and Training, *National Curriculum Framework 2005, 2007* (Kolkata), xi.

[42]Rana,K. Sen, S. Sarkar, M, et al.*The Pratichi Education Report II—Primary Education In West Bengal: Changes and Challenges*. Pratichi (India) Trust. Delhi. Dec. 2009.

delivery system of the school education. The Pratichi Report (2009) posits that community participation in the monitoring process of the SSKs positively contributed to their efficiency and thereby helped achieve the goal of universalization of the primary education more effectively than the other less equipped educational institutions. At the same time, the quality of the departmental inspection should be enriched for a better monitoring system. As the Pratichi Report (2009) suggests, both the departmental monitoring and the community-based monitoring system together enhances the efficiency of the educational system both in the primary schools and in the SSKs.

2.9 Accountability Mechanisms

2.9.1 Accountability procedure for teachers

The accountability procedure for teachers includes three different but related aspects of acquired skills and knowledge. These are: a) core academic knowledge for teaching their own subject or licensed field of interest, b) specific pedagogical skills and knowledge to teach their license-specific subjects and c) all-encompassing common professional skills and knowledge apart from their own subjects. The accountability of the teachers may be restructured by appointing teachers with vivid subject knowledge and high academic scores and qualifications. The pedagogical knowledge and teachers' training programs also add positive criteria to the teachers' accountability.[43] The UNICEF's model of a child friendly school distinguishes the teachers' role and accountability as a 'facilitator of learning'.[44] Teachers' training, motivation, competencies, systematic support and rewards to the teachers are important for quality education (Mpokosa, 2008). Simultaneously, with a legitimate recognition of the Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) programme and to achieve the goal of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, the educational system needs a large amount of 'qualified and professionally trained teachers'.[45] National Council for Teacher Education (henceforth NCTE) estimates that in upcoming years there will be a successively rising demand of qualified and professionally trained secondary stage teachers. On the contrary, the same report estimates that the

[43] Stotsky, S. Who Should Be Accountable For What Beginning Teachers Need To Know?. *Journal of Teacher Education.* Vol.57,No.3. American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE). May/June. 2006.
[44] Mpokosa, C., Ndaruhutse, S, et.al.*Managing Teachers. The centrality of teacher management to quality education.Lessons from developing countries.* CfBT Education Trust and VSO. Sept.2008.
[45] National Council for Teacher Education, *National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education: Towards Preparing Professional and Humane Teacher,2009* (New Delhi), 1-2, 6, 15.

demand for senior secondary stage teachers may decrease by the year of 2016-2017. Estimated additional demand or negative demand for teachers depends on some criteria, such as: a) projected rate of enrolment, b) pupil-teacher ratio, c) concerned factors of teaching load, d) accumulation of several untrained teachers; yet the authorities are less attentive to them.[46] Moreover, a neutral inspection system is another important parameter for the teachers' accountability. A proper inspection system offers all the stakeholders, including the teachers, with an adequate channel to express the day-to-day coercive forces that withhold their best performances (Gann 1998; Kogan 1986; Holly and Hopkins 1998; Wilcox and Gray 1996).[47]

2.9.2 Teachers' training and accountability procedures

National Knowledge Commission (NKC) studies show that teachers are the one and only major element of the school educational system. A teacher performs to fulfil a wide range of demands, related to the curriculum, goals, methodological aspects, expectations, and needs of the student community (NCTE, 2009). So, professionally trained teachers may accelerate the educational development and may increase the degree of accountability. National Council for Teacher Education (2009) recommends that teachers' training and educational curriculum should be framed in congruence with the framework of the school educational curriculum. It also suggests that a professional teacher should be communicative and understanding towards the students and their parents' community. This may help the educational procedure to raise the regular attendance level and increased educational attainment level of the students. For a full proof teachers' education, there is a demand for professionally qualified educators and a well organised teachers' training procedure.

In the field of teachers' training and educational research SCERT plays a major role. G.O. No. 7-Edn (PS) of the 25th February 1993 refers to some core functions of the SCERT. These are- a) development of the school curriculum and relevant materials: SCERT encourages qualitative development to education. It develops and improves syllabus, school curriculum, methodology, instructional materials, etc for teachers and students of different levels i.e. primary to higher secondary levels; b) in-service training and orientation or refresher courses: SCERT provides a positive orientation course and training for developing the professional competencies of administrative officers, office employees, inspecting officers, teacher-educators, and teachers; c) Research and Studies: SCERT conducts

[46] National Council for Teacher Education, *Demand and Supply Estimates of School Teachers and Teacher Educators (2007-08—2016-17), 2010* (New Delhi), 81-85.
[47] Mpokosa, C., Ndaruhutse, S, et.al.*Managing Teachers. The centrality of teacher management to quality education.Lessons from developing countries.* CfBT Education Trust and VSO. Sept.2008.

research and proper monitoring of different educational conditions, problems related to education, teachers training programmes, etc. It also includes different studies, surveys, projects, and evaluation of each and every layer of school education; d) co-ordination and extension of information: SCERT co-ordinates between all levels of Teachers' Training Institutes of the state. It also builds an interactive communication between different academic perspectives of teachers' training, including all types of basic and elementary educational activities related to it. Dissemination of various information and suitable educational programmes with the help of modern educational technologies is another important function of SCERT; e) as per the memo no. 790-SE (pry)/ES/O/OP/4P-3/2001 dated on the 13th August, 2004, SCERT (WB) should look after the academic matters of DIET.[48]

In West Bengal SCERT conducts different activities. The basic functions of SCERT (WB) are: a) necessary materials development for teachers' education and school education; b) dissemination of information through different workshops, publicity materials, radio broadcasts, kiosks, portals, publications, journals, etc; c) conducting research through surveys, case studies, action research, content development for e-learning, etc; d) supervision and monitoring of different programmes and conducting further consequent activities by means of the DIETs; e) incorporation of active working ability and responsibility of the "School Education Committee". Department of School Education, Govt. of West Bengal forms the "School Education Committee" for the education oriented research and training for necessary fields like, teaching –learning materials development mainly for the computerised instructions, development of teaching – learning 'activity books' for various subjects, etc.(Ibid).

2.9.3 Recasting the existing inspection system

According to the UNESCO (2002), the school inspection system is very poor in the whole world. Many schools remain "unsupervised and unsupported" without a proper inspection system.[49]In West Bengal, the Directorate of School Education is responsible for the inspection of primary and secondary schools. The District Primary School Council manages or administers the inspection system in the primary schools through the sub-inspectors (SIs). Under the school circles the SIs are responsible for different activities like teachers' training programmes, their academic and general professional activities, etc. In general the SIs are

[48] State Council Of Educational Research And Training, West Bengal, *SCERT ,West Bengal In Its Decadal Role: Striving Towards Quality,* (West Bengal).
[49] Jalan, J., Panda, J. *Low Mean & High Variance: Quality of Primary Education in Rural West Bengal.* Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta. 2010.

overloaded with excessive responsibility. Each of the SIs bear the responsibility to inspect more than one-hundred and five schools i.e. the total number of schools in more than two circles. The workload should be reduced for improvement of the existing inspection system. An increased number of circle staff may reduce the workload for the inspectors. Communication problems also affect the quality of inspection. The state needs a better transport system for improved inspection.[50]

[50] Ibid.

Chapter 3

Sampling and Methodology

3.1 The present study involves multiple levels. We have to review the state's position in spreading school education to the entire population in the relevant age group. The purview of the study involves all the levels of school education in the state – primary, upper primary, secondary and higher secondary. However, given the RTE Act, and the enrolment – retention problems at the lower levels, the focus has to be on the elementary level of education. The delivery system up to the elementary (upper primary) level depends much more on the systemic ability of the state as the recipients are too young to express their demands or exert their rights.

3.2 Keeping the above in mind, we made an effort to study the problem much more extensively at the ground level. For general and ground level information regarding various stages of the school education system in West Bengal, we opted for Stratified Circular Systematic Sampling technique with independent interpenetrating subsamples. For this, we first devided the state into four geographical regions, starting with North Bengal. We considered Kolkata separately. From each of the regions we have chosen two districts and within each of the districts, we selected six villages each. However, for Dakshin Dinajpur we have a sample of four villages only for reasons described below. Thus we have a total of 46 villages. We covered all the schools – primary, upper primary, secondary, higher secondary and High Madrasas – all that have been found to be located within the boundary of the selected villages. We had also surveyed all the MSKs SSKs and ICDS centres located within the boundaries of the respective sample villages. We have also surveyed 20%of all the households of the selected villages in order to investigate the status of children in the age group 0-18 years. We have, of course, collected other necessary information from the sample households to study the impact of the socio-economic variables on child education and the delivery system of education in the state. The available information from the Village Directory of the Census 2001 were also taken into account and updated through the survey. For Kolkata, we have a separate selection of 9sample primary schools selected from the DISE list using the same method.

3.3 Since the number of secondary and higher secondary schools in the sample villages were inadequate for our study, we had drawn a separate additional sample to study them. We had selected 5% of total secondary and higher secondary schools in each

of selected districts from the DISE list using circular systematic sampling method. We covered all the upper primary, secondary and higher secondary schools falling within the boundaries of the villages in which the selected sample schools were located.

3.4 Our sample methodology has been influenced by an earlier evaluation of the status of primary education in West Bengal undertaken by the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta in 1998-99 on behalf of the West Bengal Board of Primary Education and the UNICEF, Eastern India. We decided to take the opportunity of revisiting the sample units after a gap of more than ten years and compare the key findings with respect to primary education in West Bengal. In our previous study, we had used the same technique as stated above but had taken samples from all the districts of the state. Since the scope of the present study is much wider than only the primary level, and the time given is much shorter, we opted for dividing the state into manageable regions to select the districts. Within the selected districts, we went to all the six villages chosen for the earlier study through Circular Systematic Interpenetrating Subsample technique, where the first village in each subsample case was selected using random numbers. We had sorted the villages, before drawing samples, in terms of Female Literacy Rates obtained from the state sources – FLR having a very high correlation with socio-economic and even the spatial location of the villages. Thus the sample technique retained the character of randomness and yet gave us a much better geographic and socio-economic coverage of the districts. In 1998, when the earlier survey was undertaken, we had considered only four villages each from the northern and southern part of the old Paschim Dinajpur District since most of the auxiliary information was available for the undivided district as a whole. The choice of four villages in each district was due to the smallness of each of the newly created ones. The selected samples are given in the Table 3.2 in volume II.

3.5 We also met officials of the district school administration, school teachers, siksha bandhus and members of the school inspectors' association in West Bengal. In order to identify the best practices in other states, we visited the states of Madhya Pradesh and Kerala and met with the officials of SSA and the state education directorate.

3.6 Table 3.1 shows caste-wise distribution of population in the eight districts included in our survey. The data indicates that the sample comprised people from different social strata. Table 3.2 shows description of schools surveyed along with the year of

establishment, wherever found. We shall go into greater details of the sampling in the final output of the present study.

Chapter 4

Education in West Bengal: A Secondary Data Review

4.1 The objective of this section is to provide an assessment of the condition of primary education in West Bengal. For this purpose, three official sources of data have been used; (i) Census Data 2001, (ii) Elementary Education in India; District Report Cards Raw Data 2008-09 and (iii) DISE 2009-10. In this review, Kolkata district has been treated separately from other urban areas for reasons discussed earlier. The major focus in this chapter, while using the Census 2001 data, is on female literacy, gender inequality and population distribution. The District report card data is looked at in terms of infrastructural issues in primary schools

4.2 Table 4.1 provides an overview of the district-wise distribution of population. Additionally this table also provides information on the number of inhabited villages and number of households per village. It can be seen that 72% of the population and 71% of the households were from rural areas. Medinipur had the highest number of villages with a high population per household. Population per household is the lowest in South Dinajpur. The dispersion of population among the districts is higher in urban areas (coefficient of variation 1.12) as compared to the rural areas (coefficient of variation 0.59).

4.3 Table 4.2 gives us a scenario of distribution of villages according to female literacy as per census 2001. There were 168 villages in the state with no female literacy, of which more than 30% were in Medinipur. The female-illiterate villages constituted less than 0.5% of the total number of villages in the state. It implies that the female population in the state has, by and large, achieved a minimum level of literacy. Only three districts (Howrah, Hooghly, and North 24 Parganas) have a high women's literacy rate – more than 80% of the villages in these districts have a female literacy level above 50%. Kolkata, being a fully urban district, however, is not included in this count. On the whole it may be concluded that there is a considerable scope for improving the female literacy in the state.

4.4 Table 4.3 provides important statistics on the level of overall illiteracy in the State. One-third of the population in the State is illiterate (Census 2001). In three districts,

Malda, Murshidabad, and Purulia, more than 40% of the population is illiterate. There is only one district,Kolkata, where less than 20% of its population is illiterate. Thus there is a huge scope for improvement in the overall literacy of the State.

4.5 Tables 4.4 and 4.5 provide data on gender inequality in literacy. Six out of 18 districts (Census 2001) have a gender inequality of more than 20% in literacy. The gender inequality is worst in Purulia, where female literacy is low. Uttar Dinajpur with similar female literacy has lower gender inequality. This may be due to the high non-general category of population in Purulia. There is a high negative correlation between total literacy and gender inequality – around -0.5. Kolkata with 80% literacy level recorded around 7% gender inequality in literacy.

4.6 Table 4.6 provides data on district-wise distribution of sex ratio. It is interesting to note that the sex ratio is inversely related to female literacy. The correlation coefficient is about -0.3. It indicates that the female literacy is higher in districts which have a low sex ratio. The sex ratio is lowest in Kolkata (Census 2001) which recorded the highest female literacy rate (77.3%). Whereas Purulia with a high sex ratio (954) has the lowest female literacy rate (36.5%). This paradox may indicate a discouraging trend – literate female members in the household willingly or unwillingly oppose the girl child. It also reinforces the fact that a minimum level of literacy does not guarantee social awareness. It is all the more important to spread social awareness among the literate female members in the household. The drive for literacy should not confine itself to mere reading and writing skills. It is expected that the two missions – SSA and RMSA would help in addressing this issue in the long run.

4.7 Table 4.7 provides data on the scheduled caste (SC) and scheduled tribe (ST) population in the districts. The percentage of SC population is highest in Cooch Behar (50.11%). The respective female literacy rate is 56.1%. The lowest percentage of SC population is in Kolkata (6.01%) and the respective female literacy rate is 77.3 % which is the highest among all the districts.SC population in Bankura (31.24%), Jalpaiguri (36.71%) and South 24 Paraganas (32.12%) is about one third of its total population. Other than Kolkata, the percentage of SC population is lowest in Murshidabad (12%). Only three districts (Jalpaiguri, Purulia, and South Dinajpur) have a sizable ST population – more than 15% of the total population. The level of female literacy and the population category are not closely related. However, it is important to note that the relationship between the SC/ST population and female

literacy is negative, whereas the relationship of female literacy and the general category population is positive. The policy implication of this observation may be that the government should make special efforts to improve the reach and delivery of school education in these districts.

4.8 Table 4.8 provides a district-wise distribution of primary schools (Govt.) according to the type of school buildings. These data are collected from Elementary Education in India; District Report Cards (DISE) Raw Data 2008-09. The data shows that as of 2008-09, about 16% of the primary schools in the State did not have any building structures and about two-thirds (72%) of primary schools had pucca buildings. The number of primary schools (Govt.) is the highest in Paschim Medinipur (4672) among which 2164 schools have pucca school buildings, 969 schools have partially pucca buildings, 124 schools have kuccha buildings, one school is under tents, 1363 schools have multiple types of buildings and 508 schools have no building at all. The lowest number of primary schools is in Siliguri (397) with 82 partially pucca buildings, 6 kuccha buildings, 17 multiple type buildings and 3 schools without a building. Most of the districts have no schools in tents except in Hugli (1), Paschim medinipur (1), Murshidabad (3), Nadia (10) and Uttar Dinajpur (1) where a few primary schools were run under tents. Darjeeling (252) district has the largest number of Kuccha school buildings and Uttar Dinajpur, Barddhaman, Birbhum and Dakshin Dinajpur have no kuccha buildings at all. 1578 schools in North 24 Paraganas have no school buildings. Howrah (983), Purba Medinipur (831) and South 24 Paraganas (888), Kochbihar (790), Maldah (897) districts have a large number of schools without buildings.

4.9 Table 4.9 gives a picture of the distribution of primary schools according to the average number of classrooms. According to Table 4.9 the State-level average number of class rooms per government owned primary school was 3.48 in 2008-09. However, the average number of class rooms in primary schools in the State as per DISE state-wise statistic was 2.7 in 2007-08, which has increased to 3.1 in 2009-10. There were nine districts where the number of classrooms per government-run primary school was less than the state-level average. Siliguri (9.03) had the highest number of classrooms. The average number of classrooms is lowest in Puruliya (2.64) district. Barddhaman (4.14), Howrah (3.81), Purba Medinipur (3.55), Murshidabad (3.87), Jalpaiguri (3.83), Malda (3.59) and Nadia (4.06) districts had an average number of classrooms which was more than 3.5.

4.10 Table 4.10 provides district-wise data on distribution of primary schools according to the average number of teachers. The State-level average number of teachers per government owned primary school was 3.28 in 2008-09. However, there were eight districts where the number of teachers per government-run primary school was less than the state-level average. Murshidabad (4.19) district had the highest number of average teachers in primary schools and Puruliya (2.14) had the lowest. Howrah (3.69), Hugli (3.40), Jalpaiguri (3.58), Kolkata (3.59), Maldah (4.14), Nadia (3.69), Siliguri (4.07) and Uttar Dinajpur (3.90) district had an average number of teachers, more than 3.5.

4.11 The RTE Act requires that the pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) does not exceed 40 in primary schools and 35 in upper primary schools. Table 4.11 shows the PTR in West Bengal and a select few states for primary and upper primary schools during 2009-10. It is observed that West Bengal lagged way behind Kerala. The PTR in upper primary schools in West Bengal was much above the national average. It implies that there is acute shortage of upper primary schools in West Bengal. The Government needs to take immediate steps to bring the PTR at par with the RTE norms.

4.12 Table 4.12 shows the Educational Development Index (EDI) and the rank of select states in India based on DISE data 2009-10. EDI shows the status of a state in terms of the effectiveness of the primary and upper primary education system. A set of 21 indicators have been used in computing EDI which are re-grouped into the four sub-groups, namely Access, Infrastructure, Teachers and Outcome indicators. Table 4.12 is self-explanatory. Access rank for primary schools in West Bengal is above Kerala. However, the situation is quite opposite in the case of upper primary schools. Other states mentioned in the table have also performed better than West Bengal on most of the indicators. A poor EDI ranking indicates that the State may have poor PTR, students-classroom ratio, and presence of untrained teachers, among other things. The Government of West Bengal has to make sincere and timely efforts to improve the EDI ranking. Implementation of RTE Act norms and standards would definitely help the State improve its EDI ranking.

Chapter 5

Implementation of Right to Education Act

5.1 Introduction

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is an effort to universalize elementary education through community-ownership of the school system. The main objective of the SSA is to provide useful and relevant elementary education (including retention) for all children between 6 to 14 years of age by 2010. The Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) is an extension of the SSA as it promises universal access to secondary level education to all children between 15 to 16 years of age by 2017 and universal retention by 2020. While the SSA and the RMSA offer operational frameworks for universalizing education, their provisions have been used as general guidelines by each state to interpret and implement the schemes. The 86th amendment to the Indian Constitution (Constitution (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act, 2002) inserted Article 21-A in the Constitution which provided for 'free and compulsory' education of all children betweensix and fourteen years of age as a Fundamental Right. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE) is the consequential legislation envisaged under Article 21-A. Thus, the RTE Act makes the implementation of compulsory education legally binding on all states/ union territories. The RTE Act came into effect on April 1, 2010. The SSA had been launched in 2001-02 and the states have since then started implementing the mission of the SSA by setting up the necessary infrastructure and establishing operating guidelines. When the RTE Act was enacted, one of the major challenges faced by each state was to align the existing rules/guidelines under the SSA with the requirements of the RTE Act.

5.2 State RTE Rules

The RTE Act provides a legally enforceable rights framework with a definite time frame that State governments must adhere to. The first step towards the implementation of the RTE Act in a state is a notification of the state RTE Act Rules in the official gazette. Such state RTE Rules may be framed in the lines of Central RTE Rules which have already been notified. The State RTE Rules must cover provisions for pre-primary schools/Anganwadis. The Rules should provide that the State Government/local authority shall undertake school mapping and identify all children, including children in remote areas, children with disabilities, children

belonging to disadvantaged groups (e.g. SC/ST) and children belonging to weaker sectionsof society within a period of one year from the date of publication of the Rules and every year thereafter.

5.3 Recognition of Unaided Schools

Section 12 of the RTE Act mandates that all unaided schools shall provide free and compulsory education to at least 25% of the children belonging to the weaker sections and disadvantaged groups in the neighbourhood. The State Government would reimburse the expenditure incurred, if any. This requires every unaided school imparting elementary education to be registered with the appropriate authority (e.g. District Inspector's Office) within a given timeframe. Each existing unaided school after the promulgation of the State RTE Rules must apply in a prescribed format to the appropriate authority to get a certificate of recognition. If an existing unaided school fails to obtain the certificate within the given timeframe, the school would be asked to close down. No new unaided school can be opened in the state unless recognised. Such recognition of unaided schools needs to be reviewed periodically (e.g. after every three/five years). The recognition certificate would be subject to the following conditions:

- The school shall give admission to a minimum of 25% of the children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups in the neighbourhood in class I. Aided schools are required to provide free and compulsory elementary education to such proportion of children admitted therein as its annual recurring aid or grants received bears to its annual recurring expenses, subject to a minimum of 25%.
- The school shall notify the fees to be charged from the children every year before the commencement of the academic session.
- The school shall have to maintain norms and standards as specified in the RTE Act.
- The school is open to inspection by any officer authorised by the State Government/ local authority; and
- The school shall furnish such reports and information as may be required by the State Government.

5.4 Neighbourhood Limits

The RTE Rules should specify the limits of neighbourhood unambiguously for primary and upper primary schools. The central RTE Rules specify that a primary school / upper primary school shall be established within the *walking distance* of one km / three km of the neighbourhood. However, the general definition of neighbourhood limits may be relaxed in areas having difficult terrain or a lack of roads. In areas with a high population density, it is prudent to set up more than one neighbourhood school. Similarly, for children from small hamlets where no school exists within the limits of a neighbourhood, the State Government/local authority would make adequate arrangements for free transport and if necessary residential facilities for providing elementary education. It would be the responsibility of the local authority to identify neighbourhood school(s) where children may be admitted and make such information public for each habitation within its jurisdiction. This would ensure that all children who are between 6 to 14 years of age are in school. The real challenge would be to track children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups in the neighbourhood. The basic population level data may be collected from the Village Education Register (VER). It may so happen that the prescribed neighbourhood limits may not have enough children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups to fill up the 25% reserved seats in unaided schools. In such a situation the limits of a neighbourhood may be extended for filling up the required percentage of seats.

5.5 Tracking of Unaided Schools

In order to ensure that unaided schools (and also partially aided schools) meet the norms and standards of the RTE Act (and rules), the following information may be maintained for every unaided (aided) school:

- Name of the cluster/block
- Name of the school
- Name of the neighbourhood village/town as per definition
- Total number of children in the neighbourhood belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups (*this information would be available in the village education register or similar register)*
- Target enrolment of children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups in the school in Class I
- Actual enrolment
- Name of the official-in-charge

5.6 Social Access

Social access requires not merely physical access to a neighbourhood school but also access to a school without any discrimination based on caste, class, gender, and special needs. Mapping for access to neighbourhood schools would need to consider these social factors as well. The SSA Framework for Implementation states that school mapping would include the following steps:

- Environment building in the village;
- Conduct of a household survey;
- Preparation of a map indicating different households, the number of children in each household and their participation status in the school;
- Preparation of a village/school education register; such a register should contain records of all children from their birth till 14 years of age;
- Presentation of the map and its analysis thereof to the people; and
- Preparation of a proposal for improved educational facilities in the village; which would form the basis of the School Development Plan mandated under the RTE Act.

Thus, providing social access requires that children from different social backgrounds should have free and equitable access to elementary education. Ideally children from different social backgrounds should study in the same school within the neighbourhood to avoid social stratification. Children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups should not be segregated from the other children in the classrooms nor should their classes be held at places and timings different from the classes held for other children. However it has been observed that disadvantaged groups (particularly scheduled tribes) stay in clusters/pockets within a neighbourhood. Therefore even if there is a school within the limits of a neighbourhood, such school may not be ‘accessible’ to the children from disadvantaged groups. Madhya Pradesh has a large tribal population: 89 blocks out of 313 blocks have a tribal population. Social access is addressed in Madhya Pradesh by opening separate schools for weaker sections/ disadvantaged groups even if there is a primary school in the neighbourhood as per RTE. Alternatively, residential facilities may be provided to the children from the targeted groups.

Another problem in such designated schools is the language of instruction. If the language of instruction in a school in a tribal area is the state language, the children of such a school may feel alienatedin the school environment as tribal populations

use different dialects. Madhya Pradesh has addressed this problem by appointing tribal teachers in such schools. This practice has also solved a related problem –that of the availability of teachers. Teachers from other parts of the state who were earlier appointed in these schools would try to seek transfer from such schools at their earliest opportunity.

In West Bengal the Village Education Register needs to be created/maintained which should include information on out-of-school children as well. This would have to be updated on an annual basis.

While tracking children in rural areas requires special attention, urban areas have different challenges in tracking street/ homeless children, children working in urban households/tea shops, etc. Local municipal authorities and NGOs have helped many states identify these children and ensured their enrolment in schools.

5.7 Student Enrolment & Teacher Requirements

The Village Education Register forms the basis of student enrolment. Normally a birth certificate is required at the time of school admission. Wherever a birth certificate under the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act, 1886, is not available any one of the following documents may be accepted as proof of age of the child for the purpose of admission:

(a) Hospital record;
(b) Anganwadi record;
(c) Declaration by the parent/guardian provided that the parent/guardian submits within six months a certificate of verification of the date of birth of the child from any elected representative of the local authority of the area where the child resides.

The RTE Act (section 26) requires that vacanciesfor the posts of teachers in a government school or government-aided school should not exceed 10% of the total sanctioned strength. The state needs to arrive at the sanctioned strength based on enrolment and fill up vacant positions to comply with the requirements of the RTE.

The RTE supports the recruitment of female teachers and specifies that the SSA practice of recruiting 50% female teachers should continue. Pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) is required to be aligned to meet the guidelines of the RTE. The SSA framework mentions that there should be at least two teachers in every primary school

irrespective of student enrolment, but the RTE links the number of teachers with thestudent enrolment. The present SSA norms require a classroom for every teacher or for every grade/class, whichever is lower, in primary and upper primary schools. The RTE requires at least one class room for every teacher.While the RTE estimates the teacher requirements based on student enrolment, the number of classrooms required would be determined by the number of teachers. Thus as per the RTE, it would be perfectly within law if a primary school with sixty students has two teachers (including a head teacher) and two class rooms, even if the school runs all the classes. However, if the state government decides to have at least one classroom per class (e.g. a primary school with one section each for classes I to V would have a minimum of five classrooms), that would be perfectly within the RTE Act. The elementary schools in the state of Kerala follow the norm of one room for every class and thus have classrooms more than the minimum required as per RTE norms. This helps in ensuring personal attention to students of different classes.

If the number of enrolled children exceeds 150 in a school, the RTE provides for the recruitment of one head teacher in addition to five teachers. The SSA norms do not require a separate room for a head teacher in a primary school while the RTE norms specifically require such.

