

Elementary Education in West Bengal – Current Status and Issues

1. Introduction:

Any person in modern society requires knowledge and skill to participate in various social processes in the public domain and being associated with gainful economic activities. In primitive society the knowledge was based on experiencing natural events and survival of human depended on learning related to gathering food and meeting other essential needs, which was quite little. There was also little inequality in the society caused by difference in knowledge of different individuals because education was not so linked with the means of livelihood. The present knowledge base of the society has been built over thousands of years and has grown tremendously in last few centuries. In keeping with that, system of education has been evolved for developing knowledge and related skill from childhood. Functionality and well being of any person now largely depends on utilizing available knowledge and skill learnt through such education system. Also, for leading a meaningful life every one has to relate him or her with others in the society and to realize their cultural values and social identity. All those are enabled by appropriate formal education in addition to the process of socialization within the family and the community. Even few centuries ago the difference of quality of life between a well educated person and one not so educated was not so large and social status as well as economic entitlement of any individual depended more on heredity and much less on what an individual acquire through education. The modern society is becoming more knowledge based and ability to acquire knowledge and skill also decides the opportunity the individual gets to have his or her economic entitlement. The education system is to equip every citizen to acquire essential knowledge and skill for building capabilities for their functioning in the society and every one has to acquire certain minimum level of education for being able to realize his or her potential in living a meaningful life. Swami Vivekananda said, “Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man”. Thus education develops a person from inside. Apart from intrinsic value of education as an individual asset for fulfilling one’s life, the functionality developed through education is very important from the point of view of receiving gainful employment including self employment. Further, economic entitlement of the individual is strongly related to the level of education in terms of number of years of schooling and education beyond that. Social status of an individual as well as achievement in various social spheres also depends on the level of education. Similarly, the economic and social development of a country will largely depend on the level of education of the citizen of the country. Also, while there will remain substantial difference in social and economic status of the family in which one is born but a

sound education system can ensure equity in the way two individuals born in two widely different families in terms of wealth can acquire equal level of education so that they have more equality in what they acquire in their life time. To state the same in a different way, failure to acquire education at par with members of the society from richer section enhances inequality in the society. Because of that reason, level of education in a society not only decides the level of social and economic development but also has much impact in bringing more equality in the society.

2. Education as an Enabler of Various Socio-economic Developments:

Correlation of education with most of the social and economic development is well understood in general. Status of education is related to nature of employment and income. Only around 9% of the workforce in India is in the organized sector which provides more income and security. Those who are illiterate or have very limited level of literacy have very little scope to get employment in the organized sector. Education status is an important determinant of the nature of employment and earning of even those who are employed as casual or regular employee in the unorganized sector. For example, the mean year of schooling of those who were in regular unorganized employment was 6.7 years (as NSS 61st round 2004-05) as compared to mean year of schooling of 3.5 years for the casual unorganized workers. Compared to that the mean year of schooling of employees in the organized sector was 9.0 years during that period. In respect of those who are self employed their ability to earn and utilize the available opportunities is strongly determined by their educational level. Therefore, eradication of poverty will have strong correlation with the education level. The table below shows the percentage distribution of rural women workers by poverty and their education status (taken from article by Nisha Srivastava, Ravi Srivastava on “Women, Work, and Employment Outcomes in Rural India” published in EPW, July 10, 2010).

Percentage Distribution of Women Workers by Poverty & Education Status (2004-2005)

Education status	Extremely Poor	Poor	Marginal	Vulnerable	Middle income	Higher Income	All
Illiterate	81.2	77.5	71.7	62.9	47.5	24.8	64.5
Primary and below	13.7	15.6	17.7	21.5	23.3	22.6	19.7
Middle level	3.9	4.8	7.6	9.9	14.0	16.6	9.2
Secondary & above but below graduate	1.2	1.9	2.7	5.2	12.8	23.5	5.7
Graduate and above	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.5	2.4	12.5	0.9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

It is obvious from the table that the level of education of the workers has strong association with their income and even middle level of education makes a big difference. The same article also mentions that “One of the major attributes of women engaged in agriculture is their low level of educational attainment. With the ongoing commercialization of agriculture, crop diversification, introduction of new technologies and the imperative for better information processing, education has to be reckoned as a key input in any attempt at overall development and modernisation of agriculture. However, the grim picture is that about 86% of female agricultural labourers and 74% of female farmers are either illiterate or have education below the primary level. Shocking as it may seem, the average education of a female agricultural labourer was less than one year in 2004-05.” That for male worker during the same period was merely 2.4 years. Compared to those, mean year of schooling of rural non-agricultural workers, who generally earn more than agricultural workers, was 4.6 years. So, it is apparent that for economic prosperity as well as reduction of inequality educational attainment of every one, not merely in terms of literacy, but in terms of depth of literacy measured through mean year of schooling will be very crucial.

Apart from employment and income, the level of education is one important determinant of maintaining good health and avoiding undesirable burden of disease in general and burden of bearing children by the women, which have very important consequences in well being of the individual and the family. People with lower level of education, which is also associated with poverty, fails to access services available or to take precautionary measures due to lack of awareness. National Family Health Survey (NFHS) brought out those features to highlight educational attainment in improving public health. For example, as per NFHS 3 conducted during 2005-06, total fertility rate was 3.07 for illiterate women; 2.43 for those with education below 5 years, 1.92 for women with schooling between 5 to 9 years and only 1.36 for those women who had at least 10 years of schooling. Mean number of children ever born to women aged 40-49 years were 4.4 (2.13); 3.6 (1.73); 2.9 (1.58) and 1.6 (1.22) for the said education categories respectively. The figure in the bracket shows the desired number of children in that category and it is clear that women with lower level of education had to bear higher burden of children as well as higher share of undesired pregnancies. Many of them had to bear child in their teen age. Percentage of girls in the age group 15-19 years who were found to have begun child bearing were 44.1% for those with no education; 29.3% for those with education below 5 years; 23.4% for those with education between 5 to 9 years and only 6.1% for those having at least 10 years of schooling. Thus, level of education has great bearing on population control as well as burden of women in

bearing child. Access to various health services such as Antenatal Check Up, Immunization etc also has strong relationship with the status of education. The table below shows how access to different such services vary with level of education of the mother. The table also shows clearly the difference in level of awareness about ORS for tackling diarrhea, which is very common.

Access to Different Health Related Services to Groups with Different Educational Status

Mother's education - No of years completed	Percentage who had three or more ANC visits	Percentage with an ANC visit in the first trimester of pregnancy	Percentage who know about ORS packets	Measles	All basic vaccinations	No vaccinations at all
Nil	43.4	25.2	69.8	64.3	52.7	8.9
<5 years	61.9	28.2	71.5	72.7	68.2	6.7
5-9 years	74.1	45.8	79.0	85.2	74.6	3.5
10 or more	91.5	78.1	95.4	84.6	70.9	0.0

(Source: NFHS 3 conducted during 2005-06)

Difference in awareness and access to services has obvious impact on the health outcome. The table below shows the difference in mortality of children of varying age groups with educational status of the mother and the mortality rate reduces substantially with increase in literacy level of mothers.

Infant and Child Mortality of Groups having Different Level of Education of Mothers

Education level of mothers	Neonatal mortality	Post neonatal mortality	Infant mortality	Child mortality	Under-five mortality
No education	41.9	16.9	58.9	22.6	80.1
<10 years	36.3	12.1	48.4	5.2	53.3
10 yrs or more	25.6	6.5	32.1	0.5	32.6

(Source: NFHS 3 conducted during 2005-06)

The above analysis provides for a strong case of strengthening the education system in general and elementary education in particular, in terms of both universal coverage and ensuring proper quality of education to the citizen. That calls for developing a sound system of education in the country and priority in government expenditure for promotion of elementary education to all irrespective of the social and economic background of the family.

3. Education Policy & State Interventions

Education was originally a State subject under the Constitution of India and the same was brought under the Concurrent list through 42nd amendment of the Constitution, in 1976 to allow more direct involvement of the GOI in affairs related to education. India spends 3% of its gross national product on education, similar to that of countries in south Asia, but well below the percentage spent in many developing countries and well below the 6% recommended by the education commission in 1966. At the same time relative share of expenditure on elementary education has declined over the years, bulk of which goes to manpower cost like teacher's salary etc leaving very little for books, Teaching Learning Materials (TLM) etc. In August, 1985 a document on policy perspective called **Challenge of Education** was released by the GOI. The document provided a host of recommendations for universalizing elementary education, reducing the school drop out rate, creating a network of "model school" in every district in the country for the most meritorious children from rural areas, using new communication technologies in schools, vocationalizing secondary education, expanding non formal education for those who had not attended or completed the school. In a spirit of self-criticism, the report documented several failures in educational development:

- i. Almost 1/4th of the pupils enrolled in pry. school are underage or overage, and if these are excluded from the rate of growth of enrollment, the actual student population will be below the age-specific population growth rate. Which implies that the no. of illiterate population is increasing with time.
- ii. Though as a whole there is increase in enrollment of girls in the pry. school, in many states the situation remains unsatisfactory.
- iii. Nearly 1/5th children do not have school within 1 km of their home. Standards of schools are also not satisfactory. 40% of schools have no pacca buildings, 9% have no buildings at all. 40% have no blackboards, 60% have no drinking water, 70% have no library facilities, 53% are without playgrounds, 89% lack toilet facilities, 35% of the schools have only a single teacher to teach three or four different classes; many schools remain without any teacher for considerable time and some teachers even are sub-contracting teaching work to others who are not qualified.
- iv. Nearly 60% of the children drop out between classes I to V and of 100 students enrolled in class I, only 23 reach class VIII.
- v. Though the literacy rate increased from 16.7% in 1951 to 36.2% , but the number of illiterates has increased fourfold 60 million to 248 million. There is also a glaring

difference between male and female literacy, the former being 46.9%, the latter 24.8%. In rural areas the literacy rates for male is 40.8% and for female 18%; in urban areas it is 65.9% and 47.8% respectively. There is also very high regional variations.

- vi. Education expenditure is disproportionately lower in rural areas.
- vii. Budgetary allocation was declining in each five year plan on elementary education. The expenditure was down to 36% by the sixth five year plan (1980-85) from a share of 56% in the first five year plan.

Earlier, on the basis of the recommendations of Kothari Commission, the Government of India announced a national Policy on education in 1968. Analyzing the above situations, the GOI reconfirmed its commitment to provide free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of 14 years and announced the new National Policy on Education in 1986. The policy declared a new thrust on achievement of universal enrolment and universal retention of children up to 14 years of age by 1995. Several central and state level initiatives have been in operation. While the design of these projects varies substantially, all of them address the objectives and strategies of the National Policy on Education 1986. It may be mentioned that the Constitution stipulated a timeframe of 10 years for achieving universal education of all children up to the age of 14 years, which was extended to 16 years. The Education Commission of 1964-66 pushed the target to 1985 and the National Policy on Education of 1986 set the limit for achieving universal elementary education by pushing the date further to the year 1995. The World Conference on Education for All held in Jomtien in 1990 adopted a declaration calling upon all member states and agencies to strive for achieving Education for ALL (EFA) by the year 2001. The country is still struggling to achieve the same. At the time of independence, only fourteen percent of the population was literate and only one child out of three had been enrolled in primary school. As per 2011 census the literacy rate of the country has reached 74%. It may be mentioned that most of the developed countries of the world achieved near 100% literacy more than a century ago and India continues to be the country with largest number of illiterates of the world. Achievement of India does not compare well even with comparable developing countries. However, there is renewed effort to achieve universalisation of elementary education (UEE) through various policy measures and interventions as mentioned below.

3.1 Operation Blackboard

This scheme was launched in the year 1987 with the aim to improve the school environment and enhancing retention and learning achievement of children by providing minimum essential facilities in all primary schools. The scheme brought about quantitative and qualitative improvement in primary education. In all, 5,23,000 primary schools across the country were covered under the programme.

3.2 Decentralisation of Elementary Education & Roll of Local Governments

Decentralised planning and management of elementary education is a goal set by the National Policy on Education, 1986. The Policy visualised direct community involvement in the form of Village Education Committees (VECs) for management of elementary education, with which the Panchayat members are associated. The Plan of Action of 1992, emphasised micro-planning as a process of designing a family-wise and child-wise plan of action by which every child regularly attends school or Non Formal Education (NFE) centre, continues his or her education at the place suitable to him/her and completes at least eight years of schooling or its equivalent at the NFE centre. States were expected to evolve institutional arrangements both in rural and urban areas for undertaking these activities. Those bodies were to be delegated with responsibilities with regard to location and relocation of existing primary and upper primary schools on the basis of micro planning and school mapping. In this regard, decentralisation of school management to grassroots level bodies is an important policy initiative.

The 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments provide for decentralisation of the activities and facilitate transfer of power and participation of the local self-government institutions such as the Panchayats and the Municipalities. The Panchayats and Municipalities are supposed to play a more dynamic and proactive role through devolution of appropriate functions related to elementary education, as envisaged in the 11th Schedule of the Constitution. However, actual devolution varied widely across states and there has been very limited devolution in West Bengal. The PRIs have been given only some facilitating role without making them responsible for owning some of the activities related to the regular elementary education system and they are responsible only for the alternative elementary education system through the Shishu Siksha Karmasuchi (described later).

3.3 District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)

The DPEP was launched in November, 1994 with the aim of operationalising the strategies for achieving universalisation of elementary education (UEE) through district specific planning and initiative. 85% of funding was from GOI (received from external

assistance and passed as grants to states) and rest was the share of the state governments. It took a holistic view of primary education with emphasis on decentralised management, community mobilisation and district specific planning based on contextually and research based inputs.

The basic objectives of DPEP were:

- To provide all children with access to primary education either in the formal system or through the NFE programme.
- To reduce differences in enrolment, dropout rates and learning achievement among gender and social groups to less than 5%.
- To reduce overall primary dropout rates for all students to less than 10%.
- To raise average achievement levels by at least 25% over measured base line levels and ensuring achievements of basic literacy and numeric competencies and a minimum of 40% achievement levels in other competencies by all primary school children.

The first phase of the programme was launched in 42 districts in the states of Assam, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamilnadu and Madhya Pradesh. In the second phase, the programme has been launched in 80 districts of Orissa, Himachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat and in Phase I States. DPEP had been able to set up project management structures at district, state and national levels, create the environment and capacity for micro planning, take up the challenge of pedagogical innovation, create a responsive institutional base which includes both government and non-government institutions, enhance community participation and strengthen the process of catering to special focus groups such as tribals, scheduled castes, women and other marginalised sections.

3.4 Universalisation of Elementary Education & Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan:

The National Policy of Education 1986, as revised in 1992, had indicated three thrust areas in elementary education:

- i. Universal access for enrolment;
- ii. Universal retention of children up to 14 years of age; and
- iii. A substantial improvement in the quality of education to enable all children to achieve essential levels of learning.

These objectives were addressed during the Tenth Plan period mainly through the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), which continues to be the flagship programme of the country being implemented by the GOI in partnership with States and UTs. The Mid Day Meal and

Teacher Education Schemes have also contributed towards progress in the above objectives. The 86th Constitutional Amendment Act 2002 made education a Fundamental Right for children in the age group of 6-14 years by providing that “the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine”. Some of the major achievements in the quest for universalisation of elementary education are listed below:

- a) Reduction in the number of out of school children: From about 320 lakh in 2002-03, the number of out of school children had reduced to 70.5 lakh based on reports of States and UTs in March 2006.
- b) Decline in gender and social gaps: The gender gap at the primary stage reduced from 5.5 percentage points in 2002-03 to 4.2 percentage points in 2005-06. At the upper primary stage this gap reduced from 10.7 percentage points to 8.8 percentage points. The Gender Parity Index (GPI) at the primary stage in 2005 was 0.95 and 0.88 for the upper primary stage. The share of SC students in total enrolment was 20.72% at the primary stage and 19.42% at the upper primary stage. For ST students, share in total enrolment was 11.75% at the primary stage in 2005-06 and 9.28% at the upper primary stage.
- c) Reduction in dropout rates: The gross dropout rate, reflected in the Selected Education Statistics of MHRD declined from 39.03% in 2001-02 to 28.49% in 2004-05. For girls, the decline in dropout rate has been significant. During this period it decline from 39.88% to 24.82% - a decline of more than 15 percentage points. The dropout rate for the entire elementary stage is however declining less rapidly.

3.5 Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)

RMSA is an extension of SSA in the sense that it promises universal access to secondary level education to all (in the age group of 15-16 years) by 2017 and universal retention by 2020. The scheme was launched in March, 2009 throughout the country to universalize the secondary education.

Vision:

- ❖ To provide a secondary school within a reasonable distance of any habitation which should be 5 km for secondary schools and 7-10 km for higher secondary schools
- ❖ Ensure universal access of secondary education by 2017 (GER of 100)
- ❖ Universal retention by 2020

- ❖ Providing access to secondary education with special reference to economically weaker sections of the society, the educationally backward, girls, disabled children, SCs, STs, OBCs, educationally backward minorities (EBMs).

Objectives:

- i. To ensure that all secondary schools have physical facilities, staffs and supplies at least according to the prescribed standards through financial support in case of Government/ Local Body and Government aided schools, and appropriate regulatory mechanism in the case of other schools.
- ii. To improve access to secondary schooling to all young persons according to norms – through proximate location (say, Secondary Schools within 5 kms, and Higher Secondary Schools within 7-10 kms) / efficient and safe transport arrangements/residential facilities, depending on local circumstances including open schooling. However in hilly and difficult areas, these norms can be relaxed. Preferably residential schools may be set up in such areas.
- iii. To ensure that no child is deprived of secondary education of satisfactory quality due to gender, socio-economic, disability and other barriers.
- iv. To improve quality of secondary education resulting in enhanced intellectual, social and cultural learning.

The strategies mainly undertaken to improve the quality of secondary education in the state are as follows:-

1. Infrastructure

- Increase/upgradation of Infrastructure

2. Access

- Strategies to ensure greater access to schools in backward regions, difficult terrains, remote locations and EBBs (Educationally Backward Blocks) and convergence of special focus groups
- For increasing the enrollment of socially backward classes

3. Capacity Building

- Capacity building at different levels

4. Improving the quality and effectiveness of teachers

- Rationalization of teachers
- Accountability of teachers should be in-built in the system
- Teacher performance appraisal and incentive
- Improving teacher recruitment and management

5. School Inspection

- Local stakeholders should be involved in the monitoring of schools, whether in the form of Village Education Committees, parent associations, or other such bodies.
- The number of inspectors needs to be increased in the State and they must be provided the facilities to undertake their activities properly, such as transport, communications devices, etc.

6. Evaluation and Research

- Revision of curriculum and teaching methodologies
- Introduction of new technologies
- Revision of examination system etc.

7. Opportunities for exploring PPP

- Feasibility analysis of PPP in the education sector in west Bengal

8. Environment building/community mobilization

Community Mobilization is one of the major activities to be undertaken under RMSA at the different levels. The following activities are to be taken up to sensitize guardian, PRI Members and officials at different levels.

Budgetary Sanction:

The total budget proposed for the financial year was Rs190.56 crores. For the pre-project activities the state received Rs 2 Crores The fund was utilized for creation of necessary infrastructure like setting up of offices, procurement of infrastructure etc. across the districts of West Bengal. The expenditures incurred while conducting the survey for filling up the data capture format of SEMIS 2007-08, survey undertaken for micro-planning and GIS mapping have also been met from this fund.

Organisational Structure

For implementing and monitoring several activities under RMSA a society has been formed and registered in the name of Paschim Banga Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Mission. Three committees have also been formed to oversee the activities of RMSA at different levels and provide necessary inputs as and when required. There will be a State Mission Authority for Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan. All activities in the Secondary education sector in the State should be under State Mission Authority. The

State Level Committee has been constituted with Chief Minister as Chairperson and Minister in-charge, School Education Department as Vice Chairperson.

The School Academic Committee will be responsible for all academic activities including planning, management, monitoring, supervision, reporting, and collection of data for SEMIS etc. It will also be responsible for ensuring quality improvements, equity, reducing barriers- like socio economic, gender and disability, teachers and students attendance, recommending teachers for training, guidance and counseling, students achievements, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities and over all academic and personality development of students and teachers.

Activities Taken up in 2009-10 & 2010-11

The starting point for planning activities is the creation of a core team at the District level which is committed towards the task of Universalization of Secondary Education. Besides Education Department functionaries, these teams comprise of faculty members of SCERTs, NGO representatives, representatives of Teachers' Unions, representatives of Women's Groups, representatives of Self Help Groups, retired and serving National and State Award winning Teachers, local literary figures, Panchayati Raj/ Autonomous Council representatives, etc. and the orientation of the District level Core Group.

The School has to play a critical role in the planning process The Head Master/ Headmistress and his/her team have to function like the local resource team for planning. The Managing Committee of every identified secondary or upper primary school would prepare a School Level Perspective Plan and Annual Plan. In the un-served areas new schools are required to be established. In case of such schools, the school plan will be prepared by the DPC with the help of District Core Group.

A workshop was held from 16.07.2010 to 18.07.2010 at Kolkata Seva Kendra and the Perspective Plans and the Annual Plans were discussed in detail with each district and were finalized.

Drop out survey has also been started at different districts.

Basic information on secondary education

Sl. No.	District	GER			Pupil-Teacher Ratio	Student-Classroom Ratio	Secondary School	Hr. Sec. School
		Total	Boys	Girls				
1	Bankura	60.09%	65.16%	54.87%	27.50	70.69	433	201
2	Bardhaman	52.99%	51.49%	54.59%	25.24	66.10	778	331
3	Birbhum	58.33%	61.26%	55.31%	30.18	77.99	365	150
4	Dakshin Dinajpur	65.31%	64.71%	65.92%	17.79	78.70	166	83
5	Darjeeling	59.06%	58.43%	59.69%	21.06	59.04	107	50
6	Howrah	54.86%	48.10%	62.14%	27.74	61.33	511	257
7	Hugli	56.59%	51.48%	61.87%	30.56	60.21	613	282
8	Jalpaiguri	63.34%	59.91%	66.89%	33.19	94.57	296	154
9	KochBehar	69.92%	65.28%	74.71%	47.77	86.39	263	144
10	Kolkata	44.73%	43.06%	46.70%	18.60	43.03	584	304
11	Malda	59.36%	59.20%	59.52%	42.37	87.48	333	147
12	Murshidabad	60.83%	56.37%	65.41%	42.45	99.70	479	251
13	Nadia	54.11%	52.28%	56.00%	36.81	72.63	434	257
14	North 24- Prgs	54.46%	50.08%	59.09%	30.00	65.94	940	513
15	Paschim Medinipur	61.95%	62.89%	61.00%	26.84	63.54	748	295
16	Purba Medinipur	66.62%	63.08%	70.29%	33.51	64.89	603	282
17	Purulia	55.51%	64.12%	46.68%	30.85	66.85	325	150
18	Siliguri	73.78%	73.72%	73.85%	40.67	73.81	96	64
19	South 24 Pgns	51.64%	47.92%	55.52%	25.32	71.28	730	315
20	Uttar Dinajpur	54.11%	54.53%	53.68%	33.30	101.33		
	Overall	57.19%	55.12%	59.35%	29.62	69.91	8985	4341

3.5 Right to Education Act, 2009 and Rights-based Framework for SSA

To make elementary education compulsory the 86th Amendment of the Constitution in the year 2002 made provision of the Article 21-A, which states that “The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine and its consequential legislation”. The same has come in to force with introduction of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 throughout India with effect from 1st April, 2010. The salient features of the RTE Act are mentioned below:-

- i. The right of children to free and compulsory education till completion of elementary education in a neighborhood school.