Special efforts need to be made to enrol out of school children in age appropriate classes. The RTE requires designing special training programmes (e.g. bridge courses) for such children. The special training programmes may be conducted in nearby school premises. Such courses may be provided by teachers working in the school, or by teachers specially appointed for this purpose. The state may involve NGOs to design and deliver such courses. In Madhya Pradesh, bridge courses for out of school children are designed by SCERT (State Council of Education, Research and Training) and imparted by special teachers. Books and an amount of Rs.1300 per child is paid to the teacher from the SSA. The SCERT provides the requisite training to bridge course teachers. Residential facilities are also provided to needy children.

5.8 Mainstreaming Informal Schools

The RTE Act mandates that eventually elementary education must be provided by formal and recognised schools.All existing EGS centres (Sishu Siksha Kendra (SSK) and Madhyamik Siksha Kendra(MSK) in West Bengal) would be required to be

converted into regular schools or closed down when children are mainstreamed into regular schools. The process of upgradation of such centres (kendras) to regular schools must be completed within two years from the date of the commencement of the RTE Act. No new EGS centres may be opened after 2010-11. This poses a huge challenge to West Bengal. There are more than sixteen thousand SSKs and around two thousand MSKs in West Bengal (Table 5.1) and about sixty seven thousand teachers in these schools.

While framing the state RTE Rules, the state government must specify implement measures to handle non-formal schools. All primary and upper primary schools upgraded under EGS would have to be provided with teachers, infrastructure, and other facilities as per the RTE norms. The RTE Act provides a timeframe of two years for upgrading EGS centres to formal schools.

The SSA would provide necessary financial support to such schools for the period of two years. If it is economically unsound to upgrade any of such schools into a formal school, the centre must be closed. The SSA would not provide any financial support after the mandated period of two years.

In the states of Madhya Pradesh and Kerala, such EGS centres have already been upgraded to formal schools and the children brought into mainstream education. In Madhya Pradesh all the teachers of the EGS centres were asked to write the teacher eligibility test (TET) and those who qualified were absorbed. In Kerala all EGS teachers were already eligible but a few hundred were untrained. The state government has developed plans to provide necessary teacher training to those teachers within the given timeframe.

5.9 School Management and Monitoring

The first-tier of school monitoring rests with the immediate stakeholders of the school. The primary responsibility of monitoring the quality of education in a school rests with the School Management Committee (SMC). The RTE Act gives immense importance to the SMCs as part of the decentralized structure, and one in which the parents would have a very significant role. The RTE Act mandates under section 21 that every school (other than an unaided school) must set up a SMC within six months of publication of the RTE rules by the state. Such a SMC would be required to be reconstituted every two years. The State RTE Rules should specify the size of the SMC. Three-fourths of the members of the SMC are required to be from

amongthe parents or guardians of the enrolled children. Rule 13(3) of the Central RTE Rules states that the remaining one-fourth of the SMC members shall be chosen from among the following persons:

- One-third of the members from among the elected members of the local authority, to be decided by the local authority;
- One-third of the members from among teachers of the school, to be decided by the teachers of the school; and
- and the remaining one-third from among local educators /children of the school, to be decided by the parents of the SMC

The SMC is required to elect a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson from among the members of the Committee. The head teacher or the senior most teachers may be the ex-officio member secretary of the SMC. The SMC is required to meet at least once a month. The SMC is required, inter alia, to ensure implementation of clauses (a) and (e) of section 24 and section 28 of the RTE Act, ensure enrolment and continued attendance of children, monitor implementation of the mid-day meal in the school and monitor regularity and punctuality of the teachers of the school. The SMC would have to prepare a three-year school development plan. The school development plan would contain estimates of class-wise enrolment for each year, additional personnel /infrastructural requirements and hence additional financial requirements. School grants under SSA would be made available to the SMC based on the school development plan. Any money received by the SMC would have to be credited in the account of the Committee. The account should be a joint account of the Chairperson and the member secretary of the Committee.

It isimperative that if a state has several school-level committees (e.g. PTA, MTA etc.), those committees should be subsumed to the prescribed SMC.

The next tier of school monitoring is prescribed at the block and cluster level. The RTE Act prescribes that every Assistant Education Officer (or an officer with similar designation) should undertake at least two visits to every school each year. Additionally, staff members at the BRC (Block Resource Centre) and CRC (Cluster Resource Centre) should visit each school at least once in every two months or every month if the circumstances so demand. In Kerala each BRC trainer is in charge of a cluster and takes care of 10-12 schools under each cluster. Every Saturday trainers assemble at the BRC and review the performance/progress of the school with the BPO (Block Project Officer), DIET faculty and AEO (Assistant Education Officer). In a situation where a particular school requires special attention (due to the

pooracademic performance of the children), the BRC trainer visits the school continuously for about 10 working days to help the teachers improve the quality of classroom transactions.

The third tier of monitoring is at the district level. The officials at the district level may occasionally undertake independent field visits to monitor school performance. However, the main information tool at the district level is the school-based annual information system called District Information System for Education (DISE). The DISE data covers all schools: recognised or un-recognised.

Finally, the State Executive Committee of the SSA should periodically monitorthe performance of all schools providing elementary education through meetings.

A set of quality monitoring tools (QMT) have been developed in collaboration with the NCERT to provide information on the quality of education at schools. Such quality related indices cover issues relating to student enrolment and attendance, pupil achievement, teacher availability, teacher training, classroom practices, and academic supervision of schools by BRC/CRC etc.

5.10 Teachers Qualification and Training

The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), vide a notification in August 2010, prescribed the minimum qualifications for teachers in elementary education (class I to VIII). Teachers are required to satisfy three criteria for being eligible for recruitment in schools imparting elementary education:

a) Secondary/ senior secondary/ graduate degree; and
b) 2-year Diploma in Elementary Education/4-year Bachelor of Elementary Education/ 1-year Bachelor of Education; and
c) Pass in the Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) to be conducted by the state government in accordance with the guidelines framed by the NCTE.

Paragraph 4 of the above notification states that the minimum qualification criteria as per the NCTE would not be applicable for:

- Teachers appointed before September 3, 2001 (the date on which the NCTE (Determination of Minimum Qualifications for Recruitment of Teachers in Schools) Regulations 2001 came into force);
- A teacher appointed in class I to V after September 3, 2001 provided he/she possesses a B.Ed (Special Education)/D.Ed (Special Education) qualification and is

willing to undergo an NCTE recognised 6-month special programme on elementary education;

- A teacher of class I to V with B.Ed qualification who has completed a 6-month Special Basic Teacher Course (Special BTC) approved by the NCTE.

No teacher can be appointed after August 2010 who does not possess the minimum qualifications as per the NCTE notification. Teachers' training poses a major challenge to the state of West Bengal. As per one estimate, there are about 75000 'untrained' teachers in primary and upper primary schools in West Bengal.

In-service teachers' training is essential to continuously improve the quality of teaching. The SSA provides financial support for organizing training programmes for teachers, head teachers, resource persons and even for educational administrators. The SSA mandates 20 days of training for each existing teacher in one academic year and a 30 day induction programme for all newly recruited teachers. The SSA provides a grant towards training of untrained teachers to enable them to acquire professional qualifications. The state-level training institutions (DIETs) should be primarily responsible for providing pre-service and in-service training. Resources at BRCs/URCs and CRCs are effectively used to provide training and on-site support to schools and teachers. In the state of Keralathe SSA mandated 10 day refresher course is held during the summer vacation (called vacation training). Other training (for the remaining 10 days) are held on Saturdays only at block/cluster level. Training is imparted initially to a select State Resource Group (consisting DIET faculty, eminent resource persons, and select school teachers from each district). The State Resource Group (SRG) would in turn train the District Resource Group (DRG) (consisting of BRC trainers and eminent school teachers (2 teachers from each block under the district)of the district) at BRCs and other venues throughout the state. Finally, the DRG trainers train teachers of schools under a cluster. The CRCs in Kerala are located in a lead school in the cluster where the head teacher of the school is the convener. One BRC trainer is in charge of a CRC. It is the responsibility of that BRC trainer to help teachers on a continuous basis in improving the quality of their classroom transactions. In Madhya Pradesh in-service teachers' training is centralized. All in-service training isconducted at DIETs. Every year 33% of the teachers in primary and upper primary schools are chosen for 20 days of training. Teachers of poorly performing schools are given a preference in such training programmes.

5.11 Organizational Restructuring

The present organizational set up for delivery of elementary education needs to be overhauled to ensure effective implementation of RTE norms and standards. The state project office of SSA and the state education directorate should coordinate their activities better. While the SSA would concentrate on elementary education, the state directorate needs to look after high school education as well. The RTE Act states that children in class I to VIII would not need to write any qualifying examination, their promotion would be automatic. Hence the role of the West Bengal Primary Education Board needs to be re-examined. The major focus of RTE is on the quality of education. The present organizational set up which looks after curriculum, text book preparation, development of TLM, and continuous comprehensive evaluation requires strengthening. SSA would provide all therequisite help in this regard. The role of academic administrators also needs to be redefined. The academic administrators should facilitate the improvement of quality of school education and should not merely be seen as inspectors who find fault with the teachers.

5.12 Information System

It is always prudent to use information technology to monitor delivery of various schemes/programmes under the SSA/RTE, maintain service records of teachers, pay teachers' salary from the treasury, and even supervise teachers' recruitment/transfers. Development of an education portal on the lines of the one currently in use in Madhya Pradesh (www.educationportal.mp.gov.in) is essential. The data entry may be done at the block/cluster level. The educational portal would be accessible to authorities at different levels. This would make the delivery system more transparent and objective while helping in auditing the activities of schools/ the district administration/ projects.

5.13 Time Frame

The following roadmap is mandated by the RTE Act:

Activity	**Time Frame**
Establishment of neighbourhood schools	31 March 2013
Provision of school infrastructure with all mandated	31 March 2013

facilities	
Provision of teachers as per prescribed PTR	31 March 2013
Training of untrained teachers	31 March 2015
All quality interventions and other provisions	With immediate effect

Thus, it is essential to notify the State RTE Rules as soon as possible. Any delay in such notification may lead to missing the deadlines and consequently the State may not receive funds under the SSA. This may seriously affect the announced programme of universalisation of elementary education.

Chapter 6

Elementary Education- Analysis and Recommendations

6.1 Access to Elementary Education

The Constitution (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act, 2002 inserted Article 21-A in the Constitution of India to provide free and compulsory education for all children in the age group of six to fourteen years as a Fundamental Right in such a manner as the State may determine by law. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, which came into effect on 1st April 2010, clearly states that all children in the 6-14 age group have the right to a free and compulsory education till completion of elementary education in a neighbourhood school. The RTE Act, 2009, further clarifies that compulsory education means an obligation of the appropriate government to ensure compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education. Free education implies that no child shall be liable to pay any kind of fee or charges or expenses which may prevent him/her from pursuing and completing elementary education. The RTE provides a legally enforceable rights framework that the government must adhere to. As per that framework every state must establish the necessary number of neighbourhood schools.This must be done by 31 March 2013 in order to ensure the goal of access and universalization of elementary education (Section 6). RTE requires every state government to notify neighbourhood norms for opening new schools under SSA. While determining the need for access of children to neighbourhood schools, a state is required to conduct mapping of neighbourhoods and link them to specific schools; thereby identifying gaps where new schools need to be opened. In other words, it is the responsibility of the state government, under the RTE Act, to ensure availability of schools within the limits of neighbourhoods.

In the state of West Bengal the total number of government schools providing primary education is 51016 (Provisional DISE 2010-11), out of which 50604 are pure primary schools. These figures do not include Sishu Shiksha Kendras (SSKs). Table 6.1 shows that 22.59% of the total population of West Bengal in 2001 were in the age group of 4-16 years. Estimates show that this percentage will decline to 17.55 in 2011 and further to 13.74 by 2026. On the other hand the proportion of children who would enter into the formal education system (children in the age group 0-4 years) was 10.69% in 2001 which is expected to go down to 7.7% in 2011 and further to 6.68% of the total population in 2026. Thus table 6.1

shows that children going into the formal elementary education system would reduce over time both in absolute numbers and in percentage.

This would imply that the need for opening new primary schools would reduce in the state in the future. Presently 51016 government primary schools cater to a population (age group 5-9 years) of 72.86 lakhs – which gives a ratio of 143 children per school. If this average is maintained in the future there would not be any need for setting up additional primary schools in the state in next 15 years (Table 6.2).

However it cannot be denied that there are areas in the state which have more number of primary schools than the minimum required and similarly there are areas which have no primary school. Thus the overall state level statistics of the availability of primary schools may not guarantee universal access to all school going children. In this respect it may be noted that the West Bengal Government has not yet notified the limits or the area of a neighbourhood as required under the RTE Act, 2009. The existing SSA norm mandates the availability of primary schools within 1 km of every habitation. In the absence of a notification defining neighbourhood schools, if one goes by the SSA mandate it is observed that there are 16 districts in West Bengal where there are places which do not have any primary school/SSK within 1 km of habitation (Table 6.3). Incidentally the Central RTE rules also state that the area or limits of a neighbourhood for setting up a primary school (class I-V) shall be within the walking distance of 1 km of the neighbourhood. The estimate shows that there is a need to setup 1557 new primary schools in designated areas to bridge this gap and thereby ensure adequate access. It is also observed (details not given for brevity) that there are four habitations in the district of Jalpaiguri, with populations of more than 35,000 (Census 2001), which do not have any primary schools/SSKs within 1 km.

The central RTE rules mentions that the limits of an area of a neighbourhood for setting up an upper primary school (class VI-VIII) shall be within the walking distance of 3 km of the neighbourhood. The SSA norms prescribe setting up an upper primary school for every two primary schools. Table 6.4 provides details of district wise availability of schools offering primary and upper primary education (excluding SSKs and MSKs) in West Bengal. Using the SSA criteria, there is a need for setting up an additional 14934 upper primary schools in the state. However a separate survey (Table 6.4) shows that the number is 14165 using a neighbourhood definition of 2 km. The revised SSA norm provides that new upper primary schools/ sections would be opened in the campuses of existing primary schools so they become integrated elementary schools from class I-VIII. This way of addressing the gap in upper primary schools would also hopefully reduce the students' dropout rate. Hence it is

necessary to identify primary schools which can be upgraded to upper primary schools to take care of the access issue. Such an exercise would be contingent on sufficient land being available with the primary schools for the upgradation.

The RTE Act mandates the formalization of Shishu Siksha Kendras (SSKs) and Madhyamik Siksha Kendras (MSKs). It is suggested that all MSKs (1911 in number) be upgraded to upper primary and secondary schools. Only those SSKs having a minimum number of 40 students may be converted to a formal primary school with the necessary infrastructure. The remaining SSKs may either be closed or used as pre-school (Anganwadi) centres.
Thus, to summarise, the requirements of additional schools are given below:
Primary schools: 1557
Upper-primary schools (including upgradation): 14934

6.1.1 Social Access

Social access implies that children from different social backgrounds should have free and equitable access to elementary education. Thankfully, the problem of social discrimination is low in West Bengal and it has been observed that the introduction of the mid-day-meal scheme in schools has further eliminated the social divide. In order to ensure that children from weaker sections and disadvantaged groups are brought to the school and are not denied admission even in unaided private schools, the village schedule must be regularly maintained and updated as mentioned in Para 5.6 of Chapter 5.
According to the NUEPA (National University of Educational Planning and Administration) report, in the last three years (2007-08, 2008-09 and 2009-10), respectively 28.13, 28.28 and 32.30 of every 100 primary school children in West Bengal were Muslims, while 25.25 per cent of the State's population is Muslim. West Bengal's figures for Muslim students' enrolment at the primary level are better than the national average of 10.49 per cent (in 2007-08), 11.03 per cent (in 2008-09) and 13.48 per cent (in 2009-10) respectively, while Muslims form 13.43 per cent of India's population. West Bengal's record is far better than that of Gujarat. In Gujarat, Muslim students' enrolment at the primary level was 4.57 per cent (2007-08), 4.73 per cent (2008-09) and 6.45 per cent (2009-10). In 2009-10, upper primary school enrolment among the Muslim students in West Bengal was 26.46 per cent (Table 6.5).

In order to ensure that private schools do not deny admission to weaker sections of society, all unaided schools must be brought under the supervision of the Directorate of School Education through a due recognition process.

6.1.2 Pre- School facilities

It has been observed internationally, that a child's physical growth and ability to learn depend significantly on the nutrition received in the early ages, particularly during the first five years. It is from this standpoint that the GoI had introduced Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS). Under ICDS, it was proposed to have atleast one Anganwadi Centre for 20 infants in the age group 2.5 and 4 years in each village. The Anganwadi worker was supposed to help the children under her care in immuinzation, developing the child's cognitive capacity and provide prescribed snacks and nutritives for which central grants were provided separately. It has been found that in the villages with Anganwadi centres, the children were better off in terms of quality of life indices.

But the age group provisions of 2.5 and 4 years in the ICDS centres, left a gap of at least one year before the child could join the primary education system. In absence of any Creche facility in the villages, the primary schools faced the pressure of admitting underaged children in class one to enable the elder siblings to attend schools, and the parents to work for livelihood. This resulted in overcrouding of class one classrooms, and an inflated figure of drop out between class 1 and 2. In recent years, the upper age limit to remain in the Anganwadi centres has been extended to 6 years, which is an important step in the right direction.

So far as the current status of ICDS in our sample villages are concerned, we find the following:

We have surveyed 126 anganwadis from 46 mouzas (table 6.5a). The average number of ICDS is highest (i.e. 6 ICDS/ mouza) among the mouzas with more than 1000 households (table 6.5b) and this figure is lowest (i.e. 1 ICDS/mouza) in mouzas with less than 100 households. Most of the surveyed ICDS run in the morning (table 6.5c). Most of the ICDS run under some shed. It is also observed by interacting with those ICDS which run in open space, that nearly 85% (28 in number) Anganwadis had shifted to other places, 12 percent is closed and only 3% of the Institutions changed their scheduled time in summer or rainy day (table 6.5d). Most of the ICDS centre's shed are owned by the person who runs those ICDS (table 6.5e). Supervisor is appointed by BDO, supervising and accountable to DPO, ICDS. Apart from supervisor, there are monitoring committee in different form in different areas supervising such institution.

Composition of Monitoring Authority: Three type of Monitoring Authorities in the form of a Committees exist in the surveyed Anganwadis: (1). VEC; (2). Beneficiary Committee and (3). Monitoring Committee. In VEC the President is generally the GP member of the Sansad,

Secretary is the Head Teacher of the Primary School and Members are some villagers whose children are studying in any school or have school going aged children in their household. In case of Beneficiary committee generally the GP member is the President. Otherwise, a villager is chosen as the President. The Secretary is generally a villager of the village while the members are some guardians of the beneficiaries. The Monitoring Committee comprises of a President who is either the GP member of the Sansad or a guardian of a student, the Secretary is generally a guardian of a student and the Members include the ICDS worker, ICDS helper, Supervisor and some villagers. A high percentage of ICDS receive toys and charts from authority (101 ICDS out of 126 ICDS). But very few ICDS receive books and copies from authority (table 6.5f). Table 6.5g shows that the enrolment in ICDS decreases from 3653 (including 0-6 years old child and pregnant and nursing mothers) in 2007 to 3421 in 2009. Other than laterite region (such as Bankura and Paschim Midnapur) the number of ICDS is adequate (table 6.5h). This may be the effect of recent policy changes towards meeting requirements of pre-school education. The teachers in ICDS are not sufficiently trained. They need to be trained in order to fulfil the purpose of pre-school/play schools in West Bengal.

6.2 School Infrastructure

Section 19 of the RTE Act 2009 and the schedule thereto mention that all new schools should have all weather school buildings and all existing school buildings should be all weather compliant by 31 March, 2013. The schedule to the RTE Act specifies the following features of an all weather school building:

a) One classroom one teacher.
b) Office-cum-store-cum-head teacher room.
c) Toilet and drinking water facilities.
d) Barrier-free access, including ramps with railings on both sides.
e) Playground.
f) Fencing/ boundary walls.
g) A kitchen where the mid-day meal is cooked in the school.

Table 6.6 provides important comparative statistics of school infrastructure. The table shows that infrastructure in primary schools in West Bengal is below par in three areas - (1) separate girls' toilet, (2) availability of computers, (3) availability of electricity. However the availability of drinking water on the school premises has improved significantly in West Bengal in 2009-10, where it crossed the national average. Availability of electricity and computers in primary schools are matters of great concern and West Bengal's performance

on these two counts have been inferior to a low national average. Interestingly percentage of schools having a ramp facility in West Bengal has fallen from 58.65 (2008-09) to 50.01 (2009-10). This implies that many new schools were established during 2009-10 without ramps. This is in violation of the recommendation of RTE Act.

We have collected infrastructure related data based on our survey of 92 Govt. schools and 9 non-Govt. schools. Table 6.7 shows the distribution of Government schools by type of school building. Survey data show that 13% of Government schools do not have a *pucca* building and two schools in urban areas (other than Kolkata) are operated from rented premises. DISE data (2008-09) showed that 72% of the Government schools had *pucca* buildings. Our survey data in table 6.6 shows that about 85% of the Government schools have *pucca* buildings. In the absence of latest DISE data if one assumes that 85% of the Government primary schools have *pucca* buildings (which is a very optimistic assumption), about 7600 schools (15% of 50604 primary schools) should be upgraded into all weather buildings. This is in addition to the need for setting up 1557 new primary schools. The state government needs to take urgent measures to upgrade the existing primary schools and setup the required number of new schools to conform to RTE standards.

Table 6.8 shows the availability of classrooms in primary schools in West Bengal. It is observed that there are 133 schools without any classroom, which is in gross violation of the RTE norms. Table 6.8 also shows that 5.32% of the primary schools have just one classroom. Our survey result on this issue is given in table 6.9. Survey data also confirms that about 5.5% of the Government primary schools have one classroom. The RTE Act provides that the number of classrooms in a school depends on the number of teachers with a minimum of one classroom per teacher. A primary school should also have another office-cum-store-head teacher room.

Table 6.10 provides data on the availability of other selected infrastructure in primary schools. Only 30% of the schools surveyed had a playground and 79.3% of the schools have a separate teachers' room/head teacher room/office room/store room. Of the 92 government schools surveyed, no primary school had any facilities for a library or computers. About 70% of the schools had a separate kitchen/kitchen shed.

Table 6.11 shows the availability of drinking water in schools. About 83% of the schools surveyed have facilities for drinking water. Interestingly, the percentage of schools with drinking water facilities is more in rural areas than in urban areas.

Table 6.12 shows the availability and type of toilets in Government schools. Overall about 95% of schools do not have separate toilet facilities. Only four schools out of 92 schools surveyed have separate toilet facilities for boys and girls.

Table 6.13 shows the distribution of Government schools by availability of water inside the toilets. Only 36% of the schools have a water supply inside the toilet. If one considers schools in rural areas only, the percentage drops to 25%. The lack of water inside a toilet is a serious hygiene issue.

Table 6.14 shows class wise availability of fans and lights in Government primary schools. About 65% of the schools do not have electricity (fan and light) facilities. Although this is a slight improvement from 2009-10 (see Table 6.5), there is a huge scope for improvement.

Since classes are held in schools during the day, the lack of availability of electricity may not be a major deterrent for school going children, provided the classrooms have sufficient sunlight. Table 6.15 shows the availability of sufficient sunlight in classrooms. About 18% of the classrooms do not have sufficient sunlight. In terms of general cleanliness of classrooms,our survey results show that about 30% classrooms do not maintain normal level of cleanliness (Table 6.16).

Thus the West Bengal Government will have to expedite upgradation of infrastructural facilities and the SSA would be able to provide necessary funds for this purpose. The Government has about two years to execute this responsibility. This would require a survey of each government school to identify the infrastructure requirements and the local authority should be involved in this exercise.

6.3 **Student Enrolment and Retention**

Table 6.17 provides a comparative picture of survival rate, transition rate and average dropout rate on four selected states: West Bengal, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Kerala. It also includes the all India average. If we look at the apparent survival rate, Gujarat stands out. In case of West Bengal the survival rate in 2006-07 and 2007-08 were 74 and 79 respectively, which are greater than the all India average in respective years. The figure did not improve in 2008-09. In case of the transition rate from primary to upper primary Kerala (98.01) is leading these states in 2007-08. Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh also show a growing rate of transition throughout the years. In the case of West Bengal this rate drops from 79.50 in 2006-07 to 69.88 in 2007-08 but then jumps to 85.88 in 2008-09. The all India average also shows a steady growth of transition rate. The average drop-out rate is highest

in West Bengal among these four states. In 2006-07 the figure was 9.41 and drops to 7.98 in 2007-08 but it jumps to 8.66 in 2008-09. The dropout rate in West Bengal is less than the national average in 2007-08 and 2008-09. Gujarat has a very low rate of dropout. One of the reasons for a high dropout and low transition rates in West Bengal could be that the primary classes in West Bengal are from I to IV. If class V is brought into primary schools, these numbers may change. Such low rates also highlight that the shikshabandhus and resource persons may not be doing their job diligently.

Table 6.18 shows the district-wise Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) and Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) at both Primary and Upper Primary levels for the year 2010-11. The GER, amongst primary schools, is highest in Uttar Dinajpur (146.82) and lowest in Kolkata (113.99). In case of NER, Nadia shows the highest figure (99.95) and Uttar Dinajpur shows the lowest figure (93.92). In Upper Primary schools, the GER is highest in Purba Medinipur (113.38) and lowest in Uttar Dinajpur (93.83). The NER in Upper Primary is highest in Hugli (96.12) and lowest in Uttar Dinajpur (76.71). Table 6.18 also highlights that the ratios are significantly poorer at the upper primary level. This reinforces our observation on the lack of access to upper primary schools. There is an urgent need to set up large number of upper primary schools in the State.

Table 6.19 provides an area-wise dropout scenario against the total enrolment figures. The dropout figure for class II is calculated by subtracting the enrolment of the current academic year in class-II from the enrolment of the previous academic year in class-I. The dropout numbers of other classes are estimated similarly. For the year 2007-08, the dropout is very high in rural areas (490) and this dropout figure is greater for the girls (254) than boys (200). For the urban areas this dropout rate is much less in urban areas. Overall 90 students dropped out in the year 2007-08 among which 48 were boys and 42 were girls. Kolkata shows a strange figure for the same academic year. The total dropout is 99 and all of these 99 students are girls. These figures were for dropouts during transition from Class-I to Class-II. The same picture is observed in 2008-09 except in Kolkata – dropout for boys in Kolkata was -5. This implies that 5 more students got admission in class-II in Kolkata. As we move to higher classes, the enrolment increases year by year and consequently the dropout rates fall. The major concern of dropout at the primary level is in class II.

Table 6.20 shows reasons for dropouts as told by schools. It is mentioned by the school head teachers that the main reason for dropping out is the students' inability to cope up with learning. The second reason cited is the migration of households to other areas. Temporary migration of parents for better earning (25.4%) is a major cause for dropouts. Other reasons

cited for low enrolment in rural areas include parents' ignorance andinterference by SSK teachers. However, when we had asked the parents of children about the reasons for dropout and low enrolment, three major reasons cited were children's /parents' lack of interest in schools, families are unable to give school fees and children go to work to support their families (Table 6.21a and Table 6.21b). Thus the reasons cited by the school teachers and the parents of the children were quite different. One thing is clear that if the school environment and classroom transactions improve, that would help in retaining children in the school. Interestingly, quite a few parents (in the low income bracket) mentioned that they were forced to withdraw their children from school due to financial reasons (unable to pay fees /charges). On enquiry, we find that while schools do not charge any tuition fee, some of the schools charge their children development/festival or other fees. Charging any fee from children is a violation of the principles of SSA and the directives of RTE Act.

Another interesting result emerges from the household survey on the reasons for dropping out in class II. Table 6.22a shows that about 4% of the children (5-8 years) never enrolled in the school/ICDS/SSKs. Our survey also finds that on many cases, a child's name appears simultaneously in ICDS/SSK and a formal school. Thus there is duplication in registration. This could be another reason for a large number of dropouts in class II. Table 6.22b shows the reasons for non-enrolment in schools. Predictably, the major reason cited for non-enrolment for 5 year old children is age of the children. However, another common reason cited is financial (no money for fees). Six children (age 8 years) cited a lack of interest as the reason for non-enrolment.

Table 6.23 shows that contrary to popular belief, not all schools provide the Mid-Day Meal (MDM). Ten out of ninety two schools surveyed did not provide the MDM. It was observed that MDM was not offered on all working days. However, SSA mandates that children should be provided MDM on all working days, without exception. We examined whether MDM had any impact on the attendance of the children in the school. Based on a surprise visit on a particular day in the schools surveyed, we observed that attendance did not drop significantly after the MDM was served (Table 6.24). Attendance fell by about 8% in rural areas and 12% in urban areas after MDM. We have observed in Madhya Pradesh that MDM was served on all working days. We have also noted that in Kerala, the local authorities (Municipal Corporation/ Gram Panchayat) provide milk, egg and breakfast separately to all school children in the respective localities. These two states have not reported any fall in attendance after MDM.

We recommend the following:

(a) There is an urgent need to restructure the primary and upper-primary classes. Like in many other states and as prescribed in the RTE, primary school should comprise of classes I-V. Upper-primary level should comprise of classes VI-VIII. This

restructuring will help in two ways: better retention ratio and the rationalization of teacher/infrastructure requirements. However, there will be a need to construct additional class rooms in stand-alone primary schools.

(b) Primary and upper primary schools should not charge any fee, by whatever name called. Expenses for any festival should be met out of voluntary contribution/contingencies.

(c) As schools do not provide notebooks, pen/ pencil to students, text books (including work books) in the primary and upper primary schools should be designed in a manner to minimize use of notebooks. Additional (blank) pages should be provided in the text book/exercise book.

(d) Mid day Meal should be compulsorily served on all working days (including Saturdays). Mother volunteers of children may be involved in the cooking/management of mid day meals.

(e) SMC, VEC and the local authority (e.g. Gram panchayat) should develop programmes to track children in respective areas to ensure 100% enrolment and retention. The village education register has to be religiously maintained.

6.4 **Teacher Requirement & Training**

The RTE Act provides for rational deployment of teachers by ensuring that the specified pupil teacher ratio is maintained for each school, rather than just as an average for the State/District/Block, thus ensuring that there is no urban-rural imbalance in teacher postings. RTE also specifies that only appropriately trained teachers will be appointed.

Table 6.25 shows estimates of district-wise teachers' requirements in West Bengal. If we calculate the shortage of teachers as per DISE's current Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) then we will find that there is a shortage of 176411 Primary teachers in the state. Some of the districts like Bankura, Darjeeling, Dakshin Dinajpur, Hugli, Kolkata, Paschim Midnapur and Purba Midnapur have surplus teachers. But if we calculate the shortages of teachers as per RTE norms then this figure jumps to 63777 in Primary schools. We have been informed by the West Bengal State Directorate of School Education that the Government has recently (in the beginning of 2011) offered appointment to about 49000 primary school teachers. If all of them join, the additional teachers' requirement in government primary schools will be around 15000 teachers. Once all the vacancies are filled up, total teachers' strength in primary schools would be around 220000. One needs to add a requirement of another 11,000 teachers per year due to the retirement of about 5% of the teachers every year.

Data collected from SSA office (Table 6.26) shows that there are 1327 primary schools in the state which are single teacher schools. The RTE rules prescribe a minimum teacher

strength of 2 per school. This serious problem of a teachers' shortage can be solved through the following measures:

(i) Concept of sanctioned post per school should be introduced.

(ii) Shortfall of teachers in a school should be met initially by transferring appropriate teachers from schools having surplus teachers in the same district.

(iii) Fresh appointments should be made only to fill up the net vacant positions.

(iv) As a policy the transfer of teachers from other districts should be avoided.

Table 6.27 shows the status of trained teachers in only Primary schools. In Burddhaman district 95.07% of all teachers (only primary schools) received in-service training and only 0.20% Primary teachers in Darjeeling district received in-service training. In aggregate 65.96% of Primary schools teachers received in-service training.

Para 5.10 of Chapter 5 lays down the minimum pre-service eligibility criteria for school teachers as per NCTE norms. The State has to ensure that all school teachers involved in elementary education (class I to VIII) are 'adequately trained' and possess minimum qualifications. We have been informed that at present there are about 75000 'untrained' teachers in primary and upper primary schools in West Bengal. All these teachers need to acquire D.Ed/B.Ed qualifications within 31 March 2015. There are currently 80 PTTIs (Primary teacher Training Institutes) in West Bengal which can enrol only 50 candidates for D.Ed course per year. Hence, following the normal process, only 20000 teachers can be trained in next five years. The other teachers can be trained in the following ways:

(a) The Education Department may write to NCTE/ other appropriate authorities and get an approval to offer D.Ed courses through distance learning mode from the 80 DIETs (i.e. PTTIs). Madhya Pradesh has gotten a similar approval. If the Department can enrol an additional 200 teachers per PTTI for the D.Ed course per year, one can easily train another 60000 teachers in next four/five years. As Madhya Pradesh has already got such an approval, we hope that there will be no problem in getting a similar approval.

(b) The Department may write to IGNOU for offering similar correspondence courses. The classes may be held in different IGNOU centres.

For in-service training, the following model is recommended:

ii. Training should be held in such a way that classes are not affected.

iii. SSA mandates 20 days training per teacher every year. This can be divided into two modules: 10 days of refresher course for each teacher during the summer vacation (may be called vacation training). Such training should be held at PTTIs/DIET. Necessary arrangements for accommodation and other facilities should be made.

iv. The training for the remaining 10 days should be held at BEC (Block Education Centre)/UEC (Urban Education Centre)/CLEC (Cluster Education Centre) on one Saturday every month.

v. An envisioning workshop may be held for three days in the first week of April every year to finalize the training calendar. This workshop will be organised by WBCERT at its state headquarters. Members (may be called the State Resource Group) attending the workshop may be drawn from the West Bengal Council of Educational Research and Training (WBCERT), eminent faculty of PTTIs/DIET, one eminent teacher (to be nominated by the district administration) from every district. The workshop will finalize the annual training calendar as well as the curriculum. We believe the participative method of curriculum development would have a greater buy-in.

vi. The State Resource Group (SRG) would then organize a series of workshops of 3-4 days duration for the faculty members of PTTIs/DIET and select trainers of BEC/UEC /CLEC. This process should be over by the end of April.

vii. The PTTI faculty would provide vacation training to all school teachers under their jurisdiction.

viii. The BEC/UEC /CLEC trainers would conduct the Saturday training sessions at block/cluster level.

ix. The BEC/UEC /CLEC trainers would also regularly visit schools to help teachers improve their classroom transactions.

6.5 **Accountability of Teachers**

The Central RTE Rules provides that each teacher shall maintain a file containing the pupil's cumulative record for every child which will be the basis for awarding completion certificate of elementary education. The State RTE Rules may also specify (e.g. RTE Rules of Madhya Pradesh) minimum number of working hours (including preparatory hours) per week. The head teacher must ensure that each teacher adheres to the minimum working hours. A teacher may, however, perform the following duties without interfering with regular teaching:

(a) Participation in training programmes;

(b) Participation in curriculum formulation and development of syllabi, training modules, and text book development;

(c) Participation in Census work.

Table 6.28 shows that the average number of working days of schools in the last year in Kolkata is less than 200 days (i.e. 176 working days), whereas the figure is more than 200 days in rural (212 working days) and urban (214 working days) areas. Kolkata also shows a lower figure of the average number of days teachers were present in the last year. For

Kolkata this figure is only 169 days on the other hand this figure is 184 and 186 days for rural and urban areas respectively. But the percentage of attendance of teachers in Kolkata (95.9%) is almost 10% higher than rural (86.5%) and urban (86.8%) areas. Overall the average number of days the teacher is present in the last year is 184 and the attendance percentage was 90.7. The statistics show that schools are not open uniformly throughout the state and the numbers of working days vary from one region to other. Also the attendance of teachers is predictably low in areas other than Kolkata.

The Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) as per RTE norm is 30. Although the average PTR based on our survey was 30, there is a significant difference between Kolkata and other areas (see Table 6.29). This difference has to be kept in mind while formulating the recruitment and transfer policy of teachers.

The interactions with the district administration of schools revealed that the administration do not have any power to take disciplinary action against errant teachers. The administration can only file a written complaint to DPSC for disciplinary action. The D.I/S.I of schools are not even given feedback on the action taken on their written complaints.

We recommend that the district school administration be empowered to take disciplinary action (excluding dismissal from service) against teachers. The aggrieved teachers should also be given the opportunity to appeal to the concerned VEC against the action. VEC can conduct periodic grievance redressal meetings with the district/block administration, as the case may be, to sort out the matters. Disciplinary action amounting to dismissal from service can only be taken by the State administration on the recommendation of the VEC.

6.6 **Quality of Education and Teachers' Incentive**

Table 6.30a shows students' performance in Class IV. Except Kolkata, more than 50% of the students secured less than 65% marks in primary schools in the eight districts surveyed. Also more than 10% of the children got less than 35% marks (except Kolkata). These data show that there is a serious problem with the pedagogy and the quality of classroom transactions.

We have conducted two separate exams for Class-I (only English test) and Class-III (Bengali, Mathematics and English tests) students during our survey. Our objective was to check the students' performance in language and quantitative courses. We find that the students have performed, as reasonably well in Bengali, moderately in Mathematics and

poorly in English. From Table 6.30b, Table 6.30c and Table 6.30d, we observe that for Class-III in the rural areas, the average marks obtained per student in Bengali is 81.10%, in Mathematics it is 50% and in English this is 17.02%. In case of urban areas, these marks are 71.95%, 56.25% and 34.04% respectively. In case of Kolkata the respective marks are 93.90%, 68.75% and 40.43%. If we take all the areas together then the average marks obtained per student in Bengali is 79.27%, in Mathematics it is 53.13% and in English it is 21.28%. Table 6.30e shows that in Class-I the average marks obtained per student in English in rural areas is 20%; in urban areas this figure is 44% and in Kolkata it is 42%. If we take all areas then the figure is only 26%. This preliminary test reinforces the fact that the quality of teaching in primary schools is far from satisfactory. This is true in both rural and urban areas.

Tables 6.31 and 6.32 shows the use of text books and TLMs (Teaching Learning Materials) in the class room. It is observed that in Mathematics, teachers of 69% schools do not use textbooks and about 45% do not use any TLMs. For science subjects, the use of TLMs is more than mathematics. 65.5% of the schools use 4 to 6 TLMs for sciences and 34.5% schools do not use any TLM for science subjects.

We have not observed any use of innovative methods of learning (e.g. activity based learning the way it is followed in Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu) in primary schools.
Table 6.33 shows the prevalence of private tuition for children in primary schools based on level of income of the household. 47.1% households with income level upto Rs.1500, provide private tuition to their children. The percentages increase with the increase in household income. On an aggregate 66.5% households provide private tuition to their children. Table 6.34 provides a caste-wise distribution of students taking private tuition. It is observed that children belonging to the weaker sections/ disadvantaged groups were not availing private tuition as actively as children from the general category.

In order to improve the quality of teaching in schools, the role of WBCERT assumes prime importance. WBCERT should be the nodal centre for curriculum development, innovation in pedagogy, development of reading materials in the form of text books and CDs, and designing training programmes for the teachers. SSA funds available under innovation and computerisation should be utilized to develop effective e-learning modules.

We recommend the following to improve the teaching quality in primary and upper primary schools:
Primary Schools:

a) Schools may be encouraged to follow activity based learning methods. Classrooms in primary schools should be specially designed for this purpose. WBCERT should be entrusted with the responsibility of preparing appropriate materials for Activity Based Learning (ABL). We have observed that ABL has two merits – (i) each student can learn at his/her own pace; and (ii) it ensures greater participation of children in the class.
b) While children should not be burdened with an overdose of homework, it cannot be denied that a child's understanding and comfort with quantitative subjects like mathematics, can only improve through practice. Hence a significant part of the classroom time should be devoted in solving problems in mathematics.
c) Language subjects should give more emphasis to oral and written skills. Every child, by turn, should be asked to read a portion of the text loudly and the teacher should give particular attention to pronunciation and spelling.

Upper Primary Schools:

(d) The use of electronic study materials and lecture sessions should be vigorously pursued in all upper primary schools. As the quality of students varies from one school to another, similarly the quality of teachers also varies. We recommend the use of the 'Flip Method' in teaching science and mathematics subjects in upper primary schools. The 'Flip Method' proposes flipping the traditional teaching model of learning inside the classroom and teaching outside the classroom. In the 'Flip Method', most of the subject learning happens outside the classroom and classroom time is used for practicing problems and undertaking interesting experiments. It is proposed that as a pilot case, 500 upper primary schools are initially selected to impart education through the 'Flip Method' on two subjects: mathematics and science. The 'Flip Method' can be implemented as below:

    i. WBCERT identifies 10 best subject teachers (for mathematics and science) for each class (Class-VI to Class-VIII). DIET can help WBCERT in identifying those teachers. The selected teachers should be good at communication skills. The syllabus of a subject will be divided into appropriate modules and a specified number of lectures will be identified for each module. The selected teachers will be asked to prepare lecture notes for each session of a subject. The lecture notes will be vetted and approved by a committee of experts setup for this purpose. The teachers, who have prepared these lecture notes, will then be asked to record these session-wise lectures in a VCD.

ii. The subject VCD so developed will have session-wise lectures by the best of teachers and sufficient copies of VCDs will be sent to all upper primary schools.

iii. The computer room in each upper primary school should have a sufficient number of computers so that there is one computer for every 5 students in a class. For example if the average class size of an upper primary class is 40, there should be at least 8 computers in the school. Each computer should have a speaker to listen to the audio of the lecture session.

iv. Each subject should have an adequate number of lectures and practice sessions. Each practice session will be preceded by one or more lecture sessions. Every student will be asked to go through the recorded lecture sessions as per the class schedule. This will help every single student, irrespective of the location of the school, to learn the subject from the best of teachers.

v. The role of a class teacher in a particular school for a particular subject (mathematics or science) will be more of a facilitator or tutor. During the practice sessions students will be given problems/tasks of varying difficulty levels. The class teacher should be a keen observer and should monitor the progress of each student in the session. The teacher should intervene/facilitate in the learning process only when he/she thinks it is necessary.

vi. The performance of each student should be evaluated on a continuous basis through specially designed tests after every module.

(e) We recommend that for subjects like history and geography, the Active Learning Method (ALM) or any other similar method be used. ALM, as followed in Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh, has many advantages. For example, it encourages students to learn in groups and go beyond what is mentioned in the text books. However one of the drawbacks of ALM is that it does not allow flexibility in learning and at times discourages creativity of the students. The alternative to ALM could be to develop textbooks in such a way that each book can be unique to a particular student. For example, the history textbook can be designed in such a way that after every chapter, a list of reference materials will be mentioned and a few blank pages will be given. The school library must have the reference materials mentioned in the textbooks. Each student will be asked to use the reference materials (this task has to be carefully assigned by the subject teacher so that no two students write the same

text) to prepare a write up as an additional learning module for that chapter and reproduce it in the blank pages provided in the textbook. This exercise will encourage students to be creative, expose students to reference materials and therefore broaden their horizons. We recommend that schools should be given the option of choosing a particular pedagogy (ALM or the other alternative).

(f) While teaching language subjects adequate emphasis should be given on oral and written skills.

The education of a child will be incomplete unless one can impart social awareness and basic ethics in every child. Students should also learn to work in groups/teams. These soft skills should be imparted informally rather than through formal classroom lectures. We propose four schemes in this regard:

i. Every child in a primary class will be asked to maintain his/her attendance record of a particular subject for the whole year. A class teacher will periodically (for example, fortnightly) verify the child's attendance record with the teacher's attendance register.

ii. Every upper primary can have a 'shopping' period once a week. During the shopping period a designated classroom can be converted into an unmanned Kirana Store where a select consumable item of a reasonably low price will be kept. The price list will be displayed in a prominent place in that classroom. Any student can enter the store and pick up an item after paying the listed price in a box kept for this purpose. This exercise will help students learn to be ethical. If any student is found cheating, the fellow students should bring it to the notice of concern teacher.

iii. Every upper primary school should organise social awareness programmes (for example cleanliness drives, medicine collection, waste paper collection etc.) in collaboration with NGOs/Social Organizations twice every year. This should be done in such a manner that every student participates in at least one such programme in a year.

iv. Every student of an upper primary school should be a member of the school house/club. The school should organize debates, essay competitions, sports and other cultural activities among the houses/clubs

It has been observed that in the case of several States, appropriate incentive systems positively affect the quality of education. Incentive schemes may be developed for students as well as teachers. We recommend the following:

a) The State can introduce a merit scholarship examination in class V. This would in a way provide a check on the quality of education at the primary level and would also provide an incentive to children to perform well in studies. The scholarship amount

may be paid out of funds available under the LEP (Learning Enhancement Programme) in SSA.

b) Teachers have a major role to play in maintaining and improving the classroom transactions and thereby enhancing student learning capability. An incentive scheme (on the lines of Pratibha Parv in Madhya Pradesh) may be launched for the teachers in primary and upper primary schools. The incentives may be paid out funds available under the LEP (Learning Enhancement Programme) in SSA.

6.7 **School Management**

Table 6.35 provides data on the activity of school management systems. Presently there are a good number of school-level committees looking after various monitoring aspects of the school. Almost every school in a rural area has a Village Education Committee (VEC), a Mother Teacher Association (MTA) and a School Monitoring Committee (SMC). But only 6 schools in rural areas have a School Development Committee (SDC). In urban areas all schools have Ward Education Committees (WEC) and 18 schools have MTAs. Only 41 out of 92 schools have SMCs. The RTE Act prescribes that there should be only one management committee of the school: the SMC. The SMC would have specific roles and responsibilities as defined in the State RTE Rules. Such roles and responsibilities of the SMC have been discussed in Chapter 5. It is recommended that MTA, SDC, and PTA (Parent Teacher Association) be merged with the SMC. VEC/WEC would look after all the schools within its jurisdiction. It can also be seen from Table 6.35 that at present only the MTA has been active. Hence it is recommended that mothers should have a significant presence in the re-constructed SMC. The School Management Committee should be held responsible for ensuring that classes are regularly held and all SSA and state government schemes are properly implemented. In addition to the school headmaster, representatives of SMCs would interact with the AEOs at the cluster level whenever necessary. The SMC would also prepare the School development plan (SDP) and such plan should be entered in the MIS at the cluster level at the Cluster Education Centres (CEC). The school development plan would contain estimates of class-wise enrolment for each year, additional personnel /infrastructural requirements and hence additional financial requirements. School grants under the SSA would be made available to the SMC based on the school development plan. Any money received by the SMC would have to be credited to the account of the Committee. The account should be a joint account of the Chairperson and the member secretary of the Committee. The SDPs will be collated at the block level and forwarded to the district project office for necessary action. The entire exercise has to be completed before the beginning of the financial year for which it is meant. Once the SMC is adequately strengthened, the VEC

will be responsible in ensuring: (a) that all the schools under its jurisdiction are appropriately managed; (b) that all common concerns (e.g. infrastructure-related, training-related) affecting schools are addressed; (c) that all complaints by the teachers are addressed and acted upon; (d) that the mid-day meal and other welfare schemes are properly implemented; and (e) that enrolment and retention ratios in schools under its jurisdiction are maintained at 100%. VEC should generally meet once in every three months. However, an emergency meeting may be convened by the Chairperson of the VEC anytime with a 10-day notice.

6.8 **School Inspection**

It is mentioned that school supervision has seriously suffered due to insufficient staff, absence of any planning, and administrative neglect. Periodic inspection/supervision of schools is critical. Also it is to be understood that the role of a school supervisor is not limited to the inspection alone: it could also be advisory in nature. Although SSA takes care of the infrastructure requirements of schools as well as provides financial support for resources, persons and learning methods, it is felt that the quality of education depends largely on the effectiveness of classroom interaction. In order to ensure that classes are held regularly, students' attendance and academic performance improve, it is necessary to strengthen the school inspection setup at the grass root level. It is therefore recommended that the school inspection setup is significantly increased at the cluster and the block levels. This will have three advantages – (a) close and continuous monitoring of the quality of education; (b) timely and quick response to address any problem and (c) relieving the district administration of substantial work pressure. It is suggested that the state government allocate additional funds to augment the school education system.

It is recommended that designations of inspectors be changed as below:

a) Sub-inspector of Schools be re-designated as Assistant Education Officer (AEO)
b) Assistant Inspector of Schools be re-designated as Block Education Officer (BEO)
c) District Inspector of Schools be re-designated as District Education Officer (DEO)

The District Education Officer will be responsible for overall management and administration of school education of the district. The DEO may not personally visit schools as a routine activity. However he/she may visit schools whenever necessary. The primary responsibility of a DEO would be the following:

a) Facilitate the teacher recruitment process in the district.
b) Help WBCERT in organising and conducting teacher training programmes.
c) Periodically interact with VEC/SMC to review administrative issues.
d) Co-ordinate with the district project officer to ensure proper implementation of SSA programmes.

e) Monitor and review performance of the children and take appropriate action whenever required.
f) Monitor and review attendance, transfer and other issues concerning teachers.
g) To facilitate and participate in periodic student evaluation programmes.

In order to discharge the above functions, each district should have 6 DEOs/ADEOs to look after elementary and high school education. The suggested staffing of DEOs/ADEOs in a district is as follows:

Elementary Education:

(i) District Elementary Education Officer
    a. Assistant District Elementary Education Officer (Training)
    b. Assistant District Elementary Education Officer (Academic)
    c. Assistant District Elementary Education Officer (School Management and Administration)

High School Education:

(ii) District Education Officer (Training & Academics)
    a. Assistant District Education Officer (Academic & Administration)

Considering 20 districts (including the DGHC) in West Bengal, the above arrangement would require 120 DEOs/ADEOs in the state. The present sanctioned strength of District Inspector of Schools (including ADI and ADSE) is 120 and hence there is no need for creating additional posts. All vacancies are to be filled up as early as possible.

There are 485 blocks in West Bengal and 3411 clusters (Source: DISE Provisional State Report Card 2009-10). The average number of school (Primary, Upper Primary) per block would be around 160 and per cluster would be around 30.

Each BEO should have a contingent of AEOs who would regularly visit schools under their jurisdiction. BEOs would also make periodic visits to schools under their block in such a way that each BEO can visit every school once a year. Assuming 200 working days in a year for schools, if a Block Education Officer (BEO) spends 100 days for visiting schools, the estimate shows that there is a need for 970 BEOs in the state. The present sanctioned strength of Assistant Inspector of Schools (now renamed as BEO) is 922. Thus there is a need for creating 50 additional posts for BEOs.

SSA recommends that each AEO should undertake at least two visits to every school each year. It is believed that for effective supervision and monitoring academic activities in the schools, each AEO should make 3 visits to every school each year. The total number of AEOs necessary in West Bengal to monitor schools providing elementary education is around 3411 (one AEO per cluster). Since there are around 30 schools per cluster, each AEO can comfortably spend 100 working days in visiting all the schools under the cluster thrice a year. The present inspection staff strength is given in table 6.36. Our recommendation suggests a more than 3 fold increase in the sanctioned strength of Assistant Education Officers (3411 from the present strength of 999). This would ensure that each school gets adequate attention and timely intervention by the school administration. The AEO in a particular cluster will also look after secondary schools if any. The role of an AEO would also include continuous interaction with the CRC co-ordinator to ensure timely collection of DISE and other data for MIS purposes.

6.9 **Governance Structure**

In order to implement the norms and standards of the RTE Act and Rules and also to align the activities of the SSA and RTE, it is essential to re-design the present structure of the organization. We believe that there is a scope for consolidation at the secretariat level and strengthening a district and cluster level organization structure to improve the supervision and delivery system. This twin approach of consolidation at the top and grass root level decentralization would also help the school education system to respond to the requirements of school going children in particular and society at large. The proposed organisation structure of the School Education system in the state is given in the Diagram 6.1-6.4

The RTE Act prescribes that there would be no qualifying examination upto Class VIII. RTE Act also prescribes a pivotal role for SCERT in designing the curriculum, preparation of text books and other reading materials and developing innovative pedagogy. Therefore no separate role is envisaged for the present West Bengal Board of Primary Education (WBPE). We recommend that the functions of WBPE be subsumed intothe WBCERT. However any activity relating to teachers' appointment and transfer will be handled by the Personnel & Supervision arm of the Directorate.

The RTE Act and RMSA clearly divide school education into two broad categories – Elementary Schooling (Class-I to VIII) and High Schooling (Class-IX to XII). In order to properly discharge the administrative responsibilities the directorate at the state level is to be

restructured into two separate wings – one for elementary schools and the other for high schools with separate directors for each wing. If the RTE is fully implemented, our estimate shows that there will be around 78,000 schools imparting elementary education in the state. Hence a separate directorate for elementary education is necessary. Similarly the directorate of the district unit of the school education system should have two wings – elementary education and high school education.

Presently the State School Education Department is inundated with a large number of legal cases. We have observed that a sizeable part of the working hours of officers at various levels is spent in various courts for attending cases. It is therefore necessary to strengthen the directorate with the appropriate staffing of Law Officers at the state as well as at the district level.

The functions of the directorate at the state level are divided into three segments – Personnel & Supervision, Academic and Appointment. The Personnel & Supervision section looks after administrative issues related to schools and teachers,and monitors teachers' attendance and accountability.The Academic section of the directorate is the focal point of the administration of school education.

The present West Bengal Board of Madrasah Education and Rabindra Mukta Vidyalaya (West Bengal Council of Rabindra Open Schools) will be retained.

Attracting and retaining quality school teachers is a precursor for the improvement of the performance of school children. While the West Bengal School Service Commission in its present form has been reasonably successful in recruitment of teachers in secondary and higher secondary schools, the recruitment in primary and upper primary schools is decentralised at the district level and is entrusted to the respective DPSC (District Primary School Council). It is observed that divergent practices were followed in the recruitment of primary teachers and there were complaintsabout favouritism. The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) prescribes that a teacher must pass an eligibility test (TET) for being eligible for recruitment in schools imparting elementary education. Therefore it is proposed that the West Bengal School Service Commission be entrusted with the additional responsibility of conducting TETs. This will ensure uniformity in the teacher recruitment process to a greater extent. It is desirable that at the elementary level of education, teachers are recruited from the same/nearby villages where a school is located. Hence while the TET can be conducted at the state level once a year, the interviews can be held at the district offices of the directorate to avoid inconvenience to the applicants.

At the district level, the directorate of school education can be divided into two broad wings – elementary education and high school education. The district inspector of schools may be called the District Elementary Education Officer (for elementary education) and District Education Officer (for high school education). Such district education officers will monitor school administration & management and co-ordinate teacher training programmes in consultation with the DIET. We propose a strong block education office at the block level. The administrative head of the block education office will be the Block Elementary Education Officer (for elementary schools)/ Block Education Officer (for high schools). Each block education office will have five resource persons (Block Resource Persons) specializing in different subjects taught in elementary schools. Each block office should also have two Group-C staff (Computer literate), two Group-D staff and one Block Accountant.

The Cluster Education Centre (currently called the Cluster Resource Centre) will be housed in one of the bigger schools in the cluster. Ideally the school chosen for locating the Cluster Education Centre should be a secondary level school with adequate space. Each Cluster Education Centre will be headed by an Assistant Education Officer (presently called the Sub-Inspector of Schools). The MIS activity (including compiling DISE data) of schools within the cluster will be managed at the Cluster Education Centre. Accordingly one MIS person-cum-clerk may be appointed in each cluster to help the Assistant Education Officer.