- ii. 'Compulsory education' makes it obligatory on the government to provide free elementary education and ensure compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education to every child in the 6-14 age group. In order to make elementary education "free", no child shall be liable to pay any kind of fee or charges or expenses which would prevent him or her from pursuing and completing elementary education.
- iii. 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 Madhyamaik Siksha Kendra(MSK in West Bengal) should be converted to regular schools or closed down when children are mainstreamed into neighbourhood schools.
- iv. It provides for a child not enrolled, whether never enrolled or a drop out, to be admitted to an age appropriate class in a formal school.
- v. It specifies the duties and responsibilities of the appropriate Government, local authority and parents in providing free and compulsory education, and sharing of financial and other responsibilities between the Central and State Government.
- vi. It lays down the norms and standards relating to Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTRs), buildings and infrastructure, school-working days, teacher-working hours etc.
- vii. It provides for rational deployment of teachers by ensuring that the specified pupil teacher ratio is maintained for each school ensuring that there is no urban – rural imbalance in teacher postings. It also prohibits the deployment of teachers for work not related to education, other than the decennial census, elections and disaster relief. Also school teachers should not be involved in private tuition.
- viii. It provides that teachers will be appointed only with the requisite professional training and academic qualifications. RTE (section 26) requires that vacancy of teachers in a government school or government-aided school should not exceed 10% of the total sanctioned strength.
- ix. Every unaided school, imparting elementary education, is to be registered with the appropriate authority (e.g., District Inspector's Office) within a given timeframe. Unaided schools are required to reserve 25% of the seats for children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups in the neighbourhood. The State RTE Rules should specify the limits of neighbourhood unambiguously for primary and upper primary schools.

- x. The primary responsibility of monitoring the quality of education in a school rests with the School Management Committee (SMC). Hence, all other school-level committees (e.g., PTA, MTA) are to be closed.
- xi. It prohibits (a) physical punishment and mental harassment of children, (b) screening during admissions, (c) payment of capitation fees, (d) prohibition of private tuition by teachers, and (e) bars the running of schools without recognition from the government.
- xii. It provides for development of curriculum which would ensure the all round development of a child building on the child's knowledge, potential and talent and make the child free of fear, trauma and anxiety through a system which is child friendly and promotes child-centered learning in consonance with the values enshrined in the Constitution.

3.5.1 RTE Road Map

The time frames mandated by the RTE Act become applicable immediately after enforcement of the Act to SSA and the same is shown below.

Activity	Time Frame
All quality interventions and other provisions	With immediate effect
Establishment of neighbourhood schools	3 Years (by 31st March, 2013)
Provisions of school infrastructure. All weather school buildings. One-classroom-one-teacher. Office cum-store-cum-Head teacher room. Toilets and drinking water facilities. Barrier free access. Library. Playground Fencing/boundary walls	
Provision of teachers as per prescribed PTR	
Training of untrained teachers	5 Years (by 31st March, 2013)

3.5.2 Revamp of SSA: The Revised SSA Framework of Implementation

With the introduction of the RTE Act making elementary education as right the delivery services related to education has to be approached in a right based framework. The National Level Committee on “Implementation of RTE Act and Resultant Revamp of SSA”, formed towards this submitted its report in April 2010 and the following principles emerged:

- a. Holistic view of education, as interpreted in the National Curriculum Framework 2005, with implications for a systemic revamp of the entire content and process of education with significant implications for curriculum, teacher education, educational planning and management.
- b. Equity: to mean not only equal opportunity, but also creation of conditions in which the disadvantaged sections of the society-girls, children of SCs/ ST/ minorities/ Landless agricultural workers and those with special needs, etc. - can avail of the opportunities being made available under the programme.
- c. Access, not to be confined to ensuring that a school becomes accessible to all children within specified distance but implies an understanding of the educational needs and predicament of the traditionally excluded categories- the SC, ST and others section of the most disadvantaged groups, the Muslim minority, girls in general, and children with special needs.
- d. Gender concerns: implying not only an effort to enable girls to keep pace with boys but to view education in the perspective spelt out in the National Policy on Education 1986/92; ie a decisive intervention to bring about a basic change in the status of women.
- e. Centrality of teacher: to motivate them to innovate and create a culture in the classroom and beyond the classroom that might produce an inclusive environment of children, especially for girls from marginalized backgrounds.
- f. Moral compulsion is imposed through the RTE Act on parents, teachers, educational administrators and other stakeholders, rather than shifting emphasis on punitive processes.
- g. Convergent and integrated system of educational management is a pre-requisite for implementation of the RTE. All states must move in that direction as quickly as possible.

3.5.3 RTE Act and Preparedness in West Bengal

The Act necessitates several steps to be taken by every state government within the timeframe mentioned above. Sometimes it needs infrastructural development and restructuring of the educational system, such as-

- Keeping in conformity with the provision of the Right of children to free and compulsory education, 2009 the formulation of state RTE Rules is under process.
- Specification of limits of neighbourhood for Primary and Upper Primary schools are to be done

- Teacher recruitment becomes necessary to follow the PTR as per guideline. Vacancies should not exceed 10% of sanctioned strength and sanctioned strength should be as per enrolment.
- All teachers must have the minimum qualifications NCTE notifications.
- Teachers should not be engaged in non-academic activities (except census, election, disaster management); also not be involved in private tuition.
- EGS centers are to be closed gradually and formal education is to be provided only through recognized schools eventually.
- Every primary schools are to be provided with i) Library, ii) games equipments and play materials.
- All unaided schools are to be registered at DI Office.
- All unaided schools to be instructed to reserve 25% seats for children weaker section/ dis-advantaged group from neighbourhood.

Statement showing intervention-wise proposal on RTE issues:

Activity	Proposal for 2011-12			Approval for 2011-12			Amount not approved	Remarks
	Spill over	Fresh	Total	Spill over	Fresh	Total		
New schools opening		442 PS & 340 UPS						Since State RTE rules yet to be notified, TSG did not recommend.
Teachers salary	0.00	233552.065 (Rs.In lakh)	233552.06 (Rs.In lakh)	0.00	235081.03	235081.03	6471.035	New teacher for new schools & excess SSK/MSK teacher is not recommended.
Block Resource center(BRC)	145.58	4788.930	4934.51	145.56	5199.43	5345.01	0.00	728 no. of Resource Person & 19 block level Accountants are approved on contractual basis.
Special Training	0.00	11477.91	11477.91	0.00	11477.91	11477.91	0.00	
Uniform	0.00	54616.58	54616.58	0.00	0.00	0.00	54616.58	Not recommended, since State RTE rules yet to be notified.
Civil Works	57468.53	352809.38	410277.91	57468.53	109585.18	167033.71	243244.19	No new school construction is recommended.
Teaching	4614.	374.60	4988.90	4614.	0.00	4614.60	374.60	No new school is

Learning Equipment	30			30				recommended.
Transport & escort facility	0.00	1273.71	1273.71	0.00	0.00	0.00	1273.71	Not recommended, since State RTE rules yet to be notified.
Residential school	0.00	559.06	559.06	0.00	0.00	0.00	559.06	No new residential school is recommended.

Steps already taken for implementation of RTE Act are:

- Copy of the minutes of the 160th meeting of PAB for the AWP&B on SSA, NPEGEL & KGVB, 2011-12, WB has been circulated to all concerned.
- Notifications issued on the following matters

Sl. No.	No. of notification with date	Content of the notification	Issuing Agency
1	134-SE(pry)/10-M-95/2000 Pt.I dtd. 04.03.2010	New set up of primary & upper primary school	Deptt. Of school Education, GoWB
2	09-SE(S)/5S-116/10 dtd.06.01.11		-Do-
3	189-SE(Law)/S/1A-01/09 dtd. 14.02.2011	No teacher shall engage in private tuition.	-Do-
4	151/BPE/2011dtd. 31.01.11	Introduction of bridge course for candidates who have completed 10+2 & 1 yr. PTTI Course	WB Board of Primary Education
5	156/BPE/2011dtd. 31.01.11	Arrangement of theoretical examination for all trainee primary teachers.	WB Board of Primary Education
6	189-SE(Law)/S/1A-01/09 dtd. 14.02.2011	No child shall be liable to pay any kind of fee or charges or expenses which may prevent him or her elementary education.	Deptt. Of school Education, GoWB
7	190-SE(Law)/S/1A-01/09 dtd. 14.02.2011	Unaided schools shall admit in class I at least 25% of the strength of that class, children belonging to weaker section and disadvantaged group & provide free and compulsory education till completion.	Deptt. Of school Education, GoWB
8	86-SSE/11/ES/S/1A-01/09 dtd. 25.02.2011	Complaint against denial of admission faced by the children (6-14 yrs.) in schools	Deptt. Of school Education, GoWB
9	60-SE(P&B)/10M-9/10 dtd 18.02.11	A system of tracking of a child's progress from the time of admission to a school at class-I till completion of his/her elementary education	Deptt. Of school Education, GoWB

4. Attainment of Universal Elementary Education and Related Issues

India has built up strong human resources in the fields of scientific and technological capabilities, humanist and philosophical thought and creativity. The need for a literate population and universal education for all children in the age group of 6-14 years was recognized as the crucial input for nation building and the same was given due consideration in enactment of the Constitution as well as in successive five year plans. Yet, as mentioned before, the country has remained behind many of the developing countries in terms of universalisation of elementary education and the goal has remained elusive. Progress of elementary education in the country as well as in West Bengal and related issues are mentioned below.

4.1 Progress of Literacy in India and West Bengal

Access to elementary education has increased manifold over the years since independence. In any case the goal for EFA has remained elusive though literacy rates have increased steadily over the years. The growth of literacy and the absolute number of illiterates in India and West Bengal from independence is given in the table below

Progress of literacy & Absolute no of Illiterates in India & West Bengal

(no in million)

Year	India				West Bengal			
	Liter Rate (%)	No of persons		Increase In no of Illiterates	Literacy Rates(%)	Literate	Illiterate	Increase In no of Illiterates
		Literate	Illiterate					
1951	16.7	58.9	294.2	+32.4	24.95			
1961	24.0	102.6	325.5	+31.3	34.46			
1971	29.5	157.3	376.2	+50.7	38.86			
1981	36.2	241.0	424.3*	+48.1	46.32			
1991	52.2	349.76	320.41	+ 18.3*	57.70	32.6	23.9	
2001	64.8	560.7	304.15	- 16.26	68.64	47.19	21.56	- 2.34
2011	74.0	778.5	272.95	- 31.20	77.10	62.6	18.6	- 2.96

*From the year 1991 children below 7 years instead of below 5 years are being excluded for calculating literacy. During 1981 illiterate population in the age group 7 years above was 302.06 million. Considering that, number of illiterates in the country increased by 18.3 million in 1991 as compared to 1981.

There is wide variation across states in literacy rates. The state wise literacy rates are shown below. Literacy rate of West Bengal during 2011 was 77.1% compared to 93.9% for Kerala. However, total number of illiterates in the state started declining from the year 2001. It will appear from the table below that West Bengal ranks quite low among all the states and

there is need to intensifying drive to achieve UEE. In this context is necessary to understand the social and economic processes which are creating barriers in UEE even for those who are currently in the school going age.

Number of Literates and Literacy Rate by sex and residence – India/ State/ Union

Territory: Census 2011 (Provisional)

State/ UT	India/ State/ Union Territory	Literates (Persons)			Literacy Rate (Persons)		
		Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	INDIA	778,454,120	493,020,878	285,433,242	74.04	68.91	84.98
01	JAMMU & KASHMIR	7,245,053	4,898,008	2,347,045	68.74	64.97	78.19
02	HIMACHAL PRADESH	5,104,506	4,533,373	571,133	83.78	82.91	91.39
03	PUNJAB	18,988,611	11,195,395	7,793,216	76.68	72.45	83.70
04	UTTARAKHAND	6,997,433	4,670,901	2,326,532	79.63	77.11	85.20
05	HARYANA	16,904,324	10,393,591	6,510,733	76.64	72.74	83.83
06	NCT OF DELHI #	12,763,352	300,539	12,462,813	86.34	82.67	86.43
07	RAJASTHAN	38,970,500	26,945,543	12,024,957	67.06	62.34	80.73
08	UTTAR PRADESH	118,423,805	88,396,557	30,027,248	69.72	67.55	77.01
09	BIHAR	54,390,254	46,478,818	7,911,436	63.82	61.83	78.75
10	ARUNACHAL PRADESH	789,943	557,105	232,838	66.95	61.59	84.57
11	NAGALAND	1,357,579	904,799	452,780	80.11	75.86	90.21
12	MANIPUR	1,891,196	1,268,881	622,315	79.85	77.15	85.98
13	MIZORAM	847,592	368,672	478,920	91.58	84.31	98.10
14	TRIPURA	2,831,742	2,016,022	815,720	87.75	85.58	93.61
15	MEGHALAYA	1,817,761	1,345,805	471,956	75.48	71.15	91.33
16	ASSAM	19,507,017	15,988,262	3,518,755	73.18	70.44	88.88
17	WEST BENGAL	62,614,556	39,898,187	22,716,369	77.08	72.97	85.54
18	JHARKHAND	18,753,660	12,973,765	5,779,895	67.63	62.40	83.30
19	ORISSA	27,112,376	21,669,993	5,442,383	73.45	70.78	86.45
20	CHHATTISGARH	15,598,314	11,173,237	4,425,077	71.04	66.76	84.79
21	MADHYA PRADESH	43,827,193	28,991,005	14,836,188	70.63	65.29	84.09
22	GUJARAT	41,948,677	21,896,928	20,051,749	79.31	73.00	87.58
23	MAHARASHTRA	82,512,225	41,703,097	40,809,128	82.91	77.09	89.84
24	ANDHRA PRADESH	51,438,510	30,850,648	20,587,862	67.66	61.14	80.54
25	KARNATAKA	41,029,323	22,860,653	18,168,670	75.60	68.86	86.21
26	KERALA	28,234,227	14,595,727	13,638,500	93.91	92.92	94.99
27	TAMIL NADU	52,413,116	24,752,447	27,660,669	80.33	73.80	87.24
28	A & N ISLANDS #	293,695	183,863	109,832	86.27	84.39	89.60

Source: Rural Urban Distribution of Population - India, Census of India 2011

#: Refers to Union Territory

There is also wide inter-district variation in literacy within the state as shown below.

Table/graph showing inter-district literacy status during 2011 :

District Code	State/ District	Literates (Persons) 2011			Literates (Rate) 2011		
		Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban
	West Bengal	62614556	39898187	22716369	77.08	72.97	85.54
01	Darjiling	1328218	752287	575931	79.92	74.97	87.48
02	Jalpaiguri	2527018	1752822	774196	73.79	70.55	82.33
03	Koch Bihar	1879984	1643723	236261	75.49	73.87	89.01
04	Uttar Dinajpur	1521933	1262730	259203	60.13	57.15	80.67
05	Dakshin Dinajpur	1102355	906370	195985	73.86	71.18	89.42
06	Maldah	2136898	1771627	365271	62.71	60.42	76.82
07	Murshidabad	4134584	3254627	879957	67.53	66.27	72.65
08	Birbhum	2175923	1846090	329833	70.90	69.25	81.74
09	Bardhaman	5350197	3048014	2302183	77.15	73.39	82.75
10	Nadia	3524073	2386942	1137131	75.58	71.50	85.88
11	North Twenty Four Parganas	7798722	2973608	4825114	84.95	78.11	89.80
12	Hugli	4140487	2421002	1719485	82.55	79.22	87.75
13	Bankura	2264013	2028958	235055	70.95	69.60	85.23
14	Puruliya	1656940	1404686	252254	65.38	63.75	76.24
15	Haora	3642617	1277113	2365504	83.85	80.82	85.58
16	Kolkata	3648210	NA	3648210	87.14	-	87.14
17	South Twenty Four Parganas	5639112	4065797	1573315	78.57	76.78	83.62
18	Paschim Medinipur	4173522	3606955	566567	79.04	77.92	87.01
19	Purba Medinipur	3969750	3494836	474914	87.66	87.47	89.14

Adult Literacy

In 1988, the National Literacy Mission was launched with the objective of imparting functional Literacy to Non-literates in the age group of 15-35 years and also to the out of school children in the age group of 9-14 years. By the end of the 10th five year plan(March 2007), NLM had covered 597 districts under Total Literacy Campaign(TLC), 485 districts under Post Literacy Programme(PLP) and 328 districts under Continuing Education Programme(CEP). As a result of these efforts, 127.45 million persons became literate, of which 60% learners were females, while 23% were SC and 12% ST. The total learners in West Bengal who became literate during the campaign from MEE deptt is 92.36 lakh. Despite sincere effort by NLM, illiteracy continues to be an area of national concern, because

census 2001 revealed that there were still 259.52 million illiterate adults in the country. The in-depth analysis revealed certain inadequacies in the design and mode of implementation of the programme; such as :-i) limitation of voluntary approach, ii) lack of convergence, iii) weak management and supervisory structure, iv)lack of community participation, v) poor monitoring and vi) inadequate funding etc. In the context, GOI aimed to recast NLM, as a programme instrument for literacy with an enhanced focus on female literacy. With this objective of reducing illiteracy, especially among women, the Union Government launched the “**Sakshar Bharat**”**Mission** in the year 2009. It aims to achieve 100% literacy in 365 low literacy districts where the adult female literacy rate is below 50% as per 2001 census. Nine districts of West Bengal viz. Coochbehar, Jalpaiguri, Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur, Malda, Murshidabad, Birbhum, Bankura and Purulia came under this scheme. Along with the initiative the Continuing Education Programme was closed on 30.09.2009. Apprehending that the neo-literates of those districts not covered under the said Mission will relapse back to near illiteracy the Department of Mass Education Extension & Library Services, responsible for adult education programme, has contemplated to launch a programme of literacy in those districts out of state budget.

4.2 Enrolment and Retention in School

Since independence, there has been a substantial increase in enrolment at all levels of education, five fold from 19.2 million to 110.9 million in 1998- 99 at the primary stage; 3.1 million to 40.4 million in the upper primary stage. The gross enrolment ratios of children in the age group 6-11 increased from 42.6 percent in 1950-51 to 92.14 percent in 1998-99. Likewise, the gross enrolment of 11-14 years age group increased from 12.7 percent in 1950-51 to 57.58 percent in 1998-99.

Enrolment Status of Primary Schools

Sl. No.	District	No of schools	5+ to 8+ Population (projected)	Total Enrolment (overall)	Net Enrolment	Out of School Children (5+ to 8+)	Gen (Overall)	NER (Overall)
1	Bankura	3531	289934	360982	288733	1201	124.5	99.59
2	Birbhum	2387	273649	346291	270369	3280	126.55	98.80
3	Burdwan	4028	628560	778088	624651	3909	123.79	99.38
4	Coochbehar	2029	225118	321735	222706	2412	142.92	98.93
5	D/Dinajpur	1207	136495	186631	135963	532	136.73	99.61

6	U/Dinajpur	1457	221806	327993	208329	13477	147.87	93.92
7	Darjeeling	789	97468	119679	94655	2813	122.79	97.11
8	Hooghly	3130	457820	571961	456221	1599	124.93	99.65
9	Howrah	2155	388236	485851	386568	1668	125.14	99.57
10	Jalpaiguri	2224	309135	466625	307579	1556	150.95	99.50
11	Kolkata	1598	416080	479076	413302	2778	115.14	99.33
12	Malda	1902	298866	432763	294893	3973	144.80	98.67
13	Murshidabad	3191	532639	738733	523691	8948	138.69	98.32
14	E/Midnapur	3257	403773	574417	403383	390	142.26	99.90
15	W/Midnapur	4690	471751	609046	467370	4381	129.10	99.07
16	Nadia	2702	418188	528351	417988	200	126.34	99.95
17	N/24 Pgs	3626	811196	942713	807699	3497	116.21	99.57
18	S/24 Pgs	3751	627590	830985	621016	6574	132.41	98.95
19	Purulia	2995	230291	307939	217983	12308	133.72	94.66
20	Siliguri	510	88516	127102	87463	1053	143.59	98.81
	State		7327110	9536960	7250561	76549	130.16	98.96

Source: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan as on 01.04.2011

Enrolment Status of Upper Primary Schools

Sl. No.	District	No of schools	Population in the age group 9+ to 13+	Total Enrolment (overall)	Net Enrolment	Out of School Children (9+ to 13+)	Gen (Overall)	NER (Overall)
1	Bankura	702	335172	361073	310897	4233	107.73	92.76
2	Birbhum	461	316347	346967	292065	11942	109.68	92.32
3	Burdwan	902	726635	771362	666020	11013	106.16	91.66
4	Coochbehar	351	260243	270517	214892	4664	103.95	82.57
5	D/Dinajpur	175	157792	170219	143528	1606	107.88	90.96
6	U/Dinajpur	269	256415	241349	196157	16140	94.12	76.50
7	Darjeeling	136	112676	110391	97843	5128	97.97	86.84
8	Hooghly	707	529254	586704	508881	1150	110.85	96.15
9	Howrah	597	448812	477802	414393	5307	106.46	92.33
10	Jalpaiguri	422	357369	375463	293257	6046	105.06	82.06
11	Kolkata	611	481001	495951	451831	2769	103.11	93.94
12	Malda	349	345499	354505	288792	5313	102.61	83.59
13	Murshidabad	654	615747	630207	511295	17297	102.35	83.04
14	E/Midnapur	700	466775	529998	441277	12289	103.31	87.89
15	W/Midnapur	944	545358	578313	487926	2669	113.54	94.54
16	Nadia	544	483439	533152	451281	1115	110.28	93.35

17	N/24 Pgs	996	937767	989132	871767	11757	105.48	92.96
18	S/24 Pgs	844	725513	745904	635610	11506	102.81	87.61
19	Purulia	480	266224	275035	233986	12289	103.31	87.89
20	Siliguri	134	85759	85250	66213	2430	99.41	77.21
	State		8453800	892297	7577914	141601	105.62	89.64

Source: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan as on 01.04.2011

Providing mere access to schools does not ensure enrolment of all the children of the school going age. There are several problems on the supply side as well as on the demand side. The 42nd round of National Sample Survey ascertained the reasons behind non-participation in the available schooling system. Out of all the non-enrolled children in school 10% mentioned the reason as want of facilities, 46% mentioned various economic reasons including household chores and another 29.5% mentioned that they were not interested in education. Out of those who discontinued 30.83% did so because of economic reasons, 16.3% did so because of their failure and they were rather pushed out of the system rather than they dropping out. Another 26% dropped out because of lack of interest implying that a large number of children do not find the schooling interesting either due to supply side or demand side constraint. In terms of access to schools there has been a marked improvement in the primary level after introduction of the Shishu Shiksha Karmasuchi. However, the problem continues for the secondary level education. The two major challenges remain as to how to make the education outcome meaningful to those who are not interested in schooling and how to reduce the economic pressure in not opting to join and continue in schools forgoing whatever little income they can earn for the family as child labour. In fact the return from schooling has to exceed the opportunity cost of schooling. One very important issue in this respect is that our elementary education system is the initial part of a continuous system and is not a terminal education for those who will not proceed beyond that stage so that such students can economically benefit out of the elementary education. Such education no doubt helps them to develop literary and numeric skills but its value in pursuing their economic life is limited unless the same is designed to enhance their skills and productivity in works which predominantly absorb them. Most of them actually find works in manual jobs which are performed with little skills. There are scholars who believe that such education may be even counterproductive in their alienation from manual labour, with which many of them will ultimately get associated, not by choice but by compulsion. Apart from the utility and quality aspect of education the economic pressure of

not being able to continue in schools is very real for many families living in poverty. Out of pocket expenditure for schooling, which is otherwise free is also pertinent in this respect and should be brought down by all means. Improving quality of teaching to help learning without any support from others outside schools either through private tuition or assistance of family members, which is not available for first generation learners is very crucial in this respect.