6.10 Role of WBCERT Redefined

It is proposed to significantly strengthen the WBCERT. Therefore a separate organisation structure of the WBCERT is given in Diagram 6.5. The WBCERT is to be construed as an independent academic body with the following explicit functions:

(a) Curriculum development
(b) Text book preparation and printing for formal as well as non-formal education
(c) Development of innovative learning techniques and tools
(d) Designing, administering teacher training programmes and the development of appropriate training materials.
(e) Conducting research in the area of school education.

The WBCERT is required to be appropriately staffed in order to effectively handle the responsibilities. The working environment of the WBCERT should be similar to a university and hence the career path of people involved in the academic wing of the WBCERT should be appropriately structured. In the view of enhanced responsibilities of the WBCERT, separate administrative, finance and accounts sections are also to be created. It is proposed

that an academic advisory board be formed to guide the WBCERT in its academic functions. Such an academic advisory board may comprise of the following members:

(a) Experienced professors in colleges (two members)
(b) Experienced teachers from government schools (three members)
(c) Representative of NCERT (one member)
(d) Representative of an NGO involved in school education (two members)
(e) Director – WBCERT, member secretary
(f) Chairman, West Bengal Board of High School Education

The advisory board would be an independent body comprising of people connected with schools/college education. The independent character of the board is to be maintained.

DIET and PTTIs are to be brought under the WBCERT. All in-service teacher training programmes will be designed and coordinated by WBCERT and administered through DIET/PTTIs. Therefore each district of the state should have a DIET to facilitate teacher training programmes.

We feel that if the WBCERT takes care of curriculum development and text book preparation for school education, there is no need to have separate boards for Secondary and Higher Secondary examinations. It is therefore proposed to have only one board to take care of the Secondary and Higher Secondary examinations. We proposed that the present West Bengal Board of Secondary Education and the West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education be merged into a new board called the West Bengal Board of High School Education. The activities of the board will include:

(a) Regulation of admission to schools
(b) Conducting secondary and higher secondary examinations
(c) Preparing annual work plan for secondary and higher secondary schools
(d) Conducting scholarship examination
(e) Managing ICT schemes
(f) Verification of educational documents and issuing of transcripts
(g) Recognition of schools

The curriculum and textbook development for secondary and higher secondary schools will be the responsibility of WBCERT.

6.11 Resource Persons

The role of the shikshabandhu cadre in the State is quite ambiguous. People working in this cadre are neither resource persons nor clerical staff. While the role and responsibilities of resource persons are well defined in the SSA, the duties and responsibilities of Shikshabandhus are not very clear. Many Shikshabandhus are not aware about their job description and the bulk of their time is spent in liaising between the school and CLRC/D.I. office. Shikshabandhus cannot be called resource persons in the sense that they are not allowed to take/attend classes. No formal training is imparted when a Shikshabandhu joins duty. The only training they get is about the filling up of DISE data. Sometimes Shikshabandhus are asked to perform the functions of Group-D staff.

We recommend that the Shikshabandhu cadre be abolished and the resource person cadre be strengthened. Each BEC should have five resource persons. Such resource persons may also be called Subject Experts. The primary responsibilities of Block Resource Persons will be as follows:

(a) Imparting teachers' training for 10 days based on modules developed by WBCERT/DIET. Such trainings should be conducted in a structural manner covering subjects taught in the schools.
(b) Providing teaching support to one or more schools in a block which experience poor performance of students.
(c) Helping the school in ensuring 100% student enrolment.
(d) Coordinating with the CLEC, wherever required, in school related matters.

Such Block Resource Persons could either be retired teachers or selected through School Service Commission. Resource persons should also be placed at the PTTIs to help with in-service teacher training programmes.

In order to ensure minimum hardship while phasing out the shikshabandhu cadre, the following strategy may be adopted:

(a) Those who fulfil the eligibility criteria should be absorbed as primary/upper-primary teachers.
(b) Those who have reasonable computer proficiency, but who do not fulfil the eligibility criteria of becoming a school teacher, should be absorbed as MIS-cum-clerk at the cluster/block level education centres.
(c) Those who do not possess any of the above qualification (as mentioned in (a) and (b) above) should be asked to leave.

6.12 Abolition of District Primary School Council (DPSC)

The governance structure proposed in para 6.9 makes the existence and importance of the DPSC redundant. The DPSC is presently responsible for the appointments, postings, transfers of the teachers and is also responsible for taking disciplinary actions against teachers. However, we have observed that DPSCsare highly politicized and are not discharging their functions properly. DPSCs are managed by part-time chairmen (mostly drawn from schools) who do not necessarily have reasonable administrative capabilities and there is no uniformity in the practices followed by different DPSCs. For example, the selection process of school teachers is not uniform across all the districts. There are also complaints of favouritism and political bias in their recruitment. The coordination between the DPSC and DPO (district project office) is often poor resulting in the improper management of various SSA schemes in the district. There are at times tussles /ego clashes between the DPO and DPSC on the territory of intervention.

We have proposed the following:

(a) School service commission will periodically conduct the TET.
(b) The District office of the school directorate will constitute independent selection committees (comprising of retired high school teachers, retired college teachers, head of the local authority) for conducting interviews and selecting teachers in the respective districts.
(c) Teachers will be selected against respective schools, based on vacancies thereof.
(d) All administrative matters concerning teachers (including transfers) will be handled by the district education office and the personnel and supervision section of the school directorate.
(e) A grievance redressal cell of the VEC/ education wing of the local authority will hear and dispose all teachers' complaints in a transparent and non-partisan manner.
(f) The present set up of the DPSC is to be abolished.

6.13 Management Information System

Information gathering and dissemination are essential management tools to monitor proper functioning and governance of the school education system. The functions of the present school portal of the State needs to be substantially augmented to make the portal an interactive one. School portal should have scalable architecture to accommodate more applications and users.

Records of every child, school, and teacher should be gathered and mapped in the mother database in such a way that every child and teacher is mapped to a school. Every teacher should additionally be mapped to a CLEC. The management information system (MIS) should be an integrated State-wide information system. The MIS should be used to identify vacancies/requirements of teachers at every school and similarly surplus of teachers in

schools. The system should also have data on student enrolment and class-wise performance. Such a MIS should be independent of DISE.

The MIS should have the following details of the teachers:

(a) Name and address
(b) Photograph
(c) Academic qualification
(d) School attached
(e) CLEC attached
(f) Date of joining
(g) Salary details
(h) Leave details
(i) Provident fund details
(j) TDS details
(k) Other service records
(l) Date of birth
(m) Marriage day (if applicable)
(n) Achievements, if any

Each school teacher will be given a login id and password. The teacher can access his page to check the necessary details. The concerned teacher should also be able to submit any application (for transfer, leave etc.) through this portal.

The portal should capture school-wise and subject-wise results of monthly/periodic tests to assess the competency level of students in the elementary schools. Such data will help analyze and monitor the performance of teachers, schools, blocks and districts. It is proposed that the district school administration should come up with a school-rank list every year. Such ranking should be based on the performance of children and teachers. The portal can also be used to manage out of school children by having data on registration, follow-up and tracking. Resource persons should gather such data in a cluster and enter the data at the CLEC. Any citizen of the State can report an out-of-school child to the cluster education centre coordinator. The cluster coordinator with the help of the AEO would verify and enter the details of such a child in the portal. The CLEC should follow up with the out-of-school-child's parents to ensure integration of the child into mainstream education. The portal should similarly have information on children with special needs (CWSN), their registration, attendance and performance tracking.

The monthly salary bill of the teachers of all schools under a cluster would be prepared at the CLEC in the school portal. The CLEC coordinator and AEO of the cluster would certify the monthly salary bills of all schools of that cluster and submit the same online to the district administration. As other details concerning a teacher (attendance, leave etc.) are maintained in the same MIS, it would be easier to prepare the pay bill in the system. Every teacher would have a unique employee id (that would also be the user id for the teacher) and a school attached. Hence, if a teacher is transferred to another school, his/her salary will not be released unless the records are updated.

The e-service book for the teachers would help the administration in settling pension and other retirement benefits on time. This would also save the teachers from the bother of maintaining physical records and chasing the district school administration for the timely release of pension and other benefits. A teachers' forum may be created in the portal to highlight the achievements of school teachers across the State.

Similarly all administrative officials (including the CLEC coordinator) will have access to the school portal. The portal will facilitate social audit through online details of key processes and activities. Even the distribution of free textbooks, bicycles and uniforms can be tracked through the portal. The portal will have a dedicated page for all government circulars, administrative announcementsand training announcements.

The portal should also be effectively utilized for two more important purposes: (i) project management and (ii) financial management. These are discussed in paras 6.15 and 6.16.

6.14 Teacher Transfer

The teacher transfer policy can be monitored through the MIS. At the beginning of each academic session, cluster-wise vacancy/surplus positions in the schools would be drawn from the system. The teacher transfer programme can be designed as below:

(a) The present system of appearing in SSC examination for seeking a transfer should be stopped.

(b) Teachers can apply for transfers in a prescribed form to the CLEC. All applications will be time-stamped. The AEO will screen all such applications and forward the same to the district office. All applications submitted up to September of any year will be considered for transfer in the next academic session.

(c) Teachers from 'teacher-surplus' schools will be compulsorily transferred to appropriate 'teacher-deficit' schools in the same district. Exceptions can be made for senior teachers (more than 55 years of age) and women teachers with children below 5 years.

(d) If after the above two steps no vacancies are left in a district, only mutual transfers will be allowed within the district. However, the net shortfall in a school in a district will be filled up either through fresh recruitment or through voluntary transfers from other districts based on applications made as in (b) above. While implementing such inter-district transfers, first-apply-first-serve method will be followed. It is also to be ensured that if the transfer is sought outside district, a minimum of 5 years of teaching experience is required in the present district.

District level teacher recruitment and the above transfer policies will ensure that: (i) Teachers stay near the school and save time and energy in daily commuting; (ii) Teachers understand local language/culture and thus interact with students more effectively; and (iii) The transfer policy is system-driven and transparent and no discretion is allowed.

6.15 Project Management

The delay in construction of new schools and additional class rooms (ACR) is a major concern for the State. The State Project Directorate should have a separate wing for infrastructure (see Diagram 6.1). The SPD would be broadly divided into two major wings – Administrative and Infrastructure. The civil maintenance job of schools will be monitored by an assistant engineer in the administrative wing of the SPD. Any new construction of ACR, School, ICDS would be monitored by the infrastructure wing. The infrastructure wing would be responsible for preparing the blue print for all the civil work. In order to facilitate the SPD to discharge this function effectively, the wing needs to be strengthened. We propose that the infrastructure wing of the SPD should have one State Project Engineer (in the rank of executive engineer) who would look after all expansion activities. The SPE should be a permanent employee of the government and not contractual staff as is the case now. The State Project Engineer would be assisted by 7-9 assistant engineers, one architect, 2-3 civil consultants on contract (preferably retired PWD employees), 2 AutoCad operators, and one computer operator. At each district there should similarly be a District Project Engineer (in the rank of an assistant engineer) assisted by an adequate number of district technical persons (on contract) so that each block has one district technical person. Such technical persons should be diploma engineers. Their responsibilities would include- (a) weekly inspection of civil construction under their jurisdiction, (b) taking photographs of various stages of completion, (c) making necessary entries in the school portal at the block office every Friday and (d) verifying contractors' bills and forwarding these to District Project Engineer for approval. Such technical persons should be appointed on contract basis for a

minimum period of two years and renewable on satisfactory performance. The DPE (District Project Engineer) will also be responsible for the maintenance of existing schools.

The SMC should have a Civil Works Sub-committee (CWC) headed by the chairman of the SMC with the head teacher of the concerned school, representative of the local authority, two parents of students, and one mason of the village (co-opted) as members. The CWC would procure materials and engage labour contractors to execute the civil work.

In the school portal, all civil works will be categorized as per types and mapped with the DISE code of schools. Monthly progress of work, including physical and financial progress, revised sanction details, completion details, photographs of completed/ work-in-progress constructions, can be captured in the portal. This will help the SPD to have updated information on all civil work and thus enable the SPD to take timely actions.

6.16 Financial Management

The school development plans of each school will help each district prepare a three year perspective plan. The annual work plan and budget (AWP&B) are prepared every year based on the perspective plan. While preparing budgets for the perspective plan, the financial norms prescribed under the SSA framework should be strictly followed. Outlays proposed under each intervention are to be supported by relevant data to determine the physical targets. Such AWP&B would be entered in the school portal and the State Project Office can view such plans. This facility would help the SPD review the annual plans and compare achievements against targets. Primary and upper-primary schools should be treated as separate schools for the purpose of school grants even if they are functioning from the same premises.

The financial management of various schemes would be monitored at the cluster/block level. We propose that a block accountant be appointed for each block. The block accountant should be computer literate. The block accountant should be responsible for collecting information on grants received and utilisation of funds from every school under the block. The block accountant would also be responsible for entering all data in the MIS.

Once the annual plans are firmed up, the funds for various schemes should be routed through the DPO (District Project Office). The funds for civil construction may be transferred to the district project office by the SPD. The DPO would transfer the funds directly to the bank account of the respective SMC on the basis of an utilisation certificate. Same procedure should be followed for distribution of funds for other schemes (uniforms, bicycles, TLM, scholarships etc.). The school should not get involved in procuring items like uniforms, bicycles etc. The SMC should identify some shops in the local area which can provide school uniforms and bicycles. Expenses for uniforms and bicycles should be reimbursed to

the parents of the children on the production of necessary bills/invoices from the designated shops. Such payments would be disbursed by the clerk of the CLEC as per the schedule drawn by the AEO. The disbursing official will keep records of all bills/vouchers in a prescribed format and send the details to the block accountant immediately after completion of the disbursal. The school teachers would not be involved in this exercise. This would substantially reduce the administrative load on schools. The block accountant would enter the fund disbursement details to the school portal. The block accountant would maintain records of all transactions with the civil contractors and enter the necessary data in the MIS.

The head teacher of the school will only maintain a cash book to record receipts and payments of contingency and maintenance grants. Such grants would also be transferred to the bank account of the SMC. The head teacher of the school can spend such grants only on the approval of SMC. The AEO will periodically (e.g. monthly) verify the cash book of each school and certify (in a prescribed format) the expenses incurred. In case there is any community contribution (donation), such contribution should augment the maintenance grant of the school and the SMC should keep records of such grants. The head teacher should be encouraged to scout for such special contributions.

The details of school-wise contingency/maintenance grant utilization will be maintained at the block level. The utilisation certificate for school grants should be reviewed by the SMC and submitted to the appropriate authority on time.

The grants for mid day meals (MDM) should also be directly sent to the bank account of the SMC. The head teacher of the school should not be involved in the administration of the MDM except for certifying the quality of the meal and the number of students who availed the meal.

6.17 Rabindra Mukta Vidyalaya

Rabindra Mukta Vidyalaya, setup in 1998, was initially known as the State Open School. It is presently renamed as the West Bengal Council of Rabindra Mukta Vidyalaya (W.B.C.R.M.V). RMSA provides that 12% of the students in a state would undergo schooling through the open school system. Hence there is a need to strengthen the WBCRMV. The main target groups of the open school system are presently neo-literates, school dropouts, whole time or part time workers, peasants, elderly persons, unsuccessful learners in the formal system and other weaker sections of society. However there is a conflict in the objective of the RTE and WBCRMV. RTE mandates that all children in the age group 6 to 14 years should study in a formal school. Presently students seeking enrolment in a RMV should self-certify that he/she has completed elementary education. In order to ensure the sanctity of a student’s claim, such an undertaking should be attested by the SMC of the concerned school.

It has been observed that the quality of learning and evaluation of students in a RMV is poor. Children, who could have joined main stream schools, take the easier route and enrolled themselves in a RMV. In order to arrest this trend it is proposed that the minimum age of admission in a RMV should be raised to 18 years. This policy will ensure that only over aged citizen can participate in the open schooling system.

The WBCRMV has so far been utterly neglected by the State administration. There is no permanent staff in the council (excepting the President and Secretary). The office space provided to WBCRMV is inadequate and the study centres are poorly managed.

In order to strengthen the open schooling system the following is suggested:

(a) The responsibility of curriculum design and preparation of textbooks should be given to WBCERT.
(b) WBCRMV would approve the curriculum and textbooks designed by WBCERT.
(c) One or more upper primary schools in a cluster should be used as study centres. Such schools should be compensated reasonably for the use of their space. Laboratories of nearby higher secondary schools will be used for conducting practical classes.
(d) WBCRMV should prepare a resource person bank cluster-wise for teaching in the study centres. Such resource persons should ideally be retired high school teachers.
(e) The resource persons will be given necessary training by WBCERT.
(f) The WBCRMV will be responsible for managing the admissions and examination system. For this purpose the council should be appropriately staffed.
(g) The present system of allowing 5-6 attempts to clear an examination should be stopped. Instead students should be given up to 3 chances to clear an examination.
(h) The school education portal should contain student related information (registration, performance and tracking) for open schools and should contain all announcements to make them easily accessible to open school students.

Diagram 6.1: Organogram of State School Education: State Unit

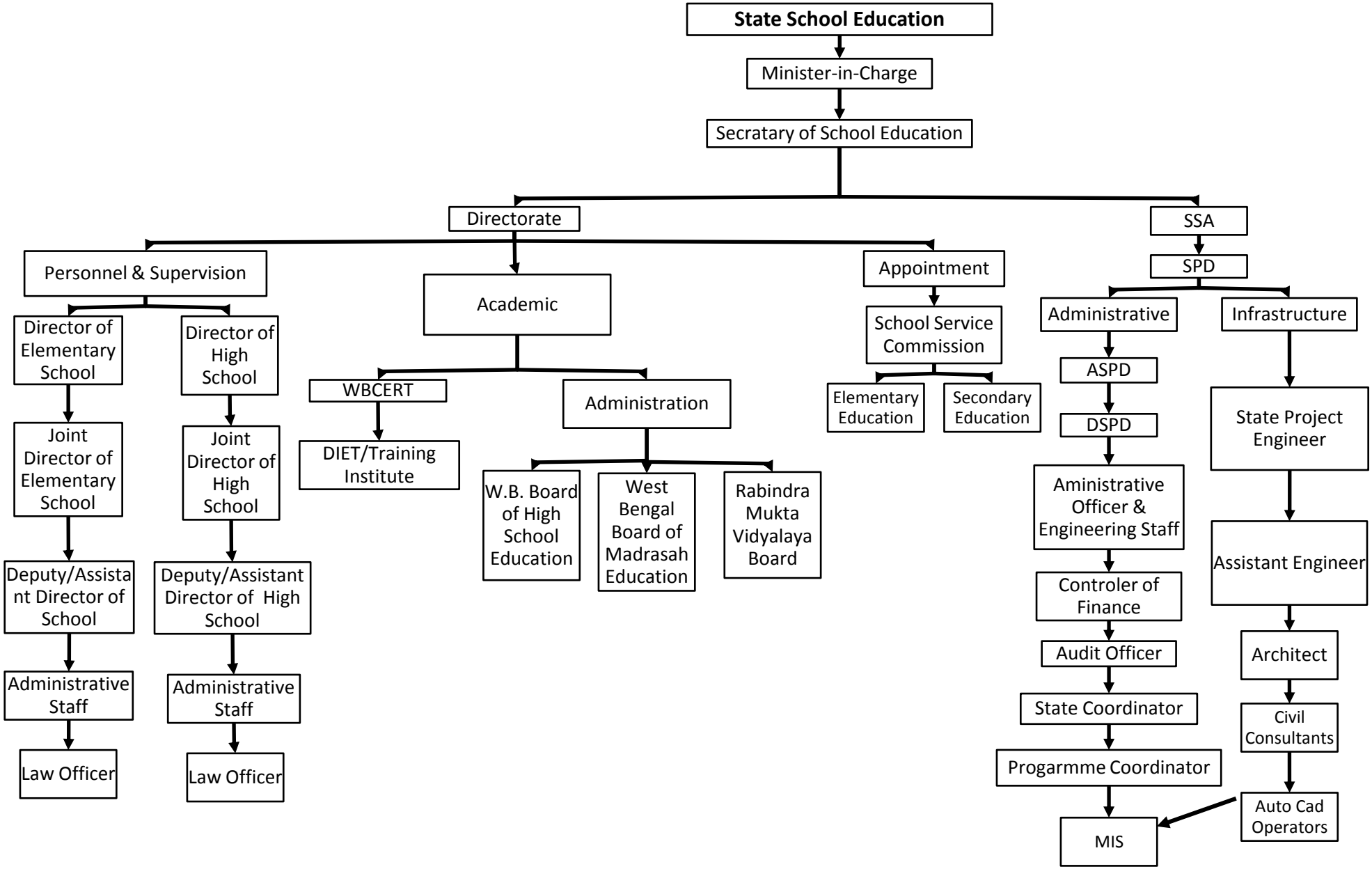


Diagram 6.2: Organogram of State School Education: District Unit

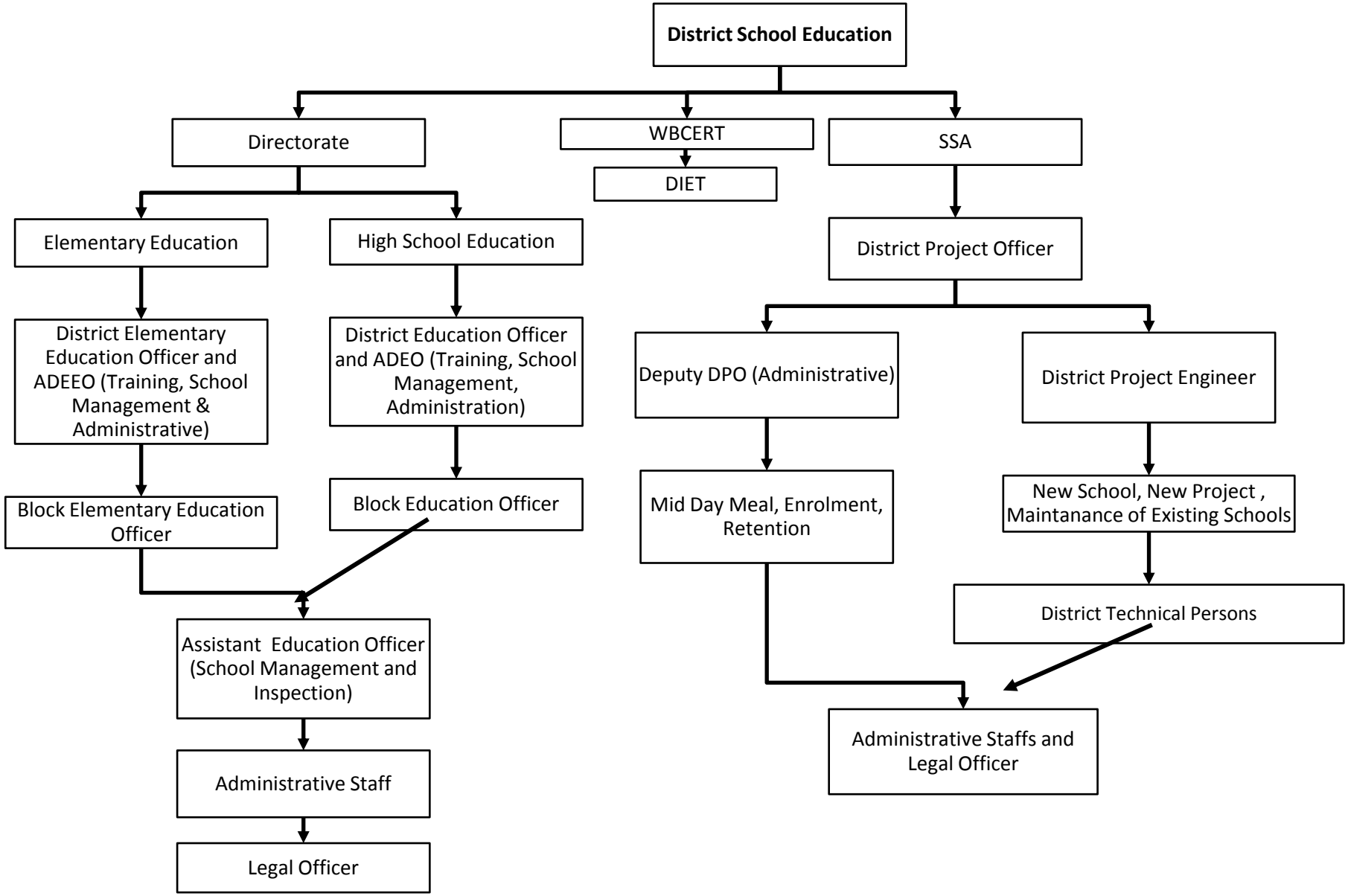


Diagram 6.3: Organogram of State School Education: Block Unit

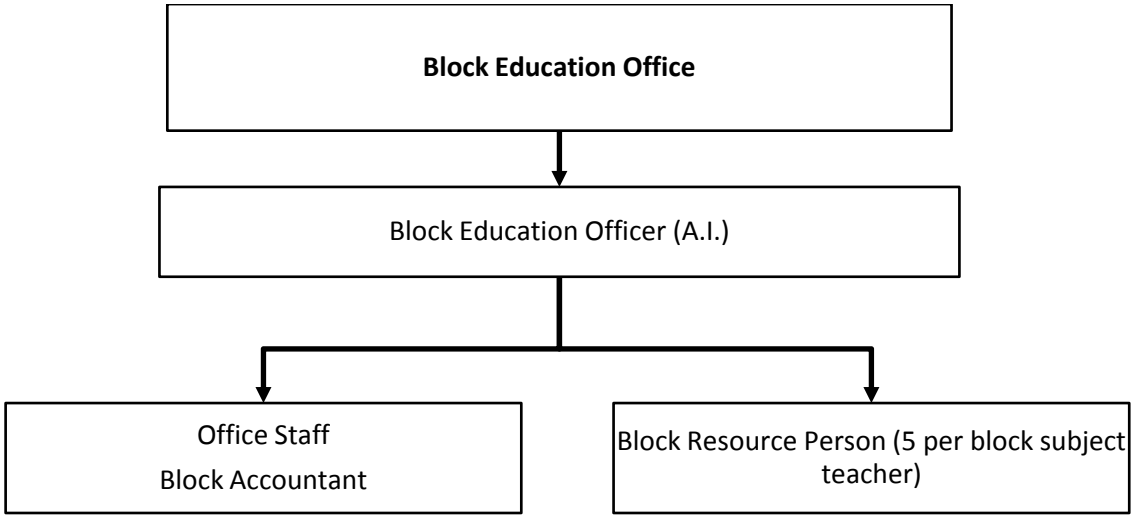


Diagram 6.4: Organogram of State School Education: Cluster Unit

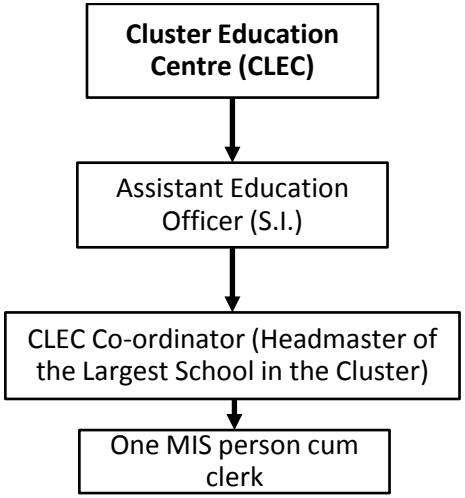
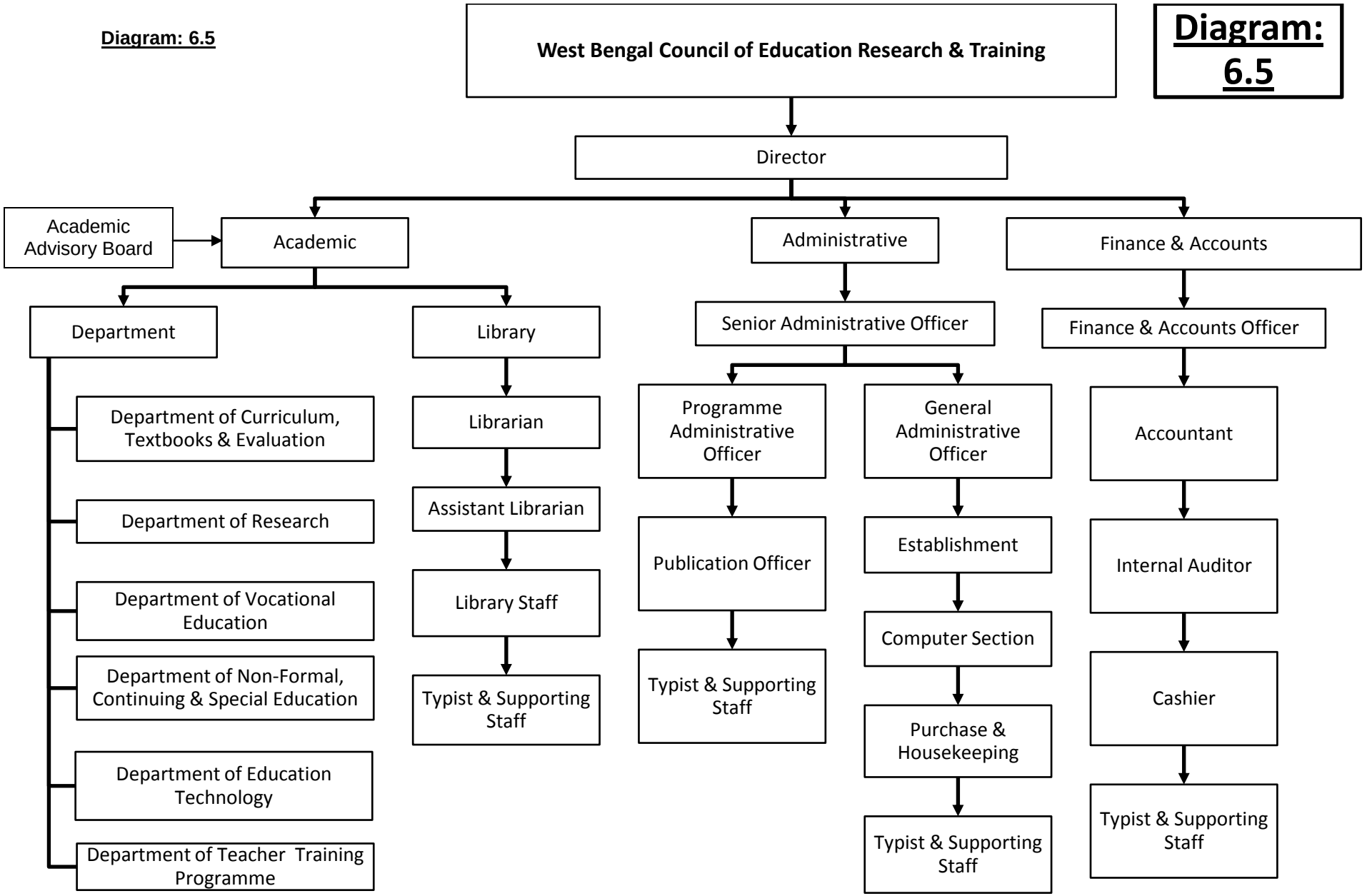