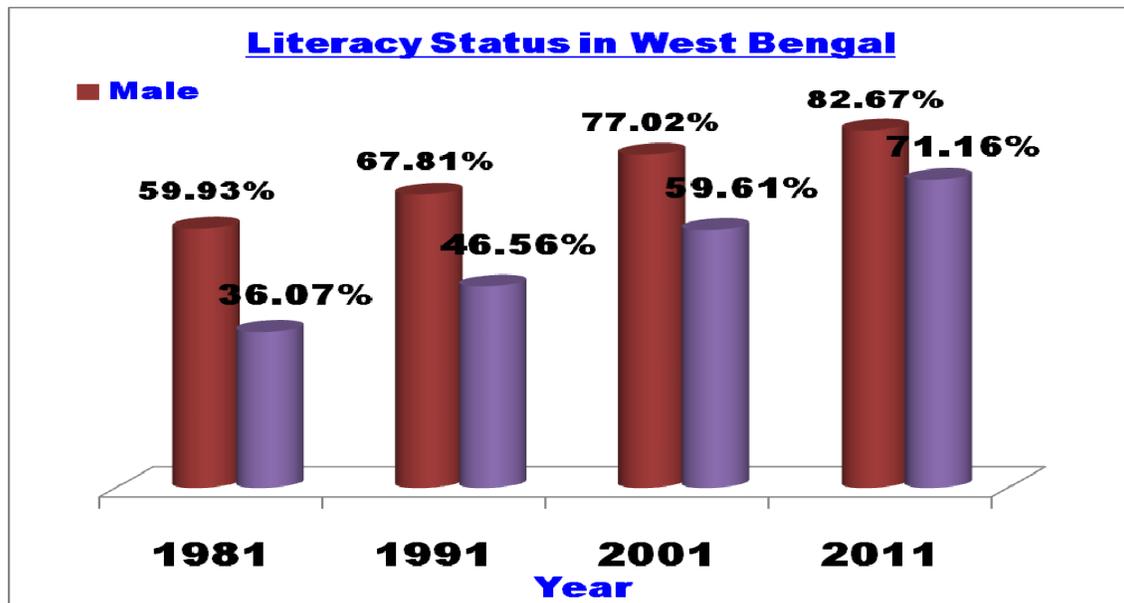
4.3 Child Labour and Universalisation of Elementary Education

One major category of children who are out of school is those who are child labour. The concept of labour in this context refers to labour associated with production and services which interfere with normative development of children including denial of opportunities for a desirable minimum education. India is one of the countries with high incidence of child labour which adversely affects universalisation of elementary education. They are either never enrolled or drop out students who work on family farms, look after cattle, and their younger siblings; they cook, clean, wash, work in tea stalls and restaurants, and as domestic servants, beggars, and rag-pickers and also live in urban areas as street children. In 1979, the International Year of the Child, GOI appointed a commission to inquire into the state of India's children and to make recommendations for their improved well-being. The commission was unequivocal in its support for both universal primary education and for bringing an end to child labour. In spite of that official figures on child labour remains indicative of failure to deal with the problem. One of the reasons behind such failure is the strongly hierarchical society, which makes many to believe on continuation of such system resulting in lack of sincerity to remove one of the fundamental reason for continuing disparity in the society. It is argued in the Indian society that we ought not to intervene in all kinds of child labour since poor parents need the income of their children and the abolition of child labour and compulsory education must await a significant improvement in the well-being of the poor. As employment and income increase, so the argument goes, it will no longer be necessary for the poor to send their children to work and all such children will join the education system. Such argument is not supported by historical experiences and poverty is not the only reason for existence of child labour. There are many more social and economic factors which forces the children to work as child labour. Incidence of child labour is confined to mostly families who are not only poor but are from lower social categories. Also, incidence of child labour in rural areas is much more than in urban areas and is more driven by demand for such labours. Reduction of both economic and social inequality in the society and assigning higher priorities for education through campaign along with special

measures for the children of the weaker sections may motivate more poor parents to send their children for education. Higher literacy rates results in lower incidence of child labour and vice versa and the case of Kerala is the best example which had the lowest incidence of child labour (0.7% compared to 4.6% in West Bengal in 1981). It is estimated that there were around 14.5 million working children below 14 years in India, as on March 1991, which account for 5.5% of the total child population. However, there is debate on the estimate and the actual incidence could be little higher. West Bengal has marginally lower incidence of child labour.

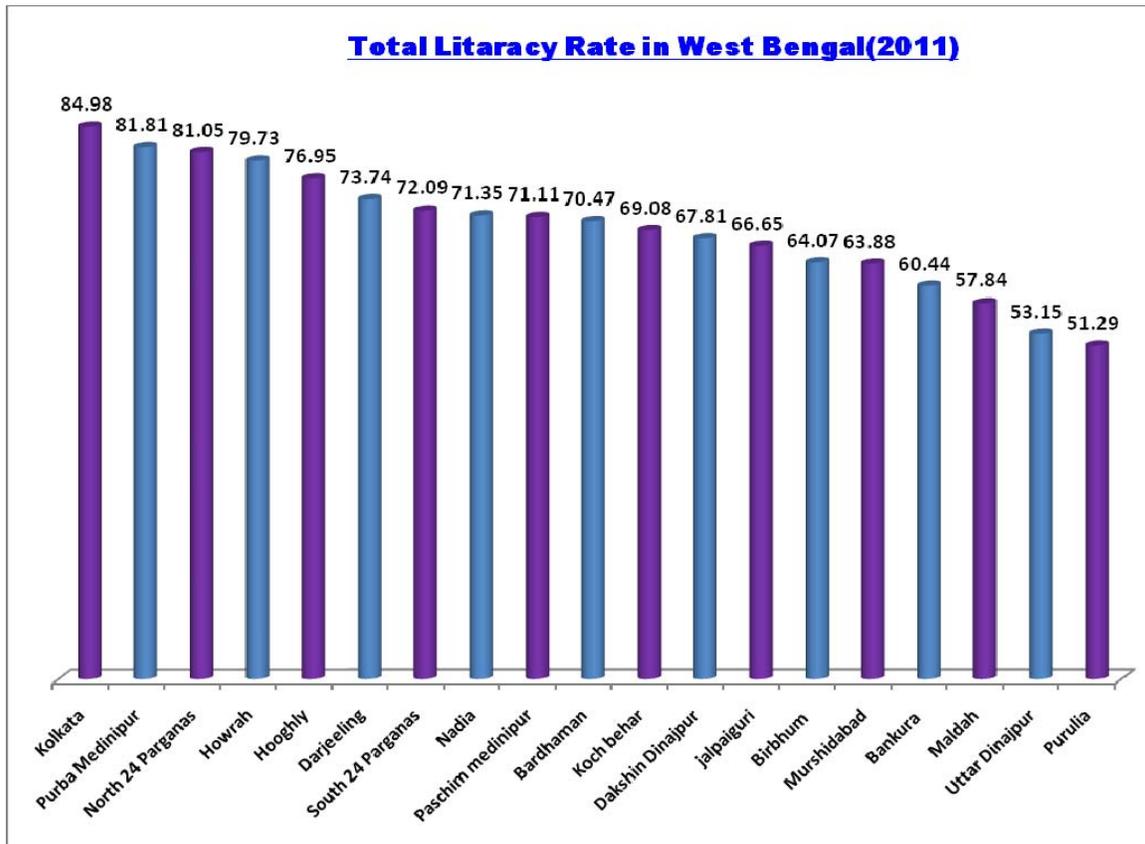
4.4 Literacy among Different Social Groups and the Gender Gap

Literacy rate as well as probability of attaining higher level of education has strong correlation with the social background. While the literacy rate in West Bengal during 2001 census was 68.64% the same for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes were 59.04% and 43.40% respectively. The literacy rate for Muslims was 57.5% during the 2001 census. Poverty, occupation and geographical location are important determinants of literacy. The highest incidence of illiteracy is among the agricultural labours in rural areas and casual labours in urban areas. The urban areas have generally has higher literacy than in rural areas. Within rural areas certain geographical locations which are remote and have higher incidence of poverty generally have lower literacy. There is also persistence gender gap in literacy. The literacy rates of male and female in West Bengal during the last three census held in 1991, 2001 and 2011 are shown graphically below.



(1981 male 59.93%, female 36.07%; 1991 male 67.81%, female 46.56%; 2001 male 77.02%, female 59.61%; 2011 male %, female %)

The gender gap in literacy also varies across social classes. As per 2001 census literacy rate of SC male and female were 70.54% were 46.90% respectively. Corresponding figures for the ST were 57.38% and 43.40 % respectively. Thus the gender gap in literacy for the SC and the ST were 23.64 percent points and 13.98 percent points respectively. Gender gap in literacy among Muslims was 14.8 percent point, which is contrary to the popular belief of educational backwardness of Muslim women, though in absolute terms they are behind the state average. Compared to that the gender gap in literacy for all social groups in West Bengal taken together was 17.41 percent points during 1991, which has improved to 11.51 percent points during 2011. The SC community faces the maximum gender gap in literacy. In absolute terms it is tribal people who have the lowest literacy rate though with lesser gender disparity. Female literacy rate is strongly correlated to many of the important social indicators. District-wise female literacy status in West Bengal during 2011 census is given below.



Rural female literacy of West Bengal during 2011 census was 66.08% implying that little more than one third of the rural women in West Bengal were illiterate. There were two districts namely Purulia and Uttar Dinajpore with rural female literacy lower than 50%. Only East Midnapore had rural female literacy higher than 80% and three districts, namely Howrah, N. 24 Parganas and Hooghli had that rate above 70% but below 80%. Utmost effort should be made in improving female literacy for the school going children as well as for the adult illiterates. As a social group the tribal women face the maximum deprivation related to illiteracy. Access to elementary education of all the socially disadvantaged groups, particularly the tribal women is one important area for closer monitoring and appropriate interventions.

4.5 Educationally Backward Blocks

There are geographical areas which are far behind in education. The educationally backward blocks are identified on the following criteria:

- Concentration of tribal population with low female literacy (below national average) and/ or a large no. of girls out of school.
- Concentration of SC, OBC and minority population with low female literacy (below national average) and/ or a large no. of girls out of school.
- Areas with low female literacy (below national average).
- Areas with a large no. of small, scattered habitations that do not qualify for a school.

In West Bengal 85 such Blocks have been identified, which as per Census 2001 had Rural Female Literacy rate below 46.13% and the Gender gap was above 21.59%. All the twenty Blocks of Purulia; all the eight Blocks of Uttar Dinajpore; thirteen out of fifteen (except Chanchal I and Kaliachak I) Blocks of Malda; eleven out of twenty two Blocks of Bankura district namely, Saltora, Mejhia, Gangajalghati, Chhatna, Indpur, Sonamukhi, Patrasayer, Vishnupur, Onda, Hirabandh and Ranibandh; nine Blocks of Murshidabad district namely, Farakka, Samserganj, Suti –I, Suti – II, Raghunathganj – I, Raghunathganj – II, Bhagawangola – II, Khargram, Kandi and Bharatpur; six Blocks of Jalpaiguri namely, Mal, Matiali, Nagrakata, Madarihat, Kalchini and Dhupguri; five Blocks of Birbhum namely, Rajnagar, Dubrajpur, Murarai – I, Murarai – II and Mohammad bazaar; four Blocks of South 24 Parganas namely Canning – II, Jaynagar – II, Kultali and Basanti; two Blocks each of Coochbehar (Sitai & Shitalkuchi); Dakshin Dinajpore (Kushmundi & Harirampur); Darjeeling (Phansidewa & Kharibari); West Midnapore (Gopiballavpur – I & Nayagram) and

Nakashipara Block of Nadia are the Educationally Backward Blocks of the State and there should be special drive in promoting education in those Blocks.

4.6 The Supply Side Constraints in UEE

There are several supply side constraints which need to be improved for attaining UEE. The problem is more for those located in remote areas and belonging to the backward communities. Access to school, particularly at the upper primary level, availability of teachers and physical infrastructure are still serious problems in the educationally backward areas. The post of teachers remain vacant in higher proportion in those areas and many of those who are posted in those schools from outside are either commuting from long distance or have higher incidence of absenteeism (which is a general problem for many schools). The social background of the teachers is another factor in promoting learning. Those from higher social and economic background are likely to be facing social distance from the students belonging to poor and backward families. In respect of girls education non-availability of female teachers is another problem, particularly in the higher classes. Absence of privacy through proper toilet is another hindrance for girl students in attending schools. There are instances even now, after lot of campaign in this regard, of toilets being kept closed due to lack of sensitivity to this issue. The tribal and others who have to face with two languages one spoken at home and the other the medium of instruction face serious problem which leads to lower educational attainment. The other major constraint is related to quality of teaching and absence of joyful ambience in schools for attracting the students. The problem is much more in non formal education, which is less monitored and has poor accountability mechanism on the ground.