Diagram: 6.5


West Bengal Council of Education Research & Training
Diagram: 6.5
Director
Academic Advisory Board
Academic
Administrative
Finance & Accounts
Department
Library
Senior Administrative Officer
Finance & Accounts Officer
Department of Curriculum, Textbooks & Evaluation
Department of Research
Department of Vocational Education
Department of Non-Formal, Continuing & Special Education
Department of Education Technology
Department of Teacher Training Programme
Librarian
Assistant Librarian
Library Staff
Typist & Supporting Staff
Programme Administrative Officer
Publication Officer
Typist & Supporting Staff
General Administrative Officer
Establishment
Computer Section
Purchase & Housekeeping
Typist & Supporting Staff
Accountant
Internal Auditor
Cashier
Typist & Supporting Staff

Chapter 7

High School Education-Analysis and Recommendations

7. **Introduction.**

The following chapter discusses the survey data on secondary and higher secondary schools, schools offering secondary programmes only, and MSKs. The suggested recommendations are added after the data is discussed. Section 7.1 discusses the data from the schools offering both secondary and higher secondary programmes, 7.2 discusses the schools offering secondary education only. **Proposed areas for intervention are discussed in Sections 7.2.11 and 7.3.11.**

7.1 West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education.

7.1.1. The West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education (W.B.C.H.S.E hereafter) came into existence as per the West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education, Act 1975. Given its mandate, the Council looks after the entire gamut of activities concerning higher secondary education at the 10+2 level as a responsible body. In practice though, much of its resources are geared towards the conduct of 10+2 level examinations in the state.

7.1.2. In terms of organisational structure, the Council is headed by the President. It also consists other ex officio members such as the President of the Board of Secondary Education and the Director of School Education. Under the overall guidance of the President, the Secretary directly supervises the Council Head Office in Kolkata and the four regional offices: i) New Jalpaiguri, ii) Bardhaman iii) Midnapur , and iv) Kolkata. These regional offices are headed by deputy secretaries.

7.1.3. The main functions of the Council are:

a) Need assessment and policy development for the higher secondary level of education.

b) Inspection of recognised higher secondary institutions.

c) Providing curriculum, syllabus, regulations, study books etc. to recognised institutions.

d) Conducting Higher Secondary Examinations.

e) To look after the preparation, publication, and sale of the necessary text books for recognised institutions.[51]

7.1.4. The Council deals with a large student body ofthe age group of 16-18 years. DISE data 2008-09 shows that 7,74,503 students are enrolled in the higher secondary schools working under the aegis of the Council. Among them, the total number of boys are 4,43,195, and the total number of enrolled girls are 3,31,380.(Table 7.1).[52]

7.1.5 The district wise distribution of the higher secondary schools can be gleaned from Table 7.2, on the basis of data from the official website of the Higher Secondary Council, WB.[53] Total number of Higher Secondary Institutions in the State is 4652. Among which 71.34% are co-ed schools. 11.67% and 15.24% are the respective numbers of only boys and only girls higher secondary institutions. Among all the districts of West Bengal, Kolkata shows the highest number of higher secondary institutions, i.e., 385. Burdwan district has the distinction of having the second highest number of schools i.e. (375). By contrast, Dakshin Dinajpur has the lowest number of higher secondary schools (82). Likewise, the highest number of girls' higher secondary schools is in Kolkata (147). The second highest number of girls' higher secondary institutions i.e. 124 belongs to the district of North 24 Parganas. Dakshin Dinajpur has the lowest number of girls' Higher Secondary Schools (10 schools). It has been observed that save Malda, in each district the numbers of girls' higher secondary schools are higher than the boys' higher secondary schools.

Highest and the second highest number of boys' higher secondary schools respectively belong to Kolkata (126 schools) and North 24 Parganas (92 schools). Each of the districts of Bankura, Coochbehar, and Dakshin Dinajpur possesses eight higher secondary institutions only for boys.

In case of co-ed schools, the highest numbers of schools belong to North 24 Parganas; and the second highest number of co-ed schools is located in the South 24 Parganas. As expected, Dakshin Dinajpur has the lowest number of co-ed higher secondary schools. Co-ed higher secondary schools constitute 71.34 per cent of the total number of schools in the state.

[51] http://61.95.144.78/html/history.htm (accessed on 10th August 2011.)
[52] www.wbsed.gov.in(DISE 2008-09)
[53] http://174.120.21.162/~wbchse/databank/admin/dist_school_count.php (accessed on 10th August 2011)

7.1.6 Given the gap (3685) between the number of secondary and higher secondary schools (8337 and 4652 respectively), upgradation of secondary schools to higher secondary ones is a continuous process (Table 7.1, on the basis of 2008-09 data). The total number of upgraded schools is 119, i.e. 2.5 per cent of the total number of schools.

7.1.7 At present the total number of Higher Secondary schools is 4652. On the basis of 2008-09 data, table 7.3a and 7.3b show that in the year of 2016 and 2026 the projected number of schools (on the basis of secondary pass out percentage) will be respectively 4370 and 3453. It reveals that the demand and projected number of higher secondary schools will decrease in future.

7.1.8 In West Bengal apart from the recognized schools of the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education (W.B.B.S.E) and West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education (W.B.C.H.S.E), there are some other schools which are affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary education (CBSE) and Indian School certificate (I.S.C)/ Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (I.C.S.E). CBSE Annual Report (2010-2011) shows that there are total 171 CBSE affiliated schools in the state (table 7.4).[54] From the official website data, updated on 27th May 2011, it can be observed that there are total 323 I.S.C/ I.C.S.E recognized schools in West Bengal.[55] On the basis of data from the respective official websites, table 7.5 provides district wise number of I.S.C/ I.C.S.E schools. Kolkata possesses 120 I.S.C/ I.C.S.E schools whereas among the remaining districts, Darjeeling has the highest number of schools (56 schools). On the contrary, Bankura, Birbhum, and Dakshin Dinajpur hardly have any I.S.C/ I.C.S.E affiliated schools. However the I.C.S.E and C.B.S.E affiliated schools are not part of our study and analysis.

7.1.9 Data from the Annual Report 2009-10, Department of School Education, West Bengal shows some over-lapping categories of the number of teachers (Table 7.6). These categories of teachers are: a) Primary with upper primary and secondary/higher secondary, b) Upper primary and secondary/ higher secondary, c) Secondary only, d) Secondary with higher secondary, e) Higher secondary only.[56] Such over-lapping categories make it difficult to find out the exclusive number of teachers for any specific level. Therefore it is difficult to get the present status of the pupil-teacher ratio at a given level, be it secondary or higher secondary.

[54] www.cbse.nic.in (accesses on 11th August, 2011)
[55] http://www.cisce.org/Locate.aspx (accesses on 11th August, 2011)
[56] Department of School Education, Government of West Bengal, *Annul Report 2009-10,* (Kolkata).

Findings on Secondary and Higher Secondary schools

7.1.10FORMAL INFORMATION

7.1.10.A Table 7.7a shows the location-wise distribution of Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools. Among the total 232 (100%) surveyed secondary and higher secondary schools, the maximum percentage of schools i.e. 64.2% schools are located in rural areas and one-fourth (25%) of the schools are located in urban areas. Only one-tenth (10.8%) of the surveyed Secondary and Higher Secondary schools are located in Kolkata. Table 7.7b indicates that most of the surveyed schools i.e. 216 schools (93.10%) were established more than thirty years ago.

7.1.1O.B Table 7.8 shows that only four urban schools (1.7%) run in the morning session. Apart from these four, almost all of the Secondary and Higher Secondary schools (98.3%) in all area specific categories are day schools. Table 7.9 shows gender-wise distribution of the schools in three different categories, such as: a) only boys' schools, b) only girls' schools, and c) co-education schools. Kolkata has the maximum number of girls' schools (60%) but the percentage of girls' schools is minimum (12.1%) in rural areas. The same percentage is 37.9% in urban areas. In rural areas, most of the schools are co-education (81.9%) schools whereas in Kolkata there is no co-educational school at all. The highest percentage of boys' schools (40%) is in Kolkata. While rural areas show the lowest percentage (6%) of the same.

7.1.11 COMMITTEES IN SCHOOLS

7.1.11.A Table 7.10 provides data on the existence of different committees in Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools. These committees are: a) Mother Teacher Association, b) School Development Committee, c) School Management Committee, and d) Parent Teacher Association. Almost half of the schools have the Mother Teacher Association (MTA). 60% of the schools in Kolkata have a MTA and this figure is 49.2% for urban areas. An ignorable number of schools have a School Development Committee in all the areas. There is only one school (4%) in Kolkata with a School Development Committee and this is the highest percentage among all the regions. Almost every school has a School Management Committee (SMC). In rural areas 98.7% schools

have a SMC and this figure is 72.9% and 96% respectively for urban areas and Kolkata. Except one school (0.7%) in rural areas, no school has a Parent Teacher Association (PTA).

7.1.11.B Table 7.11 shows the frequency of committee meetings of Secondary and Higher Secondary schools. Average frequency of School Development Committee and SMC meetings per school are higher than other committee meetings. In rural areas an average of 12 meetings are held by the School Development Committee and this figure is 9.7 for the School Management Committee. In urban areas an average of 7 meetings are held by School Development Committee and this figure is 8.1 for the School Management Committee. In Kolkata, on an average, 3 meetings are held by the School Development Committee and this figure is 5 for the School Management Committee and an average of 3.1 meetings are held by the Mother Teacher Association.

7.1.12 VISIT BY AUTHORITIES

7.1.12.A Table 7.12 provides data on the number of school visits by SIS/ASI in the last year. In rural areas, nearly half of the surveyed schools (45%) are visited by SIS/ASI in the last year and the average number of visits per school is 1.4. In case of urban areas, more than two-thirds of the surveyed schools (67.2%) schools have not been visited by SIS/AIS in the last year, and the average number of visits per school is 1.6. In Kolkata, more than three-fourths of the schools (76%) have not been visited by SIS/AIS in the last year and the average number of visits per schools is 2. In total 60.3% schools are not visited by SIS/AIS in last year and average number of visits per schools is 1.5.

7.1.12.B Table 7.13 shows the frequency of the visits of higher authority officials in the surveyed Secondary and Higher secondary schools. In the rural areas, 88.6% schools are not visited by officials from higher authorities and the average number of visits per school is 1.4. In urban areas 91.4% of the schools are not visited by officials from higher authorities and the average number of visits per school is 2. In Kolkata, 92% schools are not visited by officials from higher authorities and the average number of visits per school is 1. Most of the surveyed schools (89.7%) are not visited by officials from higher authorities and the average number of visits per school is 1.5.

7.1.13 INFRASTRUCTURAL FACILITIES

7.1.13.A Table 7.14 shows the distribution of Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools on the basis of building types. Here the categories of buildings are: a) *pucca*, b) semi-*pucca*. In rural areas, except 6 semi-*pucca* schools, all schools (96%) have *pucca* structures. In urban areas, all schools (100%) have a*pucca* structure. In Kolkata, except 1 semi-*pucca* school, all schools (96%) have a *pucca* structure. In total, almost all of the schools (97%) have *pucca* structure and only a few (3 %) have semi-*pucca* structures.

Table 7.15a reflects that except 2 buildings in Kolkata, all school buildings, i.e. 99.1% buildings among the overall total, are owned by school authorities in all areas.

Table 7.15b provides data on the number of floors in the school building. In rural area, more than three-fourths (79.2%) of the schools have 2 storied buildings and 18.8% are 3 storied. Only 1 school belongs to 'above than 4 storied' building category. In urban area, there are 36.2% schools have 2 storied buildings and 46.6% have 3 storied buildings. Only 1 school (1.7%) possesses a building with more than 4 stories. In Kolkata only 12% of the schools have 2 storied buildings and 72% have 3 storied buildings and 12% of the schools are 4 storied buildings. Only 1 school (4%) has more than 4 stories.

Among all over the areas, there are more than half of the schools (61.2%) with 2 storied buildings and less than one-third (31.5%) of the schools with 3 storied buildings. Only 3 schools (1.3%) possess more than 4 storied buildings.

7.1.13.B Table 7.16 shows classroom-wise distribution of the surveyed schools. In rural areas, near about one-fifth of the schools (19.5%) have more than 20 classrooms and one-tenth of the schools (10.1%) have only 10 classrooms. In urban areas, a little more than one-third (36.2%) of the schools have more than 20 classrooms and a little less than one-tenth of the schools (8.6%) have 16 classrooms. In Kolkata, more than one-fourth (28%) of the schools have more than 20 rooms and one-fifth (20%) of the schools have 12 rooms and almost 12% of the schools have only 6 classrooms. In

total nearly one-fourth (24.6%) of the schools have more than 20 classrooms; and among all types of classroom categories this is found in the highest frequency.

7.1.13.C Table 7.17 is about the distribution of Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools by the availability of rooms other than classrooms. In rural areas, almost all of the schools (98%) schools have a teachers' room and near about three-fourths (72.5%) of the schools have a separate room for the 'Teacher-in-Charge'. Almost half of the schools have a computer room (47%), library (43.6%) and laboratories (43.6%). A high percentage of schools (81.2%) have a veranda. In urban areas, about all of the schools have a teachers' room (98.3%) and a separate room for the Teacher-in-Charge (91.4%). More than half of the schools, respectively 55.2% and 55.2% schools, have a library and laboratory. While more than two-thirds (67.2%) of the schools have a computer room. Percentage of schools having a veranda is also high (87.9%) in this area. In Kolkata, every school (100%) havea teachers' room and almost each of them (92%) have separate rooms for the Teacher-in-Charge. 76%, 64%, and 60% schools have a computer room, library and laboratory facilities respectively. Less than two-thirds of the schools (64%) schools have a veranda.

In total figures, almost all of the schools (98.3%) have a teachers' room and more than two-thirds (79.3%) of the schools have a separate room for the Teacher-in-Charge. Around half of the schools have a computer room (55.2%), library (48.7%) and laboratory facilities (48.3%). A high percentage of the schools (81%) have a veranda.

Concerning the above data, we recommended that every school must have a separate room for teachers andthe Headmaster or the Teacher-in-Charge. Moreover a separate office room, computer room and library should be made available in each school.

7.1.13.D Table 7.18 shows that almost every school (98.7% of the total) has drinking water facilities except 2 schools in rural areas and 1 school in Kolkata. Table 7.19 indicates that every school (100%) in all areas has toilet facilities.

Table 7.20 provides data on availability of toilet categories in Secondary and Higher Secondary schools. In rural areas, the average number of toilets for students is 5.9 per school and the figure is 2.3 for teachers' toilets. Average number of common toilets is 1.1 per school.

In urban areas, average number of toilets for students is 6.2 per school and the figure is 2.3 for teachers' toilets. Average number of common toilets is 1.3 per school.

In Kolkata, average number of toilets for students is 5.6 per school and the figure is 1.9 for teachers' toilets. Average number of common toilets is 1.7 per school.

Data on the distribution of Secondary and Higher Secondary schools having separate toilets for boys & girls is available in table 7.21 In rural areas, 91.8% of the co-education schools have separate toilet for girls and boys. In urban areas, 87.5% of the co-education schools have separate toilets for girls and boys. In total, almost all of the co-education schools (91.1%) have separate toilets for girls and boys.

Table 7.22 shows the distribution of Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools on the basis of separate toilet facilities. In rural areas, except 1 school with a toilet for teachers only and 24 schools with a toilet for students only and 1 school with a common toilet, every school has separate toilets for teachers and students.

In urban areas, except 3 schools with toilets for teachers only and 3 schools with toilets for students only and 1 school with a common toilet, every school has separate toilets for teachers and students.

In Kolkata, every school has separate toilets for teachers and students.

In total, except 4 schools with a separate teachers' toilet only and 27 schools with a toilet for students only and 2 schools with a common toilet, every school (199 schools), i.e. 85.77% of the schools, have separate toilets for teachers and students.

Table 7.23a reflects the picture of availability of water inside the toilet. In rural areas, more than half of the schools (59.7%) have water inside the toilet. In urban areas, 94.8% of the schools have water inside the toilet. In Kolkata, most of the schools (96%) have water inside the toilet.

In total, almost three-fourths (72.4%) of the schools have water inside the toilet.

7.1.14 OTHER FACILITIES

7.1.14.A Table 7.23b shows the distribution of Secondary and Higher Secondary schools having a computer room by number of computers for students. In rural areas, more than one-third (35.7%) of the schools have 6-10 computers and more than one-fifth (22.9%) of the schools have 1-5 and 11-15 computers each. 4 schools (5.7%) do not have any computer.

In urban areas, 33.3% schools have 1-5 computers each and 20.5% schools have 6-10 computers each. 2 schools do not have any computers.

In Kolkata, 26.3% schools have 1-5 computers and 15.8% schools have 6-10, 11-15, 16-20 and above 20 computers. 2 schools do not have any computers.

In the overall total including all the regions, 28.1% schools have computer rooms with 6-10 computers and in 8 schools (6.3%) the computer rooms are without computers.

The average numbers of computers per school in rural areas, urban areas and in Kolkata are 10.2, 10.6 and 11.2 respectively. The picture clearly indicates the need of computers for students in every school.

7.1.14.B Table 7.23c highlights the data on the distribution of Secondary and Higher Secondary schools on the basis of hostel facilities. In rural areas, less than one-third (31.5%) of the schools have hostels and they are in use. Comparatively a high percentage (67.8%) of schools do not have hostel facilities. 1 school (0.7%) has a hostel but that remains unused.

In urban areas, only 2 schools (3.4%) have hostels and those are in use, whereas 94.8% of the schools do not have hostel facilities. 1 school (1.7%) has a hostel but that is not in use.

In Kolkata, only 1 school (4.0%) has a hostel and that is in use; but nearly all of the schools (96%) do not have hostel facilities.

In total, only 21.6% of the schools have hostels and they are in use; more than three-fourths (77.6%) of the schools do not have hostel facilities. 2 schools (0.9%) have unused hostels.

Table 7.23d shows the distribution of surveyed schools by having separate hostel buildings of the concerned school authorities. In rural areas, 91.5% schools with hostels have separate hostel buildings and only 4 schools (8.5%) do not have

separate hostel buildings. In urban areas and Kolkata all the schools with hostels have separate hostel buildings.
Except 4 schools (8.0%), every school has separate hostel buildings.

Table 7.23e focuses on the data of hostel accommodation among the schools with hostel facilities. In rural areas total 47 schools have hostel facilities. Among these less than half (44.7%) of the schools have sufficient hostel accommodation and a high percentage (55.3%) of the schools do not have such.
In urban areas, among the schools with separate hostel buildings, a perfect half (50%) of the schools have sufficient hostel accommodation and another half (50%) of the schools do not.
In Kolkata every school with separate hostel facilities has sufficient hostel accommodation.
Among all of the surveyed schools with separate hostel buildings, less than half of the (46%) schools have sufficient hostel accommodation and a high percentage (54%) of schools do not have that facility.

Table 7.23f provides the data on the distribution of the schools by the number of accommodation facilities in the running hostel. In rural areas, an average of 53.3 boys per school and 7.8 girls per school enjoy hostel facilities. Rural areas show the highest average among all the regions i.e.61 students per school can be accommodated in hostels.
In urban areas, an average of 27.5 boys per school and an average of 27.5 students per school can be accommodated in the hostel.
In Kolkata, on an average, 15 girls per school and an average 15 students per school can be accommodated in the hostel.
In the overall total of all the regions, average 51.2 boys per school and 7.6 girls per school and average of 58.8 students per school can be accommodated in the hostel.

Table 7.23g shows the distribution of schools depending on the caste of the students who are accomodated in the hostels. In rural areas, more than half (51.1%) of the schools have hostel facilities for all the students and 44.7% schools have this facility for SC and ST students only. Likewise, in 2 schools (4.3%) this facility is available for

ST students only. In urban areas and Kolkata, all the schools with hostel facilities provide this facility to all the students.

Among all the regions more than half of the schools (54%) have hostel facilities for all the students and 42% of the schools have this facility for SC and ST students only. Further, in only 2 schools (4.0%), this facility is available for ST students only.

Table 7.23h provides data on hostel charges. In rural areas, 63.8% of the schools do not take hostel fees and only 2 schools charge INR 1001-1500 as hostel fees.

In urban areas, half of the schools do not take hostel fees and other half charge INR 1-100 as hostel fees.

In Kolkata, 1 school (100%) charges INR 1001-1500 as hostel fees.

In total, more than half of the schools (62%) do not take hostel fees and only 3 schools (6.0%) charge INR 1001-1500 as hostel fees. A little less than one-fifth (18%) of the schools charge INR 501-1000 as hostel fees.

Table 7.23i shows data on the year of establishment of hostels for schools having hostel facilities. In rural areas, 36.2% schools have hostel facilities for above 30 years and only 14.9% schools have started this facility within 1-3 years.

In urban areas, 50% of the schools have hostel facilities for above 30 years and 50% of the schools have started this facility within 11-20 years.

In Kolkata, all the schools have hostel facilities for above 30 years.

In total, more than one-third (38%) of the schools have hostel facilities for above 30 years and only 14% schools have started this facility within 1-3 years.

7.1.14.C Table 7.24 shows data on the availability of electricity in surveyed schools. In rural areas most of the schools (89.9%) have electricity. In urban areas and Kolkata all schools (100%) have electricity. **It is recommended that in rural areas each of the schools should have electricity.**

In total, near about all of the schools (93.5%) enjoy electricity facility.

Table 7.25 provides data on the distribution of Secondary & Higher Secondary schools by the availability of backup power. Other than 8 schools (5.4%), no school in rural areas have a power backup system. Only 4 schools (6.9%) in urban areas

have a power backup system. There is only 1 school (4%) in Kolkata in the same category.

Only a few schools (5.6%) i.e.13 schools out of 232 surveyed schools have a backup power system.

7.1.14.D Table 7.26 shows the distribution of schools depending on the adequacy of lights and fans in the classrooms. In rural areas only half of the classrooms (50.6%) have sufficient lights and fans. 36.4% of the classrooms have an average number of lights and fans and only 13% of the classrooms have inadequate lights and fans.

In urban areas, near about three-fourth (71.2%) classrooms have sufficient light and fans. While, more than one-fourth (28%) of the classrooms have average light and fans and only 8 classrooms (0.8%) have inadequate light and fans.

In Kolkata, most of the classrooms (86.3%) have sufficient lights and fans. 13.4% of the classrooms have an average number of lights and fans and only 1 classroom (0.3%) has inadequate lights and fans.

In total, 60.5% classrooms have sufficient lights and fans. In relation to that, less than one-third of the (31%) classrooms have average lights and fans and only 8.1% of the classrooms have inadequate lights and fans.

7.1.14.E Table 7.27a provides data on school uniforms. In rural areas, except 1 school, every school (99.3%) has a uniform. In case of urban areas and Kolkata, every school (100%) has a uniform. In conclusion, almost every school (99.6%) has a uniform.

7.1.14.F Table 7.27b shows the distribution of surveyed schools on the basis of arranging health check-up camps for students. In rural areas, more than one-third (37.6%) of the schools arrange health check- up camps. In urban areas, only 17.2% of the schools arrange for health check-up camps. In Kolkata 40% of the schools arrange for health check-up camps.

Among the total number of schools, only 32.8% of the schools arrange for health check-up camps and 67.2% do not arrange thesekinds of camps. **It is recommended that, irrespective of area division a cluster of schools should come together to arrange health check-up camps.**

7.1.15 MIDDAY MEAL

7.1.15.A Table 7.28 reflects the Mid-Day Meal (MDM) scenario. In rural areas, more than half of the surveyed schools (57%) provide Mid-Day Meals. In urban areas, a little less than three-fourths (74.1%) of the surveyed schools do not provide Mid-Day Meals. In Kolkatahigh percentages (84%) of the surveyed schools do not provide Mid-Day Meals.

Less than half (44.8%) of the schools provide the MDM.