4.7 Raising Demand for Literacy and the Literacy Campaign

The National Literacy Mission (NLM) was established for promotion of adult education in a mission mode. The focus was for those in the age group 15-35 years. The NLM supported district-wise literacy campaign which was launched first in the undivided Midnapore district in the year 1990. There was massive mobilization of the people for building up environment. 2.27 lakh volunteers were given four days non-residential training who started teaching in the literacy centres from around September 1990. The target was to cover 13.69 lakh adult illiterates and 2.77 lakh NFE age group learners. However, 14.19 lakh learners joined the programme out of whom around 91% were never enrolled in school and 11.06 lakh of them were eligible for evaluation. Around two third of the learners were female. As per the evaluation it was estimated that around 8.58 lakh learners achieved

minimum level of education. Gradually all other districts joined the programme in phases. The total learners in West Bengal who became literate during the campaign from MEE deptt is 92.36 lakh. The campaign helped to improve literacy level of the adults in all districts with varying levels of achievement. The most important contribution of the literacy movement has been the improvement of parental priority in educating their children. The same has led to increase in demand of for education across the entire state and among all social groups, who were reluctant to participate in schooling earlier. However, post literacy campaign and arrangement for continuing education did not succeed well and many of neo-literates probably have relapsed to their earlier state. The most Functioning of the continuing education system for the adults has to improve and should be monitored well so that there is scope to all neo-literates or those with limited literacy to upgrade their level of education. The need has become more in the context of the SHG movement where large number of women, many of whom are having limited literacy have urged to gain more functionality. There is little organized support for providing them opportunity to learn for which volunteers will be available from their own group or the nearby group. There is also need for developing suitable reading material for them and to link their education with the open school system. Such effort will also help to reduce the gender gap in literacy since most of the SHG members are women. Many such groups have in their own way helped their members to acquire minimum literally skill.

4.8 Mid-Day Meal Programme

National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education is a centrally sponsored scheme launched on 15th August, 1995 to boost universalisation of primary education by increasing retention of enrolment, improve attendance and simultaneously it has an impact on nutrition of student in Primary School. The programme originally covered children in primary stage (Class-I to V) in Government, Local Body and Government-aided schools. It was extended in October, 2002 to cover children studying under Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative Innovative Education (AIE) Centre also. Central Assistance under the scheme consisted of free supply of food grains @ 100 grams per child per school day, and subsidy for transportation of food grains up to a maximum of Rs 50 per quintal. In September 2004 the scheme was revised to provide cooked mid day meal with 300 calories and 8-12 grams of protein to all children studying in classes I – V in Government and aided schools and EGS/ AIE centres. In addition to free supply of food grains, the revised scheme provided Central Assistance for (a) Cooking cost @ Re 1 per child per school day, (b) Transport subsidy was raised from the earlier maximum of Rs 50 per

quintal to Rs. 100 per quintal for special category states, and Rs 75 per quintal for other states, (c) Management, monitoring and evaluation costs @ 2% of the cost of foodgrains, transport subsidy and cooking assistance, (d) Provision of mid day meal during summer vacation in drought affected areas. In October 2007, the scheme has been further revised to cover children in upper primary (classes VI to VIII) initially in 3479 Educationally Backwards Blocks (EBBs). From 2008-09 i.e w.e.f 1st April, 2008, the programme covers all children studying in Government, Local Body and Government-aided primary and upper primary schools and the EGS/AIE centres including Madarsa and Maqtabs supported under SSA of all areas across the country. Construction of kitchen and maintaining hygiene in all such institutions is another major issue along with proper arrangement for serving food. The calorific value of a mid-day meal at upper primary stage has been fixed at a minimum of 700 calories and 20 grams of protein by providing 150 grams of food grains (rice/wheat) per child/school day. During the year 2009 the following changes have been made to improve the implementation of the scheme:-

- a) Food norms have been revised to ensure balanced and nutritious diet to children of upper primary group by increasing the quantity of pulses from 25 to 30 grams, vegetables from 65 to 75 grams and by decreasing the quantity of oil and fat from 10 grams to 7.5 grams.
- b) Cooking cost (excluding the labour and administrative charges) has been revised from Rs.1.68 to to Rs. 2.50 for primary and from Rs. 2.20 to Rs. 3.75 for upper primary children from 1.12.2009 to facilitate serving meal to eligible children in prescribed quantity and of good quality .The cooking cost for primary is Rs. 2.69 per child per day and Rs. 4.03 for upper primary children from 1.4.2010.The cooking cost will be revised by 7.5% from 1.4.2011.
- c) The honorarium for cooks and helpers was paid from the labour and other administrative charges of Rs.0.40 per child per day provided under the cooking cost. In many cases the honorarium was so little that it became very difficult to engage manpower for cooking the meal. A Separate component for Payment of honorarium @ Rs.1000 per month per cook- cum-helper was introduced from 1.12.2009. Honorarium at the above prescribed rate is being paid to cook-cum-helper. Following norms for engagement of cook-cum-helper have been made:
 - i. One cook- cum-helper for schools up to 25 students
 - ii. Two cooks-cum-helpers for schools with 26 to 100 students
 - iii. One additional cook-cum-helper for every addition of upto 100 students.

5. Administration of Elementary Education in West Bengal and Related Issues

The School Education Department is mainly responsible for framing policy; administer the mainstream education system and coordinating with other departments and agencies responsible for delivering education related services. The education system in the state is guided by the XX Act and there are several statutory institutions, as mentioned below, dealing with specific subjects related to education.

The principal acts governing school education in the State are:

- W. B. Primary Education Act, 1973
- W. B. Board of Secondary Education Act, 1963
- W. B. Council of Higher Secondary Education Act, 1975
- W. B. Board of Madrasah Education Act, 1994
- The GOI passed “The Right of Children to free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009” on 26/8/2009 which came into effect on 1/4/2010. The act aims towards achieving universal elementary education for the children of 6 – 14 years age group upto class VIII.

Our State is yet to frame necessary rules.

- a) West Bengal Board of Primary Education dealing with all matters relating to primary education.
- b) At the district level, it networks with elected District Primary School Councils.
- c) West Bengal Board of Secondary Education, dealing with Secondary education.
- d) West Bengal Council for Higher Secondary Education, dealing with matters relating to Higher Secondary education.
- e) School Service Commission dealing with selection and appointment of School Teachers.
- f) West Bengal Council of Rabindra open Schooling dealing with open school at Upper Primary and Secondary level.

Apart from formal school the centres opened under the Shishu Shiksha Karmasuchi (described later) and Madrasa provide for elementary education in the state. Total number of institutions available in the public sector (which provide close to 100% of available facilities in rural areas) is mentioned below.

5.1 Facilities Available for Elementary Education from other Department

Apart from schools run by the School Education Department there are other institutions providing formal education at primary and upper primary levels. Those are the Sishu Siksha Kendra (SSK) and Madhyamik Shiksha Kendra (MSK) run by the Panchayat & RD Department; Madrasas run by THE MINORITY AFFAIRS AND MADRASA EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS FOR CHILD LABOUR BY THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT. At the end of 2007-08 the State had 49,986 Primary schools, 1283 Junior High schools and 3,954 High schools. There were also 16,054 SSKs, 1067 SSPs, 352 NGO run EGS centres, 2,146 Bridge Course centres, 1752 MSKs and 1,489 Open Schools (Rabindra Mukto Vidyalay).

5.1.4 Quality Issues in Formal Schooling

Govt of WB has taken several steps for reducing illiteracy and increasing student enrolment, like-

- Establishing new primary schools
- Appointing more no. of teachers
- Substantial increase in teachers' salaries
- Making school education free
- Supplying dry food and free text books, free uniform etc.

Besides GOI has launched programme of Midday Meal for better nourishment of the student and increasing enrolment. In spite of all, the quality of education remains a great concern in WB.

Different field level studies pointed out many reasons behind it. Some of them are –

- **Poor attendance-** the poor quality of teaching (including teacher absenteeism) combined with other socio-economic problems (such as the involvement of children in sibling care, economic activities and so on) has contributed to a high level of absenteeism among the children.
- **Private tuition and class discrimination-** though private tuition by the school teachers is banned, sometimes other persons fulfil this task and sometimes the teachers do the same secretly. Relatively well-off families can afford private tuition. As their children are provided in this way, parental pressure on the teachers in Govt. primary schools to provide quality education is reduced. Economically disadvantaged children suffer a threefold discrimination. They are often neglected in their schools and their largely uneducated parents cannot help them with lessons at home. Also poverty puts private

tution beyond their reach. Though field level studies show that 67% of the students, provided with private tution could read, write and do simple sums, out of the same no. children, not aided by private tution the figure is only 29%.

- **Discrinating attitude of the teachers-** the poor attendance rate at primary school is not due to purely economic factor or other external factors. Many children did not attend school largely because of teachers' absenteeism, teachers' attitudes and the school environment. Many primary teachers suffer with the preconceived notion that children from poor economic and social background cnnot do well in education since their home environment is not conducive to studying. Despite poorer pay and the much worse working condition teachers of SSKs (Sahayikas) perform better with their symphetic attitude. So the attendance is much better in SSKs, even the girls enrolment is higher.
- **Poor infrastructure-** though grants for additional class room, drinking water and toilet maintenance grants and TLM grants are regularly are regularly released from SSA fund, still norm approved by RTE Act(one class one room) is yet to be achieved.
- **Poor use of TLM-** reluctance in using TLM makes the method of teaching uninteresting and dull.
- **Poor Supervision-** School inspection is not done regularly. SI of school often expresses their grievances that they are over-burdened as well as apprehensive of the teachers' union for making any adverse report.

Parent teacher meeting and mothers meeting are not held regurlrly. Wide publicity is also not done before holding the meeting. Wheras for SSK/MSK, the involvement of parent is higher. Village Education Committees(VEC) also are not always functioning properly and do not hold meetings regularly. In the meeting the participation of parents is also not satisfactory. So, besides infrastructure development, quality issues are generally not cosidered there. Primary education in WB suffers from many reasons e.g. problem of infrastructure, shortage of schools, shortage of teachers, the financial handicap of the prents, illiteracy among the parents etc.

After launching of SSA, the above constraints have been addressed considerably. Financial support has been provided from SSA for-

- Construction of building for primary and upper primary schools.
- Construction of additional classrooms, drinking water and toilet facilities, boundary wall,kichen shed etc.

- Construction of KGBV and residential hostel.
- Repairing works for school buildings.
- Besides, teachers training is the most important interventon of SSA. Provision of following trainings have been undertaken in SSA
- 10-day in-service training for all teachers each year.
- 30-day induction training of newly recruited teachers.
- 60-days' on-job training for the untrained teachers to aquire professional qualifications.

After implementation of RTE,Act, 2009,all the above matters have been given more weightage. Regarding civil works, in addition to SSA norms works are being taken up as per provision of S.19 of the which includes all-weather building consisting of at least one classroom for every teacher and an office-cum-store-cum-Head teacher's room.

New teachers recruitment becomes necessary for fulfillment of PTR ratio as per provision of RTE Act.

As per section 6(C) of the RTE Act, the Central Govt is required to enforce standard for teachers' training and as per section 8(i) and section 9(j) , appropriate govt./local authority is required to provide trg. Facility for teachers. This act also prescibes professional training for untrined teachers.