7.1.16PROBLEMS IN SCHOOLS

7.1.16.A Table 7.29 indicates the different problems of the surveyed schools. In rural areas, almost all the schools (97.3%) do not have adequate infrastructure. Less than one-third (32.2%) of the schools are facing the problem of inadequate teaching staff. Respectively 22.8%, 30.9% and 24.2% schools have low attendance, high dropout rates and low teacher turnout problems.

In urban areas 41.4% schools are suffering due to inadequate infrastructure. 27.6% and 29.3% of the schools do not have adequate teaching and non-teaching staff respectively. 29.3%, 27.6% and 24.1% schools have low attendance, high dropout rates and low teacher turnout problems respectively. One-fourth (25%) of the schools have a low enrolment problem.

In Kolkata, more than half (52%) of the schools are suffering due to the problem of low enrolment. 44% and 28% of the schools have ‘low attendance’ and ‘dropout’ problems respectively. Little less than one-fourth (24%) of the schools do not have adequate teaching staff.

In total, near about three-fourths (73.7%) of the schools do not have adequate infrastructure. Less than one-third of the 30.2% schools are suffering due to inadequate teaching staff. 26.7%, 29.7% and 23.3% schools are suffering due to low attendance, dropout and low teacher turnout problems respectively.

7.1.17EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

7.1.17.A Table 7.30a provides data on the distribution of schools depending on the provision of vocational training. In rural areas, a little less than three-fourths (73.8%) of the

schools do not provide vocational training. In urban areas, almost all of the schools (93.1%) are running without vocational training. In case of Kolkata 88% of the schools do not provide vocational training.
Only 19.8% of the schools provide vocational training and most of the schools (73.8%) do not provide vocational training.

Table 7.30b shows the distribution of Secondary and Higher Secondary schools providing vocational training by the ten major subjects. In rural areas, 38.5% of the schools provide vocational training on 'tailoring' and one-third (33.3%) of the schools provide vocational training on 'electrical house wiring and motor winding'.
In urban areas, half of the schools (50%) give vocational training on 'health work' and 2 schools (50%) give training on 'tailoring'. One-fourth of the schools, i.e. 1 school, provides training on 'electrical house wiring and motor winding'.
In Kolkata 2 schools give training on 'mobile & telephone repairing' and 2 give on 'computer assembling and maintenance'.
In total 37% of the schools give training on 'tailoring' and 30% give training on 'electrical house wiring and motor winding'.

Table 7.30c provides information on the distribution of schools by the category of vocational training. In rural areas 69.2% of the schools have external teachers for vocational training. In urban areas 50% of the schools have external teachers for vocational training. In Kolkata three-fourths (75%) of the schools have external teachers for vocational training.
In total only 31.9% of the schools use their own teachers for vocational training and most of the schools (68.1%) have external teachers for vocational training.

Table 7.30d discusses the distributionof schools by extra charges for vocational training. In rural areas, more than three-fourths (76.9%) of the schools do not claim extra charges for vocational training. In urban areas, half (50%) of the schools do not claim extra charges for vocational training. In Kolkata, two-thirds (66.7%) of the schools do not claim extra charges for vocational training. In total, a little more than one-fourth (26.1%) of the schools claim extra charges for vocational training and most of (73.9%) the schools do not claim extra charges for vocational training.

Table 7.30e shows the distribution of Secondary and Higher Secondary schools by the number of students getting vocational training. In rural areas, the average number of students per school taking vocational training is 72.5. In case of urban areas, the average number of students per school taking vocational training is 101. Kolkata shows that the average number of students per school taking vocational training is 173. In total, the average number of students per school taking vocational training is 81.5.

Table 7.30f focuses on the arrangement of training on social events. In rural areas more than one-fourth (26.2%) of the schools arrange for training on social events. In urban areas only 27.6% of the schools arrange for training on social events. Kolkata possesses 28% of the schools which arrange for training on social events. In total, a little more than one-fourth (26.7%) of the schools arrange for training and 73.3% do not arrange it on social events.

Table 7.30g provides data on the distribution of Secondary and Higher Secondary schools arranging training on social events upon subjects on which social training is provided. In rural areas more than half (51.3%) of the schools arrange for training on 'First Aid' and 20.5% of the schools arrange for training on 'Traffic'.

In urban areas three-fourths (75%) of the schools arrange for training on 'First Aid' and 37.5% of the schools arrange for training on 'Traffic' and 25% of the schools arrange for training on 'NCC/SCOUTS/GUIDES'.

In Kolkata 71.4% of the schools arrange for training on 'First Aid' and 42.9% of the schools arrange for training on 'Traffic' and 28.6% of the schools arrange for training on 'Literacy Programmes'. In all, more than half (59.7%) of the schools arrange for training on 'First Aid' and 27.4% of the schools arrange for training on 'Traffic'.

Table 7.30h shows the distribution of Secondary and Higher Secondary schools on the basis of organising inter-house competitions. In rural areas, most of the schools (87.9%) of the schools organise 'Outdoor Sports', 48.3% organise a 'Debate Competition' and 41.6% organise 'Science Talent'.

In urban areas, almost three-fourth (75.9%) of the schools organise 'Outdoor Sports', 43.1% organise a 'Debate Competition' and 'Indoor Sports' and 36.2% organise 'Science Talent'.

In Kolkata, 60% of the schools organise 'Outdoor Sports', 40% organise a 'Debate Competition' and 28% organise an 'Exhibition on Art and Crafts' and 24% organise 'Science Talent'.

A high percentage (81.9%) of the schools organise 'Outdoor Sports', 46.1% organise a 'Debate Competition' and 38.4% organise 'Science Talent' and 30.2% arrange for 'Indoor Sports'.

Table 7.30i highlights the distribution of Secondary and Higher Secondary schools on the basis of participation in Inter School Competitions. In rural areas most of the schools (80.5%) organise inter-school 'Outdoor Sports' and almost half of the schools organise a 'Science Talent' (57.7%), a 'Debate Competition' (50.3%), a 'Drawing Competition' (51%) and a 'Recitation Competition' (53.7%).

In urban areas, 72.4% schools organise inter-school 'Outdoor Sports' and almost half of the schools organise a 'Science Talent' (50%), a 'Debate Competition' (51.7%), a 'Drawing Competition' (62.1%) and a 'Recitation Competition' (53.4%).

In Kolkata, 76% of the schools organise an inter-school 'Drawing Competition' and 'Recitation Competition' while 64%organise a 'Debate Competition'. 40% of the schools organise a 'Science Talent' and 'Outdoor Sports'.

Overall, a little less than three-fourth (73.8%) of the schools organise 'Outdoor Sports', and almost half of the schools organise a 'Science Talent' (53.6%), a 'Debate Competition' (51.9%), a 'Drawing Competition' (56.2%) and a 'Recitation Competition' (55.8%).

7.1.18 OTHER INFORMATION

7.1.18.A Table 7.31a shows the number of non-teaching staff (clerks and group D). In rural areas, the average number of clerks per school is 1.1 and Group D staff is 1.9.

In case of urban areas, the average number of clerks per school is 1.4 and this figure for Group D staff is 2.2. In Kolkata the average number of clerks per school is 1.1 and Group D staff is 1.7.

Total average number of clerks per school is 1.2 and Group D staff is 2.

Table 7.31b provides data on the number of sanctioned non-teaching staff in Secondary and Higher Secondary schools. In rural areas, average number of

sanctioned non-teaching staff per school is 4.8. The same for urban area is 5 per school. In Kolkata, the average number of sanctioned non-teaching staff per school is 4.3. The total average number of sanctioned non-teaching staff per school is 4.8.

7.1.19 ENROLLMENT IN SCHOOLS FROM CLASS V TO CLASS X

7.1.19.A Table 7.32 provides data on enrolment status in Class-V to Class-X of Government Secondary and Higher Secondary schools. In rural areas the enrolment in class-IX and X shows a tendency to increase. Total enrolment in 2004-05 in these two classes were 9744 and 6540 respectively whereas these figures go up to 12653 and 9749 in 2000-10 in the respective classes.

In urban areas, enrolment in class-IX and X shows an increasing trend. Total enrolments in 2004-05 in these two classes were 4919 and 3657 respectively whereas these figures go up to 5376 and 4487 in 2000-10 in respective classes.

In Kolkata, enrolment in class-IX and X also shows an increasing trend. Total enrolment in 2004-05 in these two classes were 1370 and 974 respectively whereas these figures go up to 1439 and 1076 in 2000-10 in respective classes.

7.1.19.B Table 7.33a shows the enrolment status in Class V of Govt. Secondary and Higher Secondary schools. In rural areas the total enrolment in Class-V in 2004-05 was 18399 and the average number of students per school was 221.7. Whereas the total enrolment in 2009-10 is 17369 and the average number of students per school is 209.3.

In urban areas the total enrolment in Class-V in 2004-05 was 6344 and the average number of students per school was 171.5; while the total enrolment in 2009-10 is 6051 and the average number of students per school is 163.5.

In Kolkata, the total enrolment in Class-V in 2004-05 was 1509 and the average number of students per school was 88.8; in that case the total enrolment in 2009-10 was 1387 and the average number of students per school was 81.6.

The total enrolment in Class-V in 2004-05 was 26252 and the average number of students per school was 191.6. Likewise, the total enrolment in 2009-10 was 24807 and the average number of students per school was 181.1.

Table 7.33b provides data on the enrolment status in Class VI of Govt. Secondary and Higher Secondary schools. In rural areas, total number enrolment in Class-VI in 2004-05 was 14053 and the average number of students per school was 169.3 whereas the total enrolment in 2009-10 was 15401 and the average number of students per school was 185.6.

In urban areas, total enrolment in Class-VI in 2004-05 was 5651 and the average number of students per school was 152.7 whereas the total enrolment in 2009-10 was 5728 and the average number of students per school was 154.8.

In Kolkata, total enrolment in Class-VI in 2004-05 was 1397 and the average number of students per school was 82.2 whereas the total enrolment in 2009-10 was 1438 and the average number of students per school was 84.6.

In total, the total enrolment in Class-VI in 2004-05 was 21101 and the average number of students per school was 154 whereas the total enrolment in 2009-10 was 22567 and the average number of students per school was 164.7.

Table 7.33c provides data on the enrolment status in Class VII of Govt. Secondary and Higher Secondary schools. In rural areas the total enrolment in Class-VII in 2004-05 was 12003 and the average number of students per school was 144.6. Whereas the total enrolment in 2009-10 was 14681 and the average number of students per school was 176.9.

In urban areas, total enrolment in Class-VII in 2004-05 was 4984 and the average number of students per school was 134.7. While, total enrolment in 2009-10 was 5224 and the average number of students per school was 141.2.

In Kolkata, total enrolment in Class-VII in 2004-05 was 1506 and the average number of students per school was 88.6. The total enrolment in 2009-10 was 1437 and the average number of students per school was 84.5.

The total enrolment in Class-VII in 2004-05 was 18493 and the average number of students per school was 135 whereas the total enrolment in 2009-10 was 21342 and the average number of students per school was 155.8.

Table 7.33d presents the data on enrolment status in Class VII of Govt. Secondary and Higher Secondary schools. In rural areas, total enrolment in Class-VIII in 2004-05 was 10466 and the average number of students per school was 126.1. Whereas the total

enrolment in 2009-10 was 12653 and the average number of students per school was 152.4.

In urban areas, total enrolment in Class-VIII in 2004-05 was 4984 and the average number of students per school was 134.7. Further, the total enrolment in 2009-10 was 5224 and the average number of students per school was 141.2.

In Kolkata total enrolment in Class-VIII in 2004-05 was 1400 and the average number of students per school was 82.4. In this case, the total enrolment in 2009-10 was 1405 and the average number of students per school was 82.6.

In total, the total enrolment in Class-VIII in 2004-05 was 16850 and the average number of students per school was 123. Whereas the total enrolment in 2009-10 was 19282, and the average number of students per school was 140.7.

Table 7.33e shows data on enrolment status in Class IX of Government Secondary and Higher Secondary schools. In rural areas, total enrolment in Class-IX in 2004-05 was 9744 and the average number of students per school was 117.4. In addition, the total enrolment in 2009-10 was 12189, and the average number of students per school was 146.9.

In urban areas, total enrolment in Class-IX in 2004-05 was 4919 and the average number of students per school was 132.9. However, in 2009-10, total number of enrolled students was 5376 and the average number of students per school was 145.3.

In Kolkata, total enrolment in Class-IX in 2004-05 was 1370 and the average number of students per school was 80.6. Further, the total enrolment in 2009-10 was 1439 and the average number of students per school was 84.6.

In total, the total enrolment in Class-IX in 2004-05 was 16033 and the average number of students per school was 117. In that case, the total enrolment in 2009-10 was 19004, and the average number of students per school was 138.7.

Table 7.33f points out the enrolment status in Class X of Govt. Secondary and Higher Secondary schools. In rural areas, total enrolment in Class-X in 2004-05 was 6540, and the average number of students per school was 78.8; whereas the total enrolment in 2009-10 was 9749, and the average number of students per school was 117.5.

In urban areas, total enrolment in Class-X in 2004-05 was 3657, and the average number of students per school was 98.8. Moreover, the total enrolment in 2009-10 was 4487, and the average number of students per school was 121.3.

In Kolkata, total enrolment in Class-X in 2004-05 was 974 and the average number of students per school was 57.3. Simultaneously, the total enrolment in 2009-10 was 1076, and the average number of students per school was 63.3.

In absolute terms, the total number enrolment in Class-X in 2004-05 was 11171 and the average number of students per school was 81.5. It has been observed that the total enrolment in 2009-10 was 15312 and the average number of students per school was 111.8.

7.1.19.C Table 7.34a shows enrolment status from Class-V to Class-X together in Govt. Secondary and Higher Secondary schools in 2009-10. In rural areas, total enrolment is 82042 and the average number of students per school was 988.5. The percentage of boys' enrolment was 57.8.

In urban areas, total enrolment was 32303 and the average number of students per school was 873.1. The percentage of girls' enrolment was 52.9.

In Kolkata total enrolment was 8182 and the average number of students per school was 481.3. The percentage of girls' enrolment was 54.9.

In total the total enrolment was 122527 and the average number of students per school was 894.4. The percentage of boys' enrolment (54.2%) was more than half of the total students.

Table 7.34b provides data on the enrolment status from Class-V to Class-X together in Govt. Secondary and Higher Secondary schools in 2008-09. In rural areas the total enrolment was 79528 and the average number of students per school was 958.2. The percentage of boys' enrolment was 58.2.

In urban areas the total enrolment was 31454 and the average number of students per school was 850.1. The percentage of girls' enrolment was 54.1.

In Kolkata total enrolment was 8357 and the average number of students per school was 491.6. The percentage of girls' enrolment was 56.6.

Including all areas together, the total enrolment was 119339 and the average number of students per school was 871.1. The percentage of boys' enrolment (54%) was more than half of the total students.

Table 7.34c concentrates on the enrolment status from Class-V to Class-X together in Govt. Secondary and Higher Secondary schools in 2007-08. In rural areas the total

enrolment was 77100 and the average number of students per school was 928.9. The percentage of boys' enrolment was 58.6.

In urban areas total enrolment was 31282 and the average number of students per school was 845.5. The percentage of girls' enrolment was 55.

In Kolkata, total enrolment was 8371 and the average number of students per school was 492.4. The percentage of girls' enrolment was 56.

In absolute terms, the total enrolment was 116753, and the average number of students per school was 852.2. The percentage of boys' enrolment (53.9%) was higher than the girls'.

Table 7.34d provides data onenrolment status from Class-V to Class-X together in Govt. Secondary and Higher Secondary schools in 2006-07. In rural areasthe total enrolment was 74572 and the average number of students per school was 898.5. The percentage of boys' enrolment was 59.8.

In urban areas, total enrolment was 31080, and the average number of students per school was 840. The percentage of girls' enrolment was 53.7.

In Kolkata total enrolment was 8263 and the average number of students per school was 486.1. The percentage of girls' enrolment was 55.9

In total, the total enrolment was 113915 and the average number of students per school was 831.5. The percentage of boys' enrolment (54.9%) was more than half of the total students.

Table 7.34e highlights the enrolment status from Class-V to Class-X together in Govt. Secondary and Higher Secondary schools in 2005-06. In rural areas, total enrolment was 73875 and the average number of students per school was 890.1. The percentage of boys' enrolment was 60.7.

In urban areas, total enrolment was 31168 and the average number of students per school was 842.4. The percentage of girls' enrolment was 52.7.

In Kolkata total enrolment was 8456 and the average number of students per school was 497.4. The percentage of girls' enrolment was 54.8.

The total enrolment is 113499, and the average number of students per school was 828.5. The percentage of boys' enrolment (55.9%) was higher than that of the girls.

Table 7.34f shows enrolment status from Class-V to Class-X together in Govt. Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools in 2004-05. In rural areas the total enrolment was 71205 and the average number of students per school was 857.9. The percentage of boys' enrolment was 61.6.

In urban areas total enrolment was 30939, and the average number of students per school was 836.2. The percentage of girls' enrolment was 52.7.

In Kolkata total enrolment was 8156 and the average number of students per school was 479.8. The percentage of girls' enrolment was 54.5.

In absolute terms the total enrolment was 110300, and the average number of students per school was 805.1. The percentage of boys' enrolment (56.4%) was more than half of the total students.

7.1.20 ON TEACHERS

7.1.20.A Table 7.35 shows data on number of teachers in Secondary & Higher Secondary schools. In rural areas, the average number of full time teachers is 19.4 and the average number of para-teachers is 4.2. The average number of teachers per school is 23.

In urban areas, the average number of full time teachers is 20.7 and the average number of para-teachers is 4.4. The average number of teachers per school is 23.5.

In rural areas, the average number of full time teachers is 16.1 and the average number of para-teachers is 4.3. The average number of teachers per school is 17.8.

Including all areas together, the average number of full time teachers is 19.3 and the average number of para-teachers is 4.2. The average number of teachers per school is 22.6.

Table 7.36a provides data on average number of male and female teachers' in Secondary and Higher Secondary schools. In rural areas the average number of male teacher is 15.9 and the average number of female teacher is 7.1.

In urban areas the average number of male teachers is 18.1 and the average number of female teachers is 12.3.

In Kolkata the average number of male teachers is 15.2 and the average number of female teachers is 12.1.

In gender terms the average number of male teachers is 17.9 which is higher than the average number of female teachers i.e. 8.9.

Table 7.36b shows the percentage of male and female teachers' in the surveyed schools. In rural areas the percentage of male teachers is 69.3 and the percentage of female teachers is less than one-third (30.7%) of the total teachers.

In urban areas, the percentage of male teachers is less than half of the total teachers (47.7%) and the percentage of female teachers (52.3%) is higher than the males.

In Kolkata, the percentage of male teachers is 37.4 and the percentage of female teachers is highest among all the areas (62.6%).

In the overall total of all the regions, the percentage of male teachers is 60.9; and the percentage of female teachers (39.1%) lower than that of the males.

Table 7.37 shows the distribution of teachers by distance (school to residence) in Secondary and Higher Secondary schools. In rural areas, 60.3% teachers come from more than 10 kilometers (K.M.) distance and only 11.3% teachers come from less than 1 K.M.

In urban areas less than half of the (41.2%) teachers come from more than 10 k.m. distance. Moreover, a little more than one-tenth i.e. 13.6% and 13.2% teachers come from less than 1 K.M and 1-2 K.M. distances respectively.

In Kolkata, 43.5% teachers come from more than 10 K.M. distance and only 10.1% and 10.5% teachers come from less than 1 K.M. and 1-2 K.M. distances respectively.

Among all the regions put together, more than half of the teachers (53.9%) come from more than 10 K.M. distance. Only 9.2% teachers come from 1-2 K.M. distances. Again, a little more than one-tenth of the (11.8%) teachers come from less than 1 K.M. distance.

To improve teaching quality and to reduce teachers' travelling distance it may be recommended that the appointment of teachers be preferably from the same district.

Table 7.38 provides data on teachers' distribution in the surveyed schools on the basis of their professional training. In rural areas, less than half (45.6%) of the teachers have pre-service training and 18.8% teachers have in-service training. While more than one-third (35.5%) of the teachers do not have any training.

In urban areas 50.1% teachers took training before joining and 23.6% teachers took training after joining. 26.2% teachers do not have any training.

In Kolkata 52.2% teachers took training before joining and 27.8% teachers took training after joining. 20% teachers do not have any training.

In the total of all the areas, less than half (47.4%) of the teachers took training before joining and one-fifth of the (20.9%) teachers took training after joining. Less than one-third (31.8%) of the teachers do not have any training.

Table 7.39a depicts average caste-wise distribution of teachers. In rural areas the average number of teachers from the SC community is 4.7, from the ST community is 1, from the minority community is 1.6, from the OBC is 1.8 and from the general category is 13.9.

In urban areas the average number of teachers from the SC community is 4.4, from the ST community is 1, from the minority community is 1.3, from the OBC is 1.3 and from the general category is 15.5.

In Kolkata, the average number of teachers from the SC community is 3.2; from the ST community is 0.7, from the minority community is 0.4, from the OBC is 0.7 and from the general category is 12.8.

The overall total indicates that the average number of teachers from the SC community is 4.5 from the ST community is 1, from the Minority community is 1.4, from the OBC is 1.6. The same is higher for general category teachers i.e. 14.2.

Table 7.39b shows the percentage of caste-wise distribution of the teachers. In rural areas, the percentage of teachers from the SC community is 20.6%, from the ST community is 4.4%, from the minority community is 6.8%, from the OBC is 7.9% and from the general category is 60.3%.

In urban areas the percentage of teachers from the SC community is 18.8%, from the ST community is 4.2%, from the minority community is 5.6%, from the OBC is 5.5% and from the general category is 65.9.

In Kolkata the percentage of teachers from the SC community is 17.7%, from the ST community is 4%, from the minority community is 2.5%, from OBC is 3.8% and from the general category is 72%.

Altogether the percentage of teachers from the SC community is near about one-fifth (19.9%). For most of the other communities the same is less than one-tenth of the total teachers. The teachers' percentage from the ST community is 4.3%, from the minority

community is 6.1% and from the OBC is 6.9%. The general category shows the highest percentage of teachers with a little less than two-thirds of the teachers (62.8%).

Table 7.40a provides data on the teachers' educational backgrounds. In rural areas, 53.5% of the teachers are graduates, 45.5% of the teachers have degrees up to post graduate, 0.6% have some form of professional qualification and 0.4% have completed a PhD.

In urban areas 46.8% teachers are graduates, 51.7% teachers have degrees up to post graduate, 0.5% have some form of professional qualification and 1% have completed a PhD.

In Kolkata 38.1% of the teachers are graduates, 59.9% teachers have degree up to post graduate, 0.2% have some form of professional qualification and 1.8% have completed a PhD.

In the overall total, half of the teachers (50.4%) teachers are graduates, but less than half of the teachers (48.3%) have post graduate degrees. Only a few (0.5%) have some form of professional qualification and 0.7% have completed a PhD.

Table 7.40b shows the age-wise distribution of teachers. Maximum teachers (61%) in Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools are up to 40 years of age. Only a few teachers (16%) belong to the age group of 51-60 years.

Table 7.41 shows data on teachers' attendance. In rural areas, the percentage of teachers' attendance was quite good i.e. 87.5%. In urban areas, the percentage of teachers' attendance was 88.5%. Kolkata presents the highest percentage of teachers' attendance i.e. 88.8%.

In the overall total, the percentage of teachers' attendance was quite high i.e. 86.9%.

Table 7.42 provides data on the average number of periods taken by teachers in Secondary and Higher secondary schools. In rural areas the average number of periods taken by full time teachers is 47.4 and this number was 30 for part time teachers. Whereas in urban areas the average number of periods taken by full time teachers was 43.6 and this number was 25 for part time teachers. For Kolkatathe respective averages are 36 and 18.

Overall, the average number of periods taken by full time teachers was 45.2 and this number was 28 for part time teachers.

Table 7.43a indicates the teacher-student ratio in Secondary schools. In rural areas, the student-teacher ratio for 2009-10 from Class V to Class X was 40.4. The same was 36.1

for urban areas. In Kolkata the student-teacher ratio for 2009-10 from Class V to Class X was 27.2.

Considering all the schools, the student-teacher ratio for 2009-10 from Class V to Class X was 38.

Table 7.43b shows the teacher-student ratio in Secondary and Higher Secondary schools. In rural areas the student-teacher ratio for 2009-10 from Class V to Class XII was 49.7.

In urban areas and Kolkata respectively the student-teacher ratios for 2009-10 from Class V to Class XII was 46.7 and 37.2.

Including all area-wise categories together, it has been observed that the student-teacher ratio for 2009-10 from Class V to Class XII was 47.4.

7.1.21 RESULTS OF MADHYAMIK EXAMINATION

7.1.21.A Table 7.44a shows three years results of the Madhyamik Examination from surveyed secondary schools. In rural areas 20.9%, 23.5% and 24.1% students got 100%-90%marks in 2009-10, 2008-09 and 2007-08 respectively. Around half of the students, i.e. 51.4%, 54.4%, and 52.6% students got 89%-80% marks in 2009-10, 2008-09 and 2007-08 respectively. Except 10 students in 2008-09, no student got below 30% in the other two academic years.

In urban areas 35.7%, 37.5% and 42.2% students got 100%-90%marks in 2009-10, 2008-09 and 2007-08 respectively. 44.1%, 46.8% and 44.4% students got 89%-80%marks in 2009-10, 2008-09 and 2007-08 respectively. No student got below 30%in the above-mentioned three academic years.

In Kolkata 22%, 22.3% and 18.8% students got 100%-90%marks in 2009-10, 2008-09 and 2007-08 respectively.57.1%, 68.1% and 61.6% students got 89%-80%marks in 2009-10, 2008-09 and 2007-08 respectively. No student got below 30%in the above-mentioned three academic years.

A totalof 24.6%, 27.2% and 29% students got 100%-90%marks in 2009-10, 2008-09 and 2007-08 respectively. Most of the students, i.e. 50%, 53.5% and 50.9% students got 89%-80%marks in 2009-10, 2008-09 and 2007-08 respectively. No student got below 30% in the above-mentioned three academic years.

Table 7.44b provides three years statement of average result of Madhyamik Examination in Secondary Schools. In rural areasan average of 19, 17 and 14 students per school got 100%-90%marks in 2009-10, 2008-09 and 2007-08 respectively. An average of 46, 40 and 31 students per school got 89%-80%marks in 2009-10, 2008-09 and 2007-08 respectively.

In urban areas, an average of 32, 31 and 30 students per school got 100%-90%marks in 2009-10, 2008-09 and 2007-08 respectively. An average of 40, 39 and 32 students per school got 89%-80%marks in 2009-10, 2008-09 and 2007-08 respectively.

In Kolkata, an average of 14, 15 and 10 students per school got 100%-90%marks in 2009-10, 2008-09 and 2007-08 respectively. An average of 35, 46 and 32 students per school got 89%-80%marks in 2009-10, 2008-09 and 2007-08 respectively.

An average of 21, 21 and 18 students per school got 100%-90%marks in 2009-10, 2008-09 and 2007-08 respectively. An average of 43, 40 and 31 students per school got 89%-80% marks in 2009-10, 2008-09 and 2007-08 respectively.

7.1.22 **RESULTS OF HIGHER SECONDARY EXAMINATIONS**

7.1.22.A Table 7.45a shows results of three years forthe Higher Secondary Examination from the Higher Secondary schools. In rural areas, 26.9%, 30.7% and 30.9% students got 100%-80% marks the years of 2009-10, 2008-09, and 2007-08 respectively. 39.5%, 40.5% and 41% students got 79%-60%marks in 2009-10, 2008-09 and 2007-08 respectively. 1.2% students in 2009-10, 1.1% students in 2008-09 and 1.9% students in 2007-08 got below 30%marks.