5.2 Enrolment, Retention and Drop Out Rate in Primary Schools in West Bengal

District	Enrolment	Total No. of Regular Teacher	Total No. of Para Teacher	PTR without Para Teacher	PTR with Para Teacher	Overall drop out rate	Overall retention rate
Bankura	307429	11265	485	27.29	26.16	4.22	95.78
Barddhaman	568788	18215	813	31.23	29.89	3.11	96.89
Birbhum	314306	9989	218	31.47	30.79	5.63	94.37
Dakshin Dinajpur	156850	5521	0	28.41	28.41	7.89	92.11
Dghc	67966	3810	1	17.84	17.83	122.02	-22.02
Howrah	310240	7956	1064	38.99	34.39	3.32	96.68
Hoogli	350219	11362	1092	30.82	28.12	0.09	100.09
Jalpaiguri	382654	11220	1136	34.10	30.97	2.44	97.56
Cooch Bihar	303183	8527	39	35.56	35.39	2.77	102.77
Maldah	417142	8473	2227	49.23	38.99	7.54	92.46
Murshidabad	758707	17528	3096	43.29	36.79	6.41	93.59
Nadia	388587	10146	1646	38.30	32.95	3.05	96.95

North 24 Parganas	565509	15434	1849	36.64	32.72	1.37	98.63
Paschim Medinipur	529045	21871	1407	24.19	22.73	7.86	92.14
Purba Medinipur	405117	13255	830	30.56	28.76	4.97	95.03
Puruliya	304819	8447	524	36.09	33.98	1.10	98.90
Siliguri	97303	3032	453	32.09	27.92	1.27	98.73
South 24 Parganas	690150	16178	1534	42.66	38.97	3.46	96.54
Uttar Dinajpur	377977	8155	1475	46.35	39.25	12.94	87.06
State	7475926	216741	20644	34.49	31.49	4.45	95.55

5.2.1 Bharti Sunischitkaran Karmasuchi 2007

During the year 2007, a special Enrolment Drive Programme - Bharti Sunischitkaran Karmasuchi- 2007 was undertaken throughout the state to cover the huge number of Out Of School Children (OOSC). The key to the enrolment drive was the name-wise tracking of OOSC and assigning duty for each 15 to 25 number of OOSC to a VEC/MTA member or other officials of GP, teachers or Para teachers for specific tracking by name. The lists of such names of Out of School Children as collected from Child Census were made available at VEC/WEC level. Each VEC/WEC thus had a list of OOSC in OOSC Roll format which was regularly updated with new additions of OOSC and also deletions of names of OOSC admitted to school. During enrolment drive, special attention was given to enrolment of girl child, minorities and SC & ST. The enrolment status of primitive tribal groups was also specially monitored and studied. In case of Gram Sansads with unusually high number of OOSC, special strategy was planned. Special monitoring was planned for circles having out of school children number greater than 1000. This drive programme continued up to September 2007 and the number of children estimated to have remained out of school were 1,24,364 for primary and 3,31,851 for upper primary level

5.3 Shishu Shiksha Karmasuchi

Demand for education in the state increased substantially after Total Literacy Campaign was successfully launched in the State in the early nineties. However, there was inadequacy in terms of number of schools and access to available schools, particularly in remote areas and those habitations where educationally backward classes lived. It was not possible to open primary schools in all such habitations wherever there were some children not having access to primary school. Government of West Bengal, therefore, decided to introduce an alternative elementary education system, which could reach any corner of the

state, cater to the special needs of the children, less costly, but qualitatively comparable with the formal education system. In 1997-98 the Education department, Government of West Bengal, took up such a programme and planned to set up about 1000 Child Education Centres, with the help of Panchayati Raj bodies. Subsequently the programme was transferred to the Department of Panchayats and Rural Development (PRDD) of the State.

The PRDD took up the programme as Shisu Shiksha Karmasuchi, and decided to set up the Shisu Shiksha Kendras (SSK), wherever there were at least twenty children not having access to any existing primary school or require some special dispensation, which are not available in the formal primary schools. Other essential features of the Karmasuchi are:

- i. Shisu Shiksha Kendras are opened at the initiative of the community and are owned and managed by them.
- ii. Funds are provided by the State Government and Panchayats act as facilitators only.
- iii. It is a demand driven programme; Kendras can be opened in school-less villages / village with schools which have inadequate infrastructures [in terms of space and / or teachers etc.]
- iv. Curriculum and syllabus are as prescribed by the West Bengal Board of Primary Education
and same textbooks as prescribed for the formal primary schools are used.
- v. Classroom transactions are on the principles of Joyful Learning'
- vi. Teachers, called Sahayikas are mostly women from the locality

5.3.1 Organisational Structure & Administration of the Karmasuchi

The PRDD assigned the responsibility of implementing the programme to a Mission created in December 1999 in the name and style of Paschimbanga Rajya Shisu Shiksha Mission (PBRSSM). The task of the Mission are supervision and monitoring of the programme, customization of training of the Sahayikas, Supervisors, members of the Managing Committees of the Shisu Shiksha Kendras (SSK), development of Management Information System, experimentation in the field of community mobilization, experimentation with and development of TLM, generation of demand for education where demand is still low etc. The Mission is to function under the control of the Panchayats and Rural Development Department. In its turn, the PBRSSM is supposed to operate with the help of the Zilla Parishads. At the Zilla Parishad level a cell under the Shiksha-Sanskriti-Tathya-O-Krira Sthayee Samiti of the Zilla Parishad renders necessary help in implementing the programme. At Panchayat Samiti level also there is one cell to assist the Sthayee Samiti of the Panchayat Samiti. Once any community fulfills the conditions and decides to set up a

Shishu Shiksha Kendra, it will form a Managing Committee (MC) and apply for approval of the Zilla Parishad (through the Panchayat Samiti) and also for release of fund. The managing committee of the Kendra will appoint the Sahayikas in accordance with the guidelines. Sahayikas are the pivot of the programme and they were mostly housewives with necessary qualifications who were provided intensive residential training, mostly on teaching methodology and class room transactions in phases to teach following principles of joyful learning. For supervision of the academic aspects of the programme Academic Supervisors(AS) at the scale of one Supervisor for every twenty Kendras are engaged by the Zilla Parishads. Initially mostly retired teachers were engaged as Academic Supervisors and were gradually replaced by Sahayikas with experience and having graduate degree. They visit every centre regularly and review with the Sahayikas about progress of teaching and overall performance of the Kendra. The reports submitted by the Academic Supervisors are considered by the concerned Sthayee Samiti of the Panchayat Samiti.

5.3.2 Functioning of the SSKs

Though the programme was launched in 1997-98 but it took off really in the next year at the end of which there were only 1,789 SSKs. The number increased rapidly over the years and as per report compiled through DISE - 2008-09, there are 16,109 SSKs. It would have been impossible to establish such a large number of conventional schools within around ten years and large number of students who would have remained out of schools could be imparted primary education in those SSKs. Total number of students during the year 2008-09 in the SSKs was 14,93104. Number of students in class IV during the year 2008-09 was 2,69,611 The percentages of learners belonging to SC, ST, OBC and Muslim/Minority during that year were 29.56%, 11.75% and 37.79% respectively. The percentage of OBC learners was 3.03%. Thus the SSKs largely met the demand of the children from the backward sections of the community. Also, 50.29% of the learners of SSKs during the year were girls. The numbers of Sahayikas during the year 2008-09 was 46,370. The people – teacher ratio thus works out to be 32.2 during the year, which was much better than that of the conventional schools and was useful in providing providing proper attention to the students. The district-wise number of SSKs, number of Sahayikas and learners at the end of the year 2008-09 are given below.

Table on district-wise SSK, learners etc:

District wise No. of SSK/SAHAYIKA & Std. Wise Learners as per DISE 2010-11							
District Name	No. of SSKs	No. of Sahayika/Sahayak	Learners class -I	Learners Class-II	Learners Class -III	Learners Class -IV	Total Learners
Bankura	449	893	8052	5090	4612	4426	22180
Bardhaman	1063	3043	31560	19671	17964	17666	86861
Birbhum	650	1547	15976	11331	10405	10177	47889
Dakshin Dinajpur	531	1460	14990	8317	7302	7507	38116
Dghc	541	1137	7013	4418	4027	3496	18954
Haora	306	857	10390	6128	5581	5406	27505
Hugli	277	802	7382	4373	4114	4416	20285
Jalpaiguri	1086	3231	36627	22358	20132	19107	98224
Koch Bihar	698	1849	22042	14305	12854	12358	61559
Maldah	618	2218	28812	20445	18963	17617	85837
Murshidabad	1581	5709	69803	48469	42890	40617	201779
Nadia	555	1477	16652	10614	9987	9742	46995
North 24 Parganas	955	3074	34697	23225	21426	21141	100489
Paschim Medinipur	2458	6442	59814	34645	32460	33103	160022
Purba Medinipur	1445	4017	43466	22672	21423	21190	108751
Puruliya	416	793	10080	4651	3790	3164	21685
Siliguri	283	823	9771	6062	5403	5141	26377
24 Pgs.(S)	1213	4020	57155	28994	25472	23722	135343
Uttar Dinajpur	975	3261	46040	26615	22404	20770	115829
Total	16100	46653	530322	322383	291209	280766	1424680

5.3.2 Madhyamik Shiksha Kendras

West Bengal has substantial gap in access to upper primary education. Many students passing out of primary level were unable to get admission in class V and many of the upper primary classes were over crowded hampering quality of education. In that background it was decided in the year 2003-04 to set up Madhyamik Shiksha Kendras (MSKs) to provide access to upper primary level (class V to class VIII) education in areas not having high

schools in the vicinity and 863 MSKs were established in that year itself. Those were also being managed by the committee predominantly of the guardians under overall supervision of the Panchayats. The number of MSKs gradually shot up to 1900 in the year 2008. The State Government has since decided to open formal upper primary schools in areas having inadequate access to upper primary education and new MSKs were no longer being established. The number of students of MSK, which was just 65,709 during the year 2003-04 increased to 3,83,312 during the year 2008-09 and there were 72,248 learners in class VIII in that year. Many of them would not have continued to study up to that level without the MSKs. Thus those institutions are meeting the demand of upper primary level education in respective areas of the state substantially. Those were mostly established in areas inhabited by people from educationally backward communities as will be evidenced from the fact that the percentages of students of MSKs belonging to SC, ST and Muslim and were 29.97%, 10.32% and 36.86% respectively. The percentage of learners from general social category during the year was 15.76% only and 54.24% of the learners of MSKs during the year were girls. There were 9957 number of teachers, called Samprasaraks in the MSKs. For supervising functioning of the MSKs there are District Quality Managers at the Zilla Parishad and their work is supervised by one/two Assistant Education Coordinators, for which new post were created in the Zilla Parishad. The overall administration of the SSK and MSK is looked after by one Deputy Magistrate, who is called the District Nodal Officer, under supervision of the Secretary of the Zilla Parishad.

District Name	No. of MSKs	Total Learners	No. of Teachers
Bankura	73	13106	395
Bardhaman	99	20591	534
Birbhum	101	19854	513
Dakshin Dinajpur	40	8081	212
Dghc	68	7297	351
Howrah	27	5853	134
Hoogli	27	5295	141
Jalpaiguri	113	28070	551
Cooch Bihar	118	22376	615
Maldah	108	24723	517
Murshidabad	202	46559	1063
Nadia	106	28283	568

North 24 Parganas	118	27871	612
Paschim Medinipur	231	40912	1254
Purba Medinipur	153	24008	805
Puruliya	139	19842	695
Siliguri	10	4058	50
South 24 Parganas	80	17751	392
Uttar Dinajpur	107	33102	555
Total	1920	397632	9957

5.3.3 Infrastructure of SSKs and MSKs

The SSKs and MSKs were established with initiatives of the community, who were generally from poorer background and large number of such centres were opened within a short period as mentioned before. In most of the cases those had to start in temporary accommodation with inadequate space and other necessary infrastructure. The community and the Panchayats had to work together to develop required infrastructure and to identify suitable land for development of the same. This has been a serious challenge and though the infrastructure has improved over the years the same is still inadequate in many cases. As per the report of DISE 2008, only 9,620 SSKs had their own building and there were 2,819 SSKs without any building. In 653 SSKs construction of building was in progress and 3,017 SSKs were running in multiple-use buildings. Those apart 4,391 SSKs did not have any drinking water source of their own and 9,081 SSKs had no toilets. The number of SSKs having separate toilet for girls was only 1,749. So far as MSKs are concerned, DISE 2008 data shows that out of 1,900 MSKs, 1,425 MSKs had their own buildings and construction of buildings was in progress in respect of 111 MSKs. Another 327 MSKs were running in multiple-use building and 37 MSKs had no building. There were no drinking water sources in 370 MSKs and 655 MSKs were without toilets. Only 866 MSKs had separate toilets for girls, which is essential to prevent girls from dropping out of school. Thus, there is need for more investment in developing proper infrastructure of the SSKs and the MSKs.

5.3.4 Quality Interventions and Other Special Initiatives

Ensuring good quality of education in both SSKs and MSKs was one of the priorities from the very beginning. Training of Sahayikas, Samprasaraks, Academic Supervisors etc was a continuous drive towards that end including one diploma course for the Sahayikas in collaboration with with Netaji Subhas Open University. There is weekly radio programme, known as “Sahayika’s Asor” to help the Sahayikas to improve their knowledge, skill and

motivation. A programme called “Shiksha Deep Prakalpa” was launched. The same is aimed at improvement in teaching learning of Bengali, English, Mathematics, Environmental Science and also special programmes like reading guarantee and writing guarantee and remedial teaching of students are covered under the Prakalpa. During 2008-09 the reading guarantee programme was up-scaled in all the 16,109 SSKs of the state. With a view to assessing the quality of functioning of SSKs a composite **School Efficiency Index (SEI)**, to measure various aspects of functioning of the SSKs has been worked out. The SEI provides the strength and weakness of functioning of the SSKs. The SEI is worked out by the Sahayikas themselves under supervision of the Academic Supervisors and the compiled figures are shared with all concerned for taking measures in improvement of the functioning of the SSKs. The Panchayat Samiti and the Gram Panchayats who are more directly associated with functioning of the SSKs should analyse the SEI of SSKs within their jurisdiction and take appropriate remedial steps for improvement. In respect of MSKs special interventions for improvement of teaching & learning on Science and Language are made. Making available teaching and learning materials for the SSKs and MSKs are other initiatives in improving quality of learning.

5.3.5 Functioning of the SSK and MSKs and the Panchayats

All the three tiers of Panchayats are responsible for carrying out various responsibilities for proper functioning of the MSKs. One important role of the Panchayats is to develop proper physical infrastructure of those institutions for imparting education as well as to provide all other non-academic inputs. Developing proper campus, plantation of trees, arranging electricity, water supply and toilets are very crucial in this respect. The Panchayats at all levels should also allocate fund to the SSKs & MSKs for meeting their various needs for promoting quality of education. Many Panchayats also arrange scholarship to retain meritorious but poor students from not dropping out. Also, increased supervision on functioning of the centres and extending required support to the SSKs and MSKs help those centres to impart better quality education to the local children.

7. Midday Meal Programme

In West Bengal, the students were initially given dry rice at the rate of 3Kg. per month for 10 months in a year. From January, 2003 the Cooked Mid-Day-Meal Programme was started in West Bengal in 1100 schools of six districts. Thereafter coverage of schools increased gradually and till 2010-11, the Programme has covered 85,72,007 students from class I to ClassV of 74,152 Primary Schools and SSKs and 3,31,7853 students of ClassVI to class VIII of 8,857 Upper Primary schools and MSKs of the state. The local SHGs are

generally given the responsibility of cooking and serving food as well as cleaning of utensils etc. Cooking ingredients are purchased by the members of the SHGs from the local market and by the Mother Teacher Association in DGHC area. The teacher of the school, Panchayat member and mother of the children supervise the meals.

5.4 Promoting Education for the Backward Communities

KASTURBA GANDHI VALIKA VIDYALAYA (KGBV),- The Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas scheme was launched by the Govt. of India in August, 2004 for setting up residential school at upper primary level for girls belonging predominantly to the SC, ST, OBC and Minorities in difficult areas.

The scheme of KGVV ran as a separate scheme but is merged with SSA since 1st. April, 2007 and running as a separate component of the programme.

The scheme is applicable in Educationally Backward Blocks(EBBs).

5.4.1 Madrasa Education in West Bengal

The District wise number of recognized Madrasahs along with number of students

Sl. No.	District	Jr. High Madrasah	High Madrasah	Senior Madrasah	Total	Number of Students
1.	BANKURA	5	9	1	15	5292
2.	BIRBHUM	5	22	4	31	16795
3.	BURDWAN	0	31	3	34	14307
4.	COOCHBEHAR	0	21	2	23	13522
5.	DAKSHIN DINAJPUR	3	12	4	19	11795
6.	DARJEELING	3	2	0	5	872
7.	HOOGLY	7	24	9	40	22175
8.	HOWRAH	5	25	3	33	19308
9.	JALPAIGURI	3	7	1	11	7503
10.	KOLKATA	0	8	1	9	3680
11.	MALDA	12	55	14	81	88381
12.	MURSHIDABAD	42	53	16	111	104193
13.	NADIA	4	14	4	22	16153
14.	NORTH 24 PARGANAS	6	28	17	51	37897
15.	Purulia	0	4	1	5	8159
16.	PURBA MEDINIPUR	2	14	2	18	7975
17.	PASCHIM MEDINIPUR	3	13	3	19	3580
18.	SOUTH 24 PARGANAS	3	38	12	53	36989
19.	UTTAR DINAJPUR	9	15	5	29	25246
	TOTAL	112	395	102	609	443822

5..4.2 Special Schools (get details of child labour schools etc)

- i. The NCLP programme addresses the issue of child labour through the following activities
- ii. Survey to identify children engaged in hazardous occupations and processes- Withdrawal of the children from hazardous employment and processes
- iii. Rehabilitation of children withdrawn from work through special schools established by the project society

Survey is conducted to identify the child labours working in different hazardous occupations and processes. Thereafter the children are withdrawn from work and rehabilitated by enrollment in schools. The children in the age group 5-8 years are enrolled in the schools under Sarva Siksha Abhijan, whereas Special Schools under the Project Society are set up for working children in the age group of 9-14 years.

Special Schools under NCLP

The Special Schools under NCLP are run by NGOs, local self-government bodies, or directly by the Project Society. The school enrolls working children of the age group of 9-14 years and is given education for a period of maximum three years or till their attainment of 14 years of age. Each Special School has the provision for 50 children. The children are given basic education and vocational training as well. Each school has the provision for two educational instructors and one vocational instructor. Each school of 50 children has two educational instructors and one vocational instructor. The teaching volunteers are mainly from the local community and are paid a consolidated honorarium.

Up to August 2009, the children were provided with cooked midday meal @ Rs5/- per child per day w.e.f September 2010, the nutrition component has been merged with mid day meal under Sarva Siksha Mission.

Every child in the special schools is paid a stipend of Rs.100/- per month. The amount is deposited in the Savings Account opened in the Post Office /Bank in the name of the child on a monthly basis which can be withdrawn only at the time of mainstreaming.

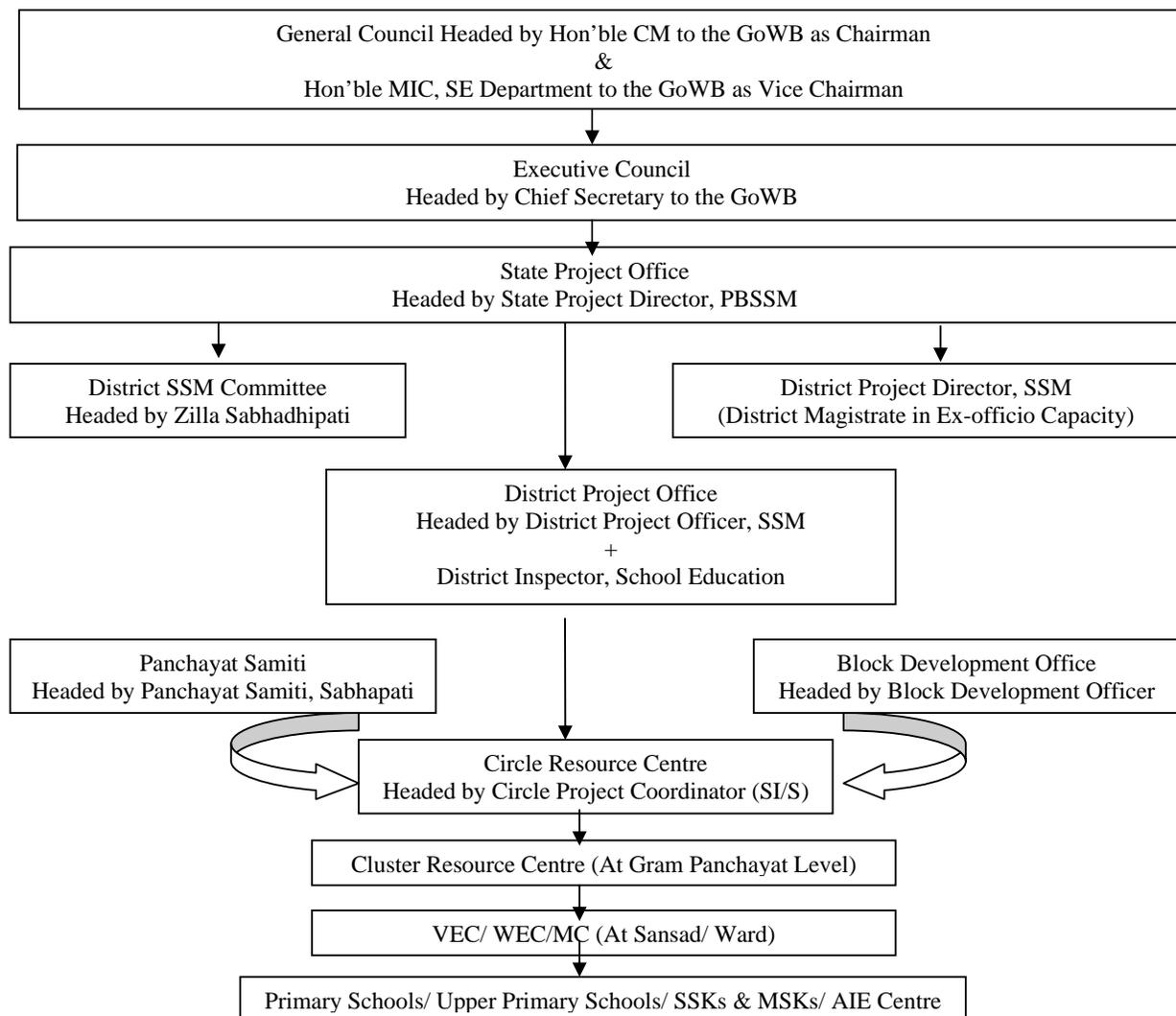
District wise details of the National Child Labour Project (NCLP) of West Bengal

(as on 31.10.2011)

Sl No	Name of the District	No of special schools sanctioned	No of special school functioning	No of children enrolled	Male	Female	*Mainstreaming as on March 2011
1.	Uttar Dinajpur	40	40	2000	990	1010	1346

2.	Dakshin Dinajpur	40	40	2000	920	1080	1954
3.	Murshidabad	140	140	7000	2712	4288	17000
4.	North 24 Parganas	40	40	2000	936	1064	11018
5.	South 24 Parganas	40	40	1996	1017	979	9300
6.	Burdwan	46	46	2300	1077	1223	2248
7.	Kolkata	40	40	2000	930	1070	2802
8.	Pashim Midnapur	46	42	1768	840	928	3325
9.	Purba Midnapur	35	27	1305	622	683	2800
10.	Malda	40	40	2000	817	1183	2746
11.	Birbhum	55	55	2750	1251	1499	2088
12.	Hooghly	68	68	3400	1680	1720	1282
13.	Purulia	90	90	4500	2136	2364	295
14.	Jalpaiguri	19	19	914	478	436	83
15.	Bankura	62	62	3278	1547	1731	152
16.	Coochbehar	19	18	900	441	459	Nil
17.	Nadia	100	100	5000	2521	2479	786
18.	Howrah	40	34	1700	809	891	260
19.	Darjeeling	25					
	TOTAL	985	941	46811	21724	25087	59485

5.5 Administrative Structure at the District, Monitoring & Supervision



5.5.2 Monitoring and Inspection of Schools

The Sub Inspectors of Schools (SIS) are responsible for inspection of the schools. Major functions of the SISs are supposed to include inspection of schools, monitoring of classroom transaction and teaching effectiveness. Each SIS, on an average, has more than 80 schools to supervise. Many SI positions remain vacant for long time. For example, in Murshidabad there are 100 schools per circle. Out of 41 circles in Murshidabad, 19 SIS posts are vacant. SIS office is equally understaffed. For example, in Murshidabad, 14 group C and 12 Group D positions are vacant. SISs spend a lot of their time in attending various meetings, often in short notice (e.g., on health awareness programmes, disaster management etc.). These meetings are not organized during summers