In urban areas, 45.6%, 43.2% and 41.3% students got 100%-80% marks in 2009-10, 2008-09 and 2007-08 respectively. 38.3%, 39.3% and 40.7% students got 79%-60%marks in 2009-10, 2008-09 and 2007-08 respectively. No student got below 30%in above-mentioned three academic years.

In Kolkata, 33.3%, 28.1% and 29.9% students got 100%-80% marks in 2009-10, 2008-09 and 2007-08 respectively. 54.6%, 58.1% and 58.1% students got 79%-60%marks in

2009-10, 2008-09 and 2007-08 respectively. No student got below 30%in above-mentioned three academic years.

In total, around one-third students, i.e. 33.1%, 34.5% and 34.3% students got 100%-80% marks in 2009-10, 2008-09 and 2007-08 respectively. Comparatively a higher percentage of students i.e. 40.5%, 41.9% and 42.7% students got 79%-60%marks in 2009-10, 2008-09 and 2007-08 respectively.

Table 7.45b provides data on three years statement of average result of Higher Secondary Examination in Higher Secondary schools. In rural areasan average of 29, 27 and 29 students per school got 100%-80% marks in 2009-10, 2008-09, and 2007-08 respectively. An average of 43, 39 and 38 students per school got 79%-60%marks in 2009-10, 2008-09 and 2007-08 respectively.

In urban areas an average of 54, 48 and 44 students per school got 100%-80% marks in 2009-10, 2008-09 and 2007-08 respectively. An average of 45, 44 and 44 students per school got 79%-60%marks in 2009-10, 2008-09 and 2007-08 respectively.

In Kolkataan average of 33, 28 and 28 students per school got 100%-80% marks in 2009-10, 2008-09 and 2007-08 respectively. An average of 54, 57 and 54 students per school got 79%-60%marks in 2009-10, 2008-09 and 2007-08 respectively.

In total, an average of 37, 35 and 34 students per school got 100%-80% marks in 2009-10, 2008-09 and 2007-08 respectively. An average of 45, 42 and 42 students per school got 79%-60% marks in 2009-10, 2008-09 and 2007-08 respectively.

7.2 West Bengal Board of Secondary Education (W.B.B.S.E)

7.2.1 In 1951, under the Act named West Bengal Secondary Education Act of 1950; the Board for secondary education was established by the State Government. In 1964it was renamed as the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education under the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education Act, 1963. The Board is entrusted with the overall task of providing secondary level education in the state.[57]

7.2.2 As per the Act of 1963 which has been amended up to 2004, the Board is headed by the President. Under the president there is a Secretary, other functioning members and

[57] http://wbbse.org/history.htm (accessed on 10th August, 2011).

staff. Section 16 of the West Bengal Act V of 1963, as amended up to 2004[58], empowers the Secretary of the Board to appoint additional staff to promote the functions and aims of the board.

7.2.3 As per the Section 18 of the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education Act, 1963, as amended up to 2004[59], the Board may consist of six committees for conducting different functions. These committees are: i) recognition committee, ii) executive committee, iii) syllabus committee, iv) examination committee, v) appeal committee, vi) finance committee. Along with these committees, the Board has two more committees at present—vii) age and record correction committee, viii) building sub-committee.

There are four regional Councils in West Bengal for decentralizing routine administrative work. Section 25 of the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education Act, 1963, empowers the Board to constitute Regional Councils. The Board may also decide the composition, 'territorial jurisdiction', and number of Regional Councils subject to approval from the State Government (*p*. 28). With the approval of the State Government, the Board can assign different functions to Regional Councils according to the Act. As per the Act, the different functions of the Board including the functioning of committees such as the examination committee or the executive committee may be decentralized through the Regional Councils.

7.2.4 Major functions of the Board are[60]—

a) Providing Secondary education in the State.

b) Conducting examinations on secondary education, i.e. Madhyamik Parikshya.

c) Suggesting different possible methods and policies for the improvement of the Secondary Education system to the State Government.

d) Looking after various administrative issues of the schools.

e) Controlling and supervising different issues related to secondary educationlike: formation of syllabus, text book publication, etc.

f) Ensuring the democratic nature of school management.

[58] West Bengal Board of Secondary Education, *West Bengal Act V Of 1963: The West Bengal Board of Secondary Education Act, 1963 as amended upto 2004,* 2005 (Kolkata), 17-18, 21, 41, 28-29, 30, 32.
[59] Ibid,18.
[60] http://wbbse.org/history.htm (accessed on 10th August, 2011).

g) Upgrading and offering recognition to the Secondary Schools.

7.2.5 According to 2008-09 data[61], table 7.1 shows that a total of 8337 schools offer Secondary Education in West Bengal, of which 3635 schools offer education up to class X only.

Of these 3635 schools which offer education up to class X only, Kolkata possesses 151 schools. The maximum numbers of schools (388) belong to the Burdwan district. On the contrary, Uttar Dinajpur possesses the minimum number of schools i.e. 51 schools.

The Annual Report (2009-10) of the School Education Department, WB in table 7.46, mentions 64 operational Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBV). KGBVs are fully residential girls' schools. Among these, construction has been completed for 53 schools.

7.2.6 The Board provides Secondary level education to the students of 15-16 years of age. As per data from 2008-09, table 7.1highlights that a total of 1680547 students (including class IX and X only) are enrolled under the state secondary education system. Among them, 837816 students are boys and 842731 students are girls. Table 7.47, on the basis of the Annual Report (2009-10) of the School Education Department, WB, shows that there are 3021 enrolled girls in the KGBVs.

7.2.7 On the basis of DISE (2008-09) data and Annual Report 2009-10 of the Department of School Education of west Bengal, table 7.48 shows that for the years 2016 and 2026, projected numbers of Secondary schools are respectively 7576 and 6406. While in 2011 there are 8337 schools. It shows that in future the demand and projected numbers of schools will decrease.

Findings on schools offering up to class X level education

7.2.8 FORMAL INFORMATION

7.2.8.A Table 7.49a, on the basis of the surveyed data, shows the location-wise distribution of total 233 (100%) surveyed secondary schools. Most of the secondary schools i.e.

[61] www.wbsed.gov.in (DISE 2008-09).

149 (63.9%) schools are in rural areas and almost one fourth of the schools i.e. 59 (25.3%) schools are in urban areas. Almost one tenth of the surveyed schools i.e. 25 (10.7%) schools are located in Kolkata.

7.2.9 SCHOOLINFRASTUCTURE

7.2.9.A Table 7.49b indicates that apart from 2 school buildings in Kolkata, all other school buildings in every location (rural, urban and Kolkata) are owned by the school authorities. It depicts the data on the distribution of school buildings on the basis of different categories of buildings. These categories are: a) pucca; b) semi-pucca; c) kutcha; d) no building. There are only 6 (4.0%) and 1 (4%) schools with semi-pucca buildings, respectively in rural areas and Kolkata. Except these 7 (3% of the total sample) schools, all other schools have pucca buildings.

7.2.9.B Table 7.51 shows the distribution of schools by the number of classrooms. Most of the secondary schools (29 schools) in the rural areas have more than 20 classrooms. The average number of classrooms in the surveyed secondary schools of rural areas is 16 per school. In urban areas and Kolkata the maximum number of schools, i.e. 22 schools and 7 schools respectively possess more than 20 classrooms. The surveyed secondary schools of urban areas and Kolkata respectively have an average of 22 and 7 classrooms per schools.

7.2.9.C Table 7.52 provides data on distribution of schools by availability of rooms other than classrooms among the surveyed schools.

In rural areas almost all schools haveteachers' rooms (98%). Almost three-fourths of the schools have separate rooms for the teacher-in-charge (72.5%). More than one-fourth (27.5%) of the surveyed rural schools have anoffice room and almost 81.2% have verandas. Almost half of the surveyed rural schools (47%) have a computer room as well. Less than half of the rural schools (43.6%) have their own library.

In urban areas almost all schools have teachers' rooms (98.3%) and a separate room for the teacher-in-charge (89.8%). Only 37.3% of the schools have an office room but a comparatively higher percentage (67.8%) schools have a separate computer room. Almost all schools have verandas (88.1%); and about half of the schools (55.9%) have library facilities.

In Kolkata every school (100%) have separate rooms for teachers and the facility of a separate room for the teacher-in-charge is also available in almost all of the schools (92%). Likewise, more than three-fourths of the schools (76%) have computer rooms. It

has been observed that in Kolkata 64% of the schools have library facilities and a veranda. In contrary less than half of the schools (44%) have an office room.

Among all the surveyed schoolsmostof the schools (98.3%) have aseparate teachers' room and 79% have a separate room for the teacher-in-charge. More than half of the schools (55.4%) schools possess separate computer rooms but less than half of the schools (48.9%) have library facilities. In contrast, the percentage of schools having an office room is low (31.8%).

7.2.10 Issues from Household Data

- Almost one-third of the sample household members are illiterate.
- Dropout percentage increases with age. Percentage of non-enrolment decreases as age increases. This is applicable for both income-wise and caste-wise distributions.
- Major reasons for dropout and non-enrolment are 'No money for fees'; 'Working/earning money' and 'lost interest' for all the age groups for both income-wise and caste-wise distributions.
- Private tuition has no relation with income level and caste.
- Private tuition also has no relation with the teaching quality in schools.

7.2.11 Proposed Areas for Intervention

At the organisational level:

- The Secondary Board and Higher Secondary Council could come together to form a single organisation.
- The work should be split into two divisions: one for routine work (like upgradation, recognition renewal, issuance of permission for new subject, etc) and the other for the ongoing process of syllabus change, publications, etc which should be the mandate of the WBCERT.
- More Regional Offices (ROs) are required for both divisions. Preferred locations could be the districts of Nadia, Bankura, and Darjeeling.
- The number of teachers needs to be increased for both.
- Decentralisation to ROs would be crucial. This should include

- mandate for upgradation and recognition, including renewal of recognition (guidelines need to given to RO),
- mandates for human resources (like approval for overtime payment),
- admission intake increase upto a percentage of ten,
- issue of duplicate marksheets,
- creation of database for migration, which will enable same-day issuance of migration certificates

- The above decentralisation would not require new staff but there should be provisions of training, especially on the use of computers at every level.
- Warehouse decentralisation for books should be done.
- A Deputy Secretary needs to be posted at all Higher Secondary ROs. At the Secondary ROs, the DS should be provided with the power of delegating service when s/he is absent. Currently, s/he is the single signatory, and his/her absence makes many routine tasks impossible.
- Laboratory grant for schools should be increased, along with proper monitoring from the RO.
- School inspection through cluster visits should be done immediately.
- Teacher sanctions for subject-wise distribution should be done by the RO by liaising with the DI office.
- Internet facility should be provided at the RO for monthly/ annual statements.
- The web portal needs to be regularly updated with circulars.
- Internet should be provided in all ROs at all levels.

At the school level:

- Every school must have a separate room for teachers and the Headmaster or Teacher-in-Charge.
- Every school should have a library, office room and computer room.
- Every school should have computers for students.
- In rural areas all schools must have a electricity connection.
- There is a need for increasingthe number of clerks and Group-D staff in schools.
- Most of the teachers come from beyond 10 k.m.; The appointment of teachers should be preferably from the same district.
- More schools should provide vocational training to their students.

- School Management Committees should be formed and encouraged in all rural and urban schools.
- Irrespective of area divisions, a cluster of schools should come together and arrange health check-up camps.
- A large number of schools offering secondary education only need proper infrastructural improvement.

7.3 Findings on MSKs

7.3.1 BACKGROUND

7.3.1.A Table 7.53 shows that among all surveyed MSKs (8 MSKs) the maximum number of MSKs (5 MSKs) were established 6-10 years ago. Only 1 MSK was established about 1-3 years ago. Further, table 7.54 provides data on the distribution of MSKs on the basis of school timings. Among the surveyed MSKs, 7 functionduring the day (87.5%) i.e. during 10.00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Only one MSK runs in the morning session between 6.30 a.m. to 11.00 a.m. Survey data reveals that all MSKs are co-educational.

7.3.2 SCHOOL COMMITTEES

7.3.2.A Table 7.55 shows that all surveyed MSKs have School Management Committees. One-fourth (25 %)of the surveyed MSKs have a Mother Teacher Association. Table 7.56 shows that in the year of 2009-10, the average number of managing committee meetings per school were 7.5.

7.3.3 VISIT BY AUTHORITIES

7.3.3.A Table 7.57 provides data on SIS/ ASI visits to surveyed MSKs in the last year. It shows that only one-fourth (25%) of the surveyed MSKs were visited by SIS/ ASI in the last year. Present study also reveals that the higher authority does not hold any vigilance visit to the surveyed MSKs.

7.3.4 SCHOOL INFRASTUCTURE

7.3.4.A From the survey it is clear that almost all of the surveyed MSKs (7 out of 8 surveyed MSKs) have their own pucca buildingand 1 MSK runs in a primary school premise. Table 7.58 shows the distribution of MSKs depending on the number of floors. Half of the MSKs are two storied and 37.5% possess a one storied building. Table 7.59 provides data on the class-room wise distribution of MSKs. Half of the surveyed MSKs (50%) have 4 class-rooms. All other categories of MSKs with 1,5,8, and 9 classrooms show a percentage of 12.5% each.

Table 7.60 focuses on MSK distribution depending on the distribution of rooms other than classrooms. Respectively one-fourth (25%) and three-fourths (75%) of the surveyed MSKs have a separate kitchen and teachers' room. Moreover 12.5% of the MSKs have a separate store room and teacher-in- charge's room. No MSKs have a library room, office room, computer room or a laboratory room.

7.3.4.B Table 7.61 shows that almost all of the surveyed MSKs (7 out of 8 surveyed MSKs), i.e. 87.5%, have available drinking water.

7.3.4.C Table 7.62 shows that near about all of the surveyed MSKs (87.5%) have toilets. Table 7.63 provides data on toilet categories. In 6 MSKs, there are toilets for students; and the average number of toilets for students' per MSK is 2.2. Moreover, in 4 MSKs there are common toilets. Again, table 7.65 shows that, there are 4 MSKs having toilets for students only; and only 2 MSKs have separate toilets for teachers' and students'. From table 7.64, it is clear that half of the surveyed MSKs (50%) have separate toilet facilities for boys' and girls'.

Table 7.66 shows that, only 1 MSK (12.5%) provides water inside the toilet.

Proper water and sanitation facilities such as: a) separate toilets for boys and girls, b) teachers and students, c) running water inside toilets should be arranged to avoid ill-health and to ensure a healthy environment.

7.3.4.D Table 7.67 shows that one-fourth (25%) of the surveyed MSKs have electricity; but no MSK has any power back up facility. Table 7.68 indicates that among the surveyed classrooms with electricity (total 14), more than half of the classrooms (57%) enjoy adequate electric light and fan facilities. 28% of the schools do not have adequate electricalfixtures.

7.3.4.E Table 7.69 shows that most of the surveyed MSKs i.e. 62.5% have specific uniforms for students.

7.3.5 MID-DAY MEAL.

7.3.5.A Table 7.70 reflects that three-fourths (75%) of the surveyed MSKs do not provide the mid-day meal.

7.3.6 DIFFERENT PREVAILING PROBLEMS

7.3.6.A Table 7.71 provides data on distribution of MSKs by different prevailing problems. Students' drop out is the biggest problem faced by most (62.5%) of the surveyed MSKs. Half of the MSKs (50%) face the problem of low turnout of teachers. One-fourth (25%) of the MSKs suffer from problems like low attendance rate of students, inadequate teaching staff, and different infrastructural problems. Inadequate classrooms, lack of mid-day meal infrastructure, lack of an office-room and boundary walls are some of the infrastructuralproblems. 12.5% of the MSKs face various problem of a low enrolment rate, low quality of mid-day meals and different infrastructural problems such as: a) inadequacy of teaching-learning material, insufficient infrastructure for –b) library, c) toiletswith running water, d) drinking water, and e) play ground.

It is recommended that there is an intervention for infrastructural improvement in the following areas: a) increasing the number of classrooms; b) teachers' rooms; c) kitchen; d) library facilities; e) office rooms; f) computer laboratories; g) water and sanitation facilities such as toilets for both teachers' and students with running water; and h) electricity.

7.3.7 SPORTS AND INTER-SCHOOL COMPETITION.

7.3.7.A Table 7.72a shows that almost all of the MSKs (87%) arrange outdoor sports as inter-house competitions. One-fourth (25%) of the MSKs engage the students in indoor sports. Further, table 7.72b provides data on the participation of MSKs in inter school competitions. Respectively three-fourths (75%) and one-fourth (25%) of the MSKs participate in out-door and in-door sports competitions. Only one (12.5%) of the

surveyed MSKs participates in science talent competitions. The survey data also reveals that all MSKs celebrate different social programs like Independence Day, Teachers' Day, etc.

7.3.8 **CLERKS AND GROUP D STAFF.**

7.3.8.A Table 7.73 shows that there is no clerk in any MSK. While the average number of Group D staff in the surveyed MSKs is 0.1. Further, table 7.74 show that the average number of sanctioned posts for non-teaching staff is 1.5.

There is a need to fill up the sanctioned posts of support staff such as clerks and Group D staff so that teachers can pay full attention to their primary responsibilities of classroom-based teaching activities.

7.3.9 ENROLMENT STATUS.

7.3.9.A Table 7.75 shows the enrolment status in class V-VIII of five MSKs which were able to provide data. It has been observed that students' enrolment is decreasing gradually. In the year of 2006-07, total student strength of class V and class VII were respectively 434 and 319. Later, in 2009-10 the same respectively decreased to 282 and 134.

Table 7.76a—7.76d shows class-wise average enrolment per school from class V-VIII. Table 7.76a provides the data that shows the average enrolment per school in rural areas in Class-V of MSKs has decreased from 86.8 in 2006-07 to 56.4 in 2009-10. In case of class VI and VII the same respectively decreased from 71 to 19.6 (table 7.76b) and 65.6 to 50.4 (table 7.76c). Again table 7.76d depicts that the average enrolment per school in rural areas in Class-VIII of the MSKs has decreased from 63.8 in 2006-07 to 26.8 in 2009-10.

Table 7.77a – 7.77d provides data on the enrolment status from Class-V to Class-VIII together in MSKs in the year of 2009-10. The average enrolment per school for class V to VIII has decreased from 287.2 in 2006-07 to 186.6 in 2009-10.

7.3.10 ON TEACHERS.

7.3.10.A Table 7.78 indicates that theaverage number of full time teachers is 4.9 and for para teachers this figure is 2.1. Every school has an average of 5.1 teachers. Table 7.79 shows the average number and percentage of Male & Female Teachers of MSKs. In rural areas, the average number of male teachers is higher (4.4) than female teachers (2). The percentages of male and female teachers are respectively 85.4% and14.6%.

Table 7.80 provides data on the distance travelled by MSK teachers to reach their workplace.The majority of the teachers come from within the locality or within a 3-5 k.m. distance from the concerned MSKs. Only 14.6% of the teachers come from a distance greater than 10 k.m.

Table 7.81 shows the distribution of MSK teachers as per their professional training. In rural areas, a little less than one-fourth (24.4%) of the teachers have taken up professional training before joining and no one has received any training after joining. Most of the MSK teachers i.e. three-fourths (75.6%) of the teachers don't have any kind of professional training at all.

These teachers should be prioritised in the teaching programmes of the state government, otherwise the gap in terms of the quality of education in MSKs and secondary and higher secondary schools will remain insurmountable.

Table 7.82 focuses on caste-wise distribution of MSK teachers.Majority of teachers belong to general category (53.7%); a little less than one-fourth (24.4%) of the teachers are from the minority community.

Table 7.83 provides data on the educational qualification of MSK teachers. Most of the MSK teachers (85.4%) have graduate degrees. Only 14.6% of the teachers have a post-graduatedegree.

Table 7.84 shows that a majority of the MSK teachers are in the age-group of 41 to 50 years.Only 4% of the teachers are under the age of 40 years.

From table 7.85 it may be concluded that in the rural areas the attendence percentage of the teachers in the surveyed MSKs is quite high i.e. 90.6%. Table 7.86 adds that the average number of periods taken by a full-time teacher in a week is 43.4 and it is 18 for part-time teachers.

Table 7.87 provides the data that the student-teacher Ratio is 22.8 in MSKs for 2009-10 from Class-V to Class-VIII.

7.3.11 Proposed Areas for Intervention Concerning MSKs (proposed areas for intervention in Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools are discussed in Section 7.2.11)

- Along with the formation of School Management Committees (SMC), the frequency of BEO/AEO visits to MSKs should be increased.
- MSKs need a major investment in infrastructural improvement. Investment is required in all the areas: a) increasing the number of class-rooms; b) teachers' rooms c) kitchens; d) library facilities e) office rooms; f) computer laboratories g) water and sanitation facilities such as toilets with running water for both teachers' and students and h) electricity.
- MSKs need sufficient teaching staff and teaching learning materials to address the problems of dropping out and low attendance rates from students.
- There is a need to appoint support staff such as clerks and Group D staff so that teachers can pay full attention to their primary responsibility of classroom based teaching activities.
- Since a large number of MSK teachers (75.6%) do not have any kind of professional training, they should be prioritised in the teaching programmes of the state government otherwise the gap in terms of the quality of education offered in MSKs and secondary and higher secondary schools will remain insurmountable.

Chapter 8

Some Observations

8. Introduction

The following chapter briefly presents a comparative study between the present (2010) field survey data and the previous report in 1998 on different aspects of primary school education. Moreover, this chapter discusses some observations on the issue of child labour related with reasons for dropping out of school, effects of the mid-day meal in schools on the students' attendance and the issue of private tuition. Section 8.1 deals with the comparative study, 8.2 discusses theissue of child labour, 8.3 discusses the effects of the mid-day-meal on student attendance. Further, different issues of concern on private tuition are discussed in section 8.4.

Comparison with Previous Report in 1998

On School			Comparative remarks.
Parameters	**1998**	**2010**	
Villages without Primary School	**25%** sample villages do not have a primary school	**17.9%** sample villages do not have any primary school	Number of primary schools increased in the sample villages.
Average school per Mouza	**1.43** school per mouza	**1.51** schools per mouza	Average number of schools per Mouza has been increased.
Number of schools in rural and urban	Total surveyed school: **124** Schools in rural areas: **105** Schools in urban areas: **19**	Total surveyed school: **102** Schools in rural areas: **59** Schools in urban areas: **24**	

areas	Private schools: **7**	Private schools: **9**	
Classification of schools	Total number of Government School: **117** Primary School: **115** **2** attached with Junior High School and **1** attached with High School. All schools are co-educational.	Total number of Government School: **83** **81** schools have their own building. **1** attached with other Primary school and **1** attached with High School. Except **1** school all schools are co-educational.	
Building Type	No building: **6% (all in rural areas)** Pucca building: **50%** Kutcha building: **15%** Mixed structure: rest 6 schools out of 117 schools have no building.	No own building: **2.2%** Pucca building: **84.8%** Kutcha building: **0%** Mixed structure: rest	Percentage of schools with own building has been increased. More number of schools possesses pucca buildings. Number of schools with kutcha building dropped to 0%.
Classrooms	Schools do not have classrooms: **20%** Schools with at most 2 classrooms in rural areas: **46%**	**1** school have no classroom available for students. Schools with at most 2 classrooms: **17%** (rural	Availability of classrooms has been increased.

	There are **15** more schools where no classroom is available for students. It appears that in rural areas, simultaneous multi-grade teaching is usual norm.	areas) &**29.2%** (urban areas) It appears that in rural & urban areas, simultaneous multi-grade teaching is usual norm.	Multi-grade teaching is still practiced in some schools.
Average number of classrooms	Avg. number of classrooms in **rural** area: **1.94** Avg. number of classrooms in **urban** area: **3.56** State average: **2.16** Most of schools do not have office rooms &**20%** of them do not have verandas that could use as classrooms.	Avg. number of classrooms in **rural** area: 3 Avg. number of classrooms in **urban** area: 4 State average: 4 Most of the schools do not have separate office rooms. **25%** of them do not have verandas. **32.3%** schools are using the verandas for serving mid-day-meal.	Average number of classrooms has been increased. Still most of the schools do not have separate office rooms. In some cases verandas are used for serving mid-day meal instead of as a classroom.
Drinking water	Percentage of schools provides drinking water in **rural** areas: **45.54%** Percentage **of school do not have such facility in urban area:18.75%**	Percentage of schools provides drinking water in **rural** areas: **89.83%** Percentage **of school do not have such facility in urban area:25%**	Drinking water facility has been improved in rural schools. In urban areas drinking water facility has been declined; more schools fail to provide drinking

			water facility.
Play ground	Percentage of schools have play ground in **rural** area: **33%** Percentage of schools have play ground in **urban** area: **25%**	Percentage of schools have play ground in **rural** area: **37.3%** Percentage of schools have play ground in **urban** area: **25%**	Percentage of schools with play ground has been increased a little in rural areas; but in urban areas it remains the same.
Electric light	Number of schools in **rural** area: **2 out of 101 schools** Number of schools in **urban** area: **5**	Number of schools in **rural** area: **8 out of 59 schools** Number of schools in **urban** area: **15 out of 24 schools**	Status of electric light facility has been improved in both rural and urban areas.
Toilet	Percentage of schools have **no urinals** in **rural** area: **87%** Separate urinals for girls are available in **2** schools in **rural** area and **1** in **urban** area.	Percentage of schools have **no urinals** in **rural** area: **12%** Separate urinals for girls are available in **37** schools in **rural** area and **13** in **urban** area.	Availability of toilet facility has been improved in rural areas. Number of schools with separate toilet for girls has been increased in both rural and urban areas.
On Teachers			

Average number of teachers	Avg. number of teachers in primary schools **rural** area: **2.7** Avg. number of teachers in primary schools **urban** area: **5.2**	Avg. number of teachers in primary schools **rural** area: **3.8** Avg. number of teachers in primary schools **urban** area: **3.7**	Average number of teachers in primary schools has been increased in both: rural and urban areas.
Number of female teachers	Percentage of female teachers in **rural** area: **12%** Percentage of female teachers in **urban** area: **62.65%**	Percentage of female teachers in **rural** area: **24.11%** Percentage of female teachers in **urban** area: **42.70%**	Percentage of female teachers has been increased in rural areas but decreased in urban areas.
Trained teachers	Percentage of trained teachers in **rural** area: **73%** Percentage of trained teachers in **urban** area: **44.58%**	Percentage of trained teachers in **rural** area: **41%** Percentage of trained teachers in **urban** area: **61.80%**	In rural areas the percentage of trained teachers has been decreased, while the same increased in urban areas.
Classification of teachers by training and caste	In **rural** areas there are **2.3** teachers per school and only **1.9** are trained. Percentage of teachers from SC	In rural areas there are **3.8** teachers per school and only **1.6** are trained. Percentage of teachers from SC community: **18.46%**	In rural areas average number of teachers per school has been increased. But the

	community: **5.22%** Percentage of teachers from ST community: **17.16%** Percentage of teachers from Minority community: **5.7%**	Percentage of teachers from ST community: **6.06%** Percentage of teachers from Minority community: **8%**	average number of trained teachers has been decreased. Percentage of teachers from SC and Minority community has been increased; but the same decreased for ST community.
Educational status of primary teachers in rural areas	Percentage of teachers have qualification less than secondary level: **64.82%** Percentage of teachers have completed higher secondary level: **21%** Percentage of teachers have completed graduation: **14.18%**	Percentage of teachers have qualification less than secondary level: **24.1%** Percentage of teachers have completed higher secondary level: **26.3%** Percentage of teachers have completed graduation or PG: **49.6%**	Educational status of primary teachers in rural area has been improved.
Student Teacher Ratio	STR in the state: **46.73**	STR in the state: **31.89**	Student teacher ratio has been decreased in the state. That means, number of student per

			teacher has been decreased.

8.1 A brief comparison between the survey data of the previous study in 1998 and present study (2010) shows different distinctive measures taken to improve primary school education.The study reveals that, there is an increase in the number of primary schools per village and per Mouza throughout the years from 1998-2010. School buildings and infrastructural facilities have also improved in the sample villages. At present there is no school with kuccha building; and the percentage of schools with their own buildings and pucca buildings have improved. Classroom facilities, play grounds, electric lights, and toilet facilities show a gradual improvement over the years. By contrast thedrinking water facilities show a positive change in rural schools but do not show an impressive result in urban areas.In some schoolsvarious infrastructural problems co-exist with differentissues of progressive development. These backlogs of infrastructural facilities are: a) practice of multi-grade teaching, b) lack of a separate office room, c) under-developed play ground facilities in urban areas, etc.

Comparative study on teachers' data shows that the number of primary teachers has increased in both rural and urban areas. While the percentage of female teachers' reaches a higher level in rural areas butdeclines in urban areas. By contrary, the percentage of trained teachers has decreased in rural areas, but increased in urban areas.The caste-wise distribution of teachers show that thepercentage of teachers from Scheduled Casts and the minority community have increased but the same decreased for the Scheduled Tribe community. A comparative study shows an improvement in the educational status of primary teachers in the rural areas. In 1998, most of the primary teachers (64%) were qualified under the secondary level; while in 2010 a large number of the primary teachers (49.6%) have graduate or post-graduate degrees. Throughout the years the student-teacher ratio in the state has decreased from 46.73 to 31.89which helps to develop the quality of education.

8.2 Child Labour Issue

8.2.1 Literature review on child labour issue.

8.2.1.A Lieten (2002) opines that child labourers are those, who are engaged in any type of productive work that hold back their sound 'normative development' (*p.*5191). In this regard Stein and Davies (1940: 112-113) define child labour practice as "any work by children that interfere with their full physical development, the opportunities for a desirable minimum

education and of their needed recreation" (Lieten, 2002:5191).[62] Antony and Gayathri(2002) refer to Lieten (2002) and state that, there exists an acute distinction between the two different terminologies: child labour and child work. The child labourers are in a direct exposure to the 'labour market', which adversely affects their overall development including education. The term 'child work' (Anthony and Gayathri, 2002: 5186) is applicable to those who are engaged in any kind of paid or unpaid work. All types of household work and outdoor work, which restrain a child's growth and development are categorised as 'child work'.[63]

Siddiqi (1998) states that Asia and Africa jointly face the highest occurrence of child labour. Among the Asian countries, India has the highest number of child labourers.[64]In India almost 44 million children are currently employed as an active 'workforce' (Sud, 2010: 1). As per the article 24 of the Indian Constitution, children below the age group of fourteen years should be kept free from all types of work and 'hazardous employment' (Aggarwal, 2004:173). In addition article 45 of the same advices the states to provide the opportunity of ''free and compulsory education'' to all children below fourteen years of age.[65]In this regard, Sinha opines that the main occupation of a child is of a student rather than that of a worker.[66] In reality both of the factors: child labour practices and educational attainment level are in a close proximity to each other (Aggarwal, 2004).

8.2.1.B Probable reasons and present situation of the child labour issue.

There prevails a bipartite causal argument of poverty and education behind child labour (Antony and Gayatri 2002, Aggarwal 2004).In this regard Kabeer (2001) states that poor economic conditionscreates the lackof demand for education following a paucity of financial resources for educational expenditure(Antony and Gayatri 2002). There are several unfavourable educational conditions like the problem of school accessibility, unattractive and inappropriate syllabi for job prospects, poor infrastructure, and underdeveloped employability of the students passing out of the school system. Thus a low educational outcome is

[62] Lieten G K, "Child Labour in India: Disentangling Essence and Solutions",*Economic and Political Weekly* 37, no. 52, (2002), 5191.
[63] Antony Piush and Gayathri V, "Cild Labour: A Perspective of Locale and Context",*Economic and Political Weekly* 37, no.52, (2002), 5186.
[64] Sud Pamela, "Can non-formal education keep working children in school? A case study from Punjab, India", *Journal of Education and Work* 23, no.1, (2010),1.
[65] Aggarwal Suresh Chand, "Child Labour and Household Characteristics in Selected Sates: Estimates from NSS 55th Round", *Economic and Political Weekly* 39, no.02, (2004), 173,182,185.
[66] Sinha Shantha, "Emphasising Universal Principles towards Deepening of Democracy: Actualising Children's Right to Education",*Economic and Political Weekly* 40*,* no.25, (2005), 2569.

concomitant with several unfavourable educational conditions. Due to such an unsatisfactory return on investment for education, household members often lose their interest for educating their children. Especially older children show a higher dropout rate (Aggarwal, 2004). Reddy (2008) studies that one third of the children drop out during their first five years of schooling; further almost half of the children drop out without completing the requisite eight years of compulsory schooling.[67] In different states of India, a low enrolment rate and a high dropout rate impoverish the educational condition followed by an increase in child labour, and vice versa (Aggarwal, 2004).

Parents' educational qualifications play a significant role behind the incidence of school dropout and child labour. In addition, the mother's educational level is a major influential issue for determining the tendency for child labour.[68]Different unfavourable issues like gender, livelihood security, ethnicity and caste often merge with a low socio-economic status and make the situation vulnerable to the incidence of child labour (Antony and Gayatri, 2002). In Aggarwal's (2004:173) view, the monotonous and uninteresting system of education and 'low government expenditure on education and poverty reduction' prominently accelerate the social practice of child labour.

8.2.1.C Towards the reduction of child labour incidence.

Sudden annihilation of child labour incidence is quite impossible in the present socio-economic context of India (Aggarwal, 2004). Regarding the factor of parental and especially maternal educational background, an increased level of education for women and improved parental consciousness may prove beneficial towards the removal of child labour practices.[69] While an effective educational facility may relief the child labourers to some extent (Bissell 2003, Basu 2003, Basu and Van 1998).[70]

Sud's (2010) study in Jalandhar, Punjab positively concludes that the non-formal educational system, along with an incentive scheme, help to bring the child labourers under the

[67]Reddy, A.N., Sinha, S.,*School Dropouts or Pushouts? Overcoming Barriers for the Right to Education.* National University of Educational Planning and Administration.(NUEPE). New Delhi. Create Pathways to Access, Research Monograph No. 40.Research commissioned by the Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transition and Equity (CREATE). University of Sussex. UK. July. 2008.

[68] Das Saswati and Mukherjee Diganta, "Role of Women in Schooling and Child Labour Decision: The Case of Urban Boys in India", *Springer 2006,Social Indicators Research* 82, issue2, (July, 2007), 463, http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/results, (accessed 11th July, 2011).

[69] Ibid.

[70] Aggarwal Suresh Chand, "Child Labour and Household Characteristics in Selected Sates: Estimates from NSS 55th Round", *Economic and Political Weekly* 39, no.02, (2004), 173.

mainstream formal education system. Irrespective of the different employment status and economic conditions of the child labourers, the non-formal schooling effectively functions as a tool for alternative primary level education. Further the system is also responsible for guiding the primary level educated children up to their 'post-primary' education, as per the necessity and capacity of the children (Sud, 2010). But in reality a continuous spread of non-formal education for all the working children and a co-existence of education and employment is not always possible and preferable (Aggarwal, 2004). Sud's (2010) study also reveals that the non formal educational services are not fully compatible with the full time work schedules of child labourers.

Some believes that compulsory primary level education may be a positive step towards the reduction of child labour incidences (Bhargava 2003, Mishra 2000, Burra 1996, and Weiner 1991). The same group of scholars also opine that regular compulsory education is the best way to support the child labourers (Aggarwal, 2004). Sud (2010) suggests that different schemes should address the school enrolment and retention issues with close attention. The issue of formal schooling for all children should be considered with the greatest importance rather than the non-formal education of the employed children only.

Focusing on the formal educational system, Aggarwal (2004:185) suggests some probable measures for the declination of dropout rates to reduce the child labour practice; these are: a) to ensure appropriate educational outcome; b) rewarding students, rewards may also serve as the household incentives; c) increasing the retention rate of the children through primary to 'middle school' level; d) giving special attention to women's education. Sud (2010) also opines that prior attention on schooling may help to reduce the practice of child labour.

8.2.2 Observations

8.2.2.A Reasons for drop-out and child labour practice.

Table 8.1a shows different reasons for non-enrolment and drop-out in the age group of 6-11 years according to households' income slab. Among all income categories most of the students of 6-11 years of age i.e. class II- VI students drop out for having no money for fees (37.5%) and losing their interest to study (17.5%). Only 15% students of class II-VI are dropping out for working or earning money. While in this age group, most of the children are not enrolled because of some disability or illness (29%) or having no money for fees

(25.8%). In this age group no children show the cause of working/earning money as a reason for their non-enrolment.

Table 8.1b indicates that irrespective of different income slabs, students of the age group of 12-16 years, i.e. class VI-X students, most drop out cases occur for working or earning money (33.4%) and losing interest in studying (25.9%). Among the reasons of non-enrolment of this age group, working or earning money (32.7%) is the most common reason; while 19.2% children are not enrolled for having no money for fees.

Table 8.2a and Table 8.2b provide data on the different reasons for non-enrolment and drop-out of students according to their caste group. Table 8.2a shows that among all the caste groups, 48.1% students of 6-11 years of age drop-out for having no money for fees. While working or earning money causes only 22.2% of this age group to dropout. In the case of non-enrolment, having no money for fees (29.5%) and losing interest to study (20.5%) are the main two reasons for such.

Table 8.2b shows that, irrespective of caste groups among all the students of 12-16 years of age, near about one-third (32.6%) and one-fourth (25.5%) students drop out for working or earning money and having no money for fees respectively. These two reasons are also the most common for non-enrolment of that age group.

- Previously Table 6.19 shows that at the primary level the maximum number of student dropouts occur between Class-I to Class -II. Further, from the survey data it is clear that child labour practices i.e. working or earning money is not an important reason for droping out for the age group of 6-11 years, at primary level of schooling. Survey data reveals that the median age of the child labour is that of 13 years. Most of the students drop-out for earning money at the age group of 12-16 years of age i.e. at the secondary level. Thus the survey data indicates that the effect of child labour practices are very low or nil at the primary level of schooling.

N.B.: The median age for admission in school is 6 years.

8.3 Effect of mid-day-meal on students' attendance record.

Table 8.3a shows that in 75 units of SSKs more than three-fourths (from 75.5% - 80%) of students were present during the month of September to November, 2010 as a beneficiary result of the mid-day-meal. Further Table 8.3b indicates that during Monday to Friday of the same three months, the percentage of students' attendance is quite high i.e. from 75% to

82%. Contrarily the percentage decreases to 67.7% on Saturdays in the month of November 2010(Table 8.3c).

Table 8.4a shows the effect of the mid-day-meal scheme in the three months (Sep, 2010 to Nov, 2010) and the attendance record of primary schools from Monday to Saturday. In rural and urban areas respectively 50 and 10 primary schools were able to provide data on attendance. A high percentage of students, respectively 66%-71% and 65%-72% in rural and urban areas, were present from Monday to Saturday as a positive result of the mid-day-meal. Further, Table 8. 4b and Table 8.4c indicate that, as far as attendance is concerned, attendance on Saturdaysis quite low, rather than other week days as the school runs without the mid-day-meal. From the Table 8.4b it is clear thatthe average attendance percentage of students in 3 months is 70.6 per month, but in November the attendance is a little lower (68.1%) due to the engagement in supporting economic activity for households or as a care taker of their own households. It is also reflected that a few students (0.5%-15.4%) are not benefited by the mid-day-meal facility. Sometimes, schools fail to deliver the mid-day-meal due to some unavoidable circumstances for one or two days. Particularly in the month of October schools could not provide the mid-day-meal, throughout the school working days, due to the irregular supply of food grains. Table 8.4d and table 8.4e show that in the 10 units of urban regions, the percentage of attendance on Saturdays is a little low.

Table 8.5a to Table 8.5e provide data on the effect of mid-day-meals on three months' attendance records of 45 units and 10 units of secondary schools located in rural and urban regions respectively. These tables show the same trend that most of the students, i.e. 72.6%-75% students in rural areas and 62.8%-76% students in urban areas, remain present from Monday to Saturday as a beneficiary result of mid-day-meal. Another issue also matches with the primary school that on Saturday the students' attendance percentage decreases a little.

- Thus the survey data indicates that the mid-day-meal facility positively affectsthe students' attendance rate and a high percentage of students are benefitted from the scheme.

8.4 Issues on Private Tuition

8.4.1 Literature review on private tuition

Widely prevalent practice of private tuition has added to the quantum of educational expenditure. SCERT (2009) refers to Pratham and states that in West Bengal a large portion of the students under the age group of six to fourteen years are quite

habituated with private tuition. The same report of SCERT also reveals that the rate of private tuition simultaneously increases with students' up- gradation from primary to secondary level. Students' and parents' responses indicate several causal orientations for an increased interest to private tuition. These are: A) most of the students do not get any sort of educational guidance from family. So private tutors help and guide the students in their study. B) Private classes help the students to their assigned home tasks of schools. C) Students can easily communicate with private tutors. They can ask frequent questions to solve their difficulties and queries. D) Students opine that, guiding procedure of tutorial classes helps them to acquire high marks in the examinations. Students also claim that suggestive set of probable questions for examination also helps the students in the examinations.[71] *In the Pratichi (India) Report, 2002, Amartya Sen writes that the "evil of private tuition" perpetuates the 'class divisions' in an uninterrupted way. It also violates the commitment of the Indian Constitution for "free education".*[72]

(Reproduced from Chapter 2, para 2.5.1)

8.4.2 Observations

8.4.2.A Relation between Educational Status of household members and private tuition

Table 8.6 provides data on the distribution of household members by their educational qualification. Most of the household members are non-literate (32%). About 24.1% and 27.2% of the population are educated up to class IV and class VIII respectively. Around 10.7% and 3.9% have completed Secondary and Higher Secondary level education respectively. There is a huge percentage gap between the Secondary qualified and Higher Secondary qualified population. Only 1.6% of the total population have completed graduation or above academic levels. 74.5% households have students and 66.5% of them provide private tutors to their children (Table 8.8). So we can conclude that most of the households have first generation learners and parents are interested in their children's' education.

[71] State Council Of Educational Research And Training (W.B),Department of School Education, Govt. of West Bengal, *Implications of Private Tuition in West Bengal*, *2009* (Kolkata), 1,95, 170-171.
[72]Mohan, D. *Education as Regulated Means of Representation: Methodological Failures in the First Pratichi Report, 2002*. Conference on Religious and Social Fragmentation and Economic Development in South Asia, A D White House, Cornell University. Oct. 2005.*p.*1.

8.4.2.B Relation between caste-wise occupational Status and private tuition

Table 8.7 and Table 8.9 respectively provide data on the caste-wise occupational status and distribution of households with private tutors. Among the overall sample, a little less than one-third (31.9%) are of the student population.

Among SCs almost 30.38% of sample population belong to student community. Other than students, the majority of SCs are involved in household work, labour in agriculture, labour in other fields and child/aged/handicapped. Among the overall SC population 71.5% households have students and among these 67.7% households have private tutors for their children.

Almost 30.91% of the sample population of STs are students. About 15% of the sample population are agricultural labourers, unskilled day labourers and household workers. But 72% of the households have students and among them almost 53.7% of the households have private tutors for their children.

Other than students, minority communities are mostly engaged in household work, labour in other fields, labour in agriculture and unskilled labour based professions. A high percentage of minority households (80.9%) have students and 59.9% of them have private tutors.

In the case of OBCs, household work, agriculture on their own land, labour in other fields and labour in agriculture are the major professions. Almost three-fourths (75%) OBC households have students and 66.7% of these households provide private tutors to their children.

The majority of general castegory people take household work, labour in other fields and agriculture on their own land as their profession. Most of the households (72.3%) of the total sample general category population have students and 76.2% of them have private tutors.

Majority of Buddhists are engaged as labourers in other fields. Other than this, they also work as unskilled/skilled labourers and household workers. 73.3% of total Buddhist households have students and among them 81.8% have private tutors for their children.

- Thusthe survey data indicates that among all the caste groups and in all occupational categories private tuition is a common factor. Further, Table 8.8 shows that in the monthly income slab of Rs. 15,001/- -20,000/- almost all (96.3%) of the households with studentsprovide private tuition facilities for their children. Likewise, among all

other income groups private tuition is also a prominent practice. In addition Table 8.10a and Table 8.10b and again Table 8.11a and Table 8.11b provide data that shows that irrespective of having private tuitions most of the population of the different income groups and caste groups opine that teachers give a lot of attention to students in the schools. So it may be concluded that the practice of private tuition is not related with the lack of teachers' attention in school; rather it reflects the parents' interest and care for their child's education.

Chapter 9

Madrasahs and the way forward

9. Introduction.

This section discusses about the survey data on Junior and High Madrasahs. The section starts with a brief introduction on West Bengal Madrasahs. Section 9.2 and 9.3 respectively discuss the data from Junior and High Madrasahs.

9.1.West Bengal Madrasahs.

West Bengal has been a pioneer in the area of madrasah education since 1915, when efforts were made to reform and modernize the curriculum prevailing in this system. In 1994, West Bengal became the first state to establish a statutory body, the West Bengal Board of Madrasah Education and entrusted in with academic responsibilities in respect of Madrasah Education. With the avowed objective to reform Madrash Education, the Government of West Bengal, in 2001, constituted the Madrasah Education Committee, under the Chairmanship of Dr. A. R. Kidwai. The Commission submitted its report in the year 2002.

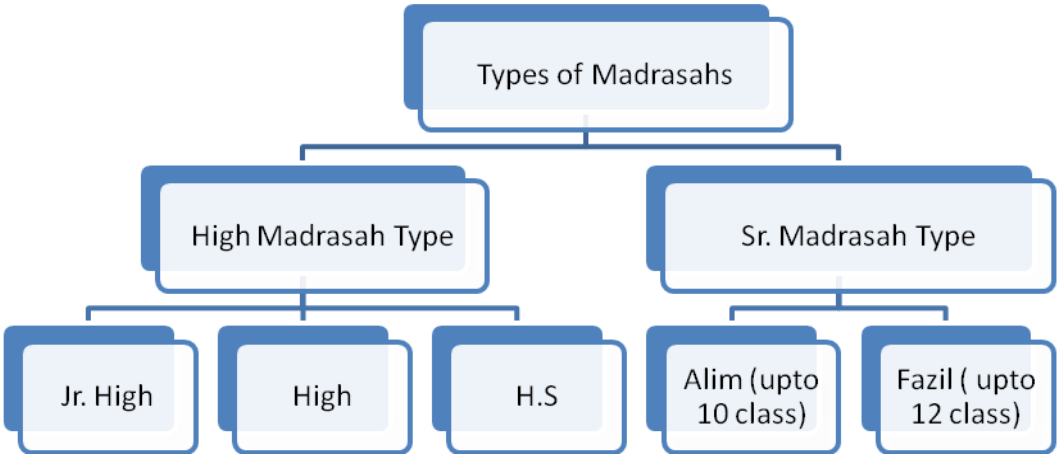
There are altogether 597 recognised Madrasahs in West Bengal as on 31.12.2010. While 102 of them are under the Senior Madrasah system, the remaining 474 are under the High Madrasah system (89 Junior High Madrasahs, 385 High Madrasahs). Upgradation of Jr. High Madrasah to High Madrasah, High Madrasah to Higher Secondary Madrasah and upgradation of Sr. Madrasah from Alim stage (10 th standard) to Fazil stage (12 th standard) is a regular and continuous process.

There has been a significant growth of Madrasah system in the last decades. The chart below shows increased number of different types of Madrasahs with year.

.	1947-1948	1977-1978	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Jr. High Madrasah	90	71	167	130	26	35	62	101
High Madrasah	07	92	238	274	378	385	396	394
Sr.Madrasah	02	74	103	103	102*	102	102	102

(This *section 9.1. West Bengal Madrasahs is copied and pasted from the web-page* http://www.wbmadrasahdte.gov.in on 24th January,2012).

In West Bengal there are different types of Madrasahs. This can be shown through the chart below:



9.2 Findings on Junior Madrasah

In this study, a total of Junior Madrasahs are surveyed. All are located in rural areas. Among the surveyed Junior Madrasahs half were established more than twenty years ago (Table 9.20).

9.2.1 SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE.

Table 9.2.1 shows distribution of Junior Madrasah school structure. In rural areas, half of the surveyed schools (two schools) are only for boys; while another half of Junior Madrasah is co-educational. In urban areas and Kolkata, no Junior Madrasah was surveyed.

Table 9.2.2 shows that, all surveyed Junior Madrasahs have pucca building. Among these, three fourth schools belong to sub-sample-1 and the rest one fourth schools are located in sub-sample-2. Table 9.2.3 reflects that schools have six class-rooms on average. Respectively table 9.2.3a.i and table 9.2.3a.ii show the distribution of Madrasahs by number of class-rooms with teachers. There are two to nine full time teachers in different Junior Madrasahs. **It seems there is a need to recruit more number of part-time and full-time teachers for an improved educational condition. Number of class-rooms also should be increased as per demand.**

Table 9.2.4 shows distribution of Junior Madrasahs by availability of other rooms and verandas. From this table it is clear that, only half of the Madrasahs have separate teachers' rooms. **Further requirement of other rooms and verandas are needed in different schools.**

Tables 9.2.6.i and table 9.2.8 show that, no government Madrasahs has toilet facility and water facility inside toilet. Further table 9.2.6.a.iii shows that, only half of the Madrasahs have separate toilet for students. Moreover, table 9.2.7 indicates that there is no gender-wise separate toilet facility in surveyed schools. **Therefore, Madrasahs need a serious intervention for infrastructure and toilet facility.**

9.2.2. ON TEACHERS.

Table 9.2.9 shows that, in average there are 6.3 teachers in surveyed Junior Madrasahs. Moreover, all teachers are males (table 9.2.10) from minority caste group (table 9.2.11). Further table 9.2.15 reflects that none of the teachers have basic training.

Table 9.2.12 reflects that, three-fourth of surveyed Madrasahs have more than five teachers. Most of the teachers (76%) travel less than one k.m. to reach respective schools from their residence (table 9.2.13). Table 9.2.21 shows distribution of Madrasahs by school time and residential distance of teachers. As per Table 9.2.21, in SS 1 all surveyed schools run in morning session; while only one (100%) surveyed school of SS 2 runs in afternoon session.

Table 9.2.17 shows that, most of the teachers (40%) are educated up to Alim, while 8% teachers do not want to reveal their educational qualification. Near about one third (32%) teachers are post-graduate.

According to table 9.2.18 number of students per teacher in schools providing data of enrolment for 2009-10 from Cl-I to Cl-IV is 12.2.

Our survey data reflects there is a need for properly trained teachers in junior Madrasahs.

9.2.3. COMMITTES IN MADRASAHS.

Table 9.2.14 shows that one-fourth of the surveyed school has School Monitoring Committee (SMC) only. No other committee exists in rest of the surveyed school. Further table 9.2.16 indicates that in sub sample 1 average meeting of SMC per school (in the last year) is 8.5, while the same is 5.0 for sub sample 2.

9.2.4. ENROLMENT STATUS IN MADRASAH.

Table 9.2.19.a to table 9.2.19.a.viii show enrolment status of Junior Madrasahs in different classes and years. Among these, table 9.2.19.a indicates that only one school provided data from 2006-07 to 2009-10 and from class-I to class-IV. The table shows that, in 2009-10 highest number of students were enrolled in class-I. Table 9.2.19.a.v shows that, in the same year there were near about one-third (32%) girls among the enrolled students among all classes together. **Survey data makes it clear that, enrolment status of girls' is quite low in Junior Madrasahs.**

9.2.5 MID-DAY-MEAL

Table 9.2.22 shows that, no Junior Madrasah is facilitated by mid-day-meal programme.

9.2.5 VISIT BY HIGHER AUTHORITIES

Table 9.2.23 and table 9.2.24 reveals that no Junior Madrasah was visited at all by SIS or higher authority officers in the last year. **It seems that, schools need regular visit and attention from SISs and higher authorities for a better educational condition.**

9.3 Findings on High Madrasah

Table 9.3.1(a-b) to table 9.3.3 provides formal information on surveyed High Madrasahs. Table 9.3.1a shows that half (two in number) of the surveyed High Madrasahs is located in rural areas and another half is situated in urban areas. Table 9.3.3 indicates that, all surveyed school are co-educational.

9.3.1. COMMITTEES IN SCHOOLS and VISIT BY AUTHORITIES

Table 9.3.4 to table 9.3.7 shows different data on school committees and visit of High Madrasahs by higher authorities. Table 9.3.4 indicates that, there is only School Management Committee (SMC) in all the High Madrasahs. Tables 9.3.6-7 shows that, no school was visited by SIS/AIS and higher authorities. **It seems that, High Madrasahs need a serious attention from higher authorities.**

9.3.2 SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE and OTHER FACILITIES

Table 9.3.8 to table 9.3.21a reflects different issues on infrastructure and other facilities. Table 9.3.8 and table 9.3.9 respectively shows that all surveyed schools have pucca building of their own possession. Further table 9.3.12 indicates that all surveyed schools have available drinking water and toilet facilities (table 9.3.13).

Table 9.3.18 shows that only one surveyed High Madrasah in rural area does not have electricity. **It seems that, in rural areas school infrastructures should be improved as per need.**

9.3.3 MIDDAY MEAL

Table 9.3.22 shows all surveyed High Madrasahs provide mid-day-meal to students. Survey data also reveals that in all surveyed High Madrasas of Rural and Urban areas children eat the midday meal within the school premises. Students are allowed 100 Grams of rice and Rs.3.05 is for other expenditure excluding remuneration of SHG. It is also reported that egg is served once a week in the Rural High Madrasa and twice a week in the Urban High Madrasa. In none of the surveyed High Madrasas teachers habituated to eat mead-day-meal. For Day schools both of them serves during tiffin period from 1.15 PM - 2.00 PM and of 4 periods are taken after the midday meal.

9.3.4. PROBLEMS IN HIGH MADRASAHS

Table 9.3.23 reveals that: a) low enrolment, b) low attendance, and c) lack of electricity are major problems of rural High Madrasah; while urban one faces the problem of drop out.

9.3.5 EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Table 9.3.24a-c reveals data on different extra-curricular activities. No surveyed High Madrasahs provide any vocational training. Moreover table 9.3.24.b-c shows that High Madrasahs participate in different inter home and inter school competition. Survey data also shows that except for Teacher's Day, Children's Day and Saraswati Puja other programmes are celebrated by the High Madrasas in both Rural & Urban Areas. **It seems that, High Madrasahs need to arrange vocational training courses as per need.**

9.3.6 OTHER INFORMATION

Table 9.3.25a-b shows that the number of non-teaching staffs and sanctioned posts of non-teaching staffs in surveyed schools.

9.3.7 ON TEACHERS

Table 9.3.26 to table 9.3.35 reveals data on teachers of High Madrasah. Table 9.3.26 shows that, in both rural and urban areas there are para-teachers beside full-time teachers. Moreover, table 9.3.27a reveals that there are female teachers (21.4%: table 9.3.27 b) also in High Madrasahs.

Table 9.3.29 shows that half of surveyed teachers do not have any professional training. While, more than half (57.1%) of surveyed teachers are graduate (Table 9.3.32). **Survey data reveals that, in both rural and urban areas teachers need professional training for more improved quality education.**

Table 9.3.34 reflects that, respectively in rural and urban areas number of students per teachers in school is 19 and 88.

9.3.8 RESULTS OF MADHYAMIK EXAMINATION

Table 9.36.i-ii shows data on last three years' result and average result of Madhyamik Examination in secondary schools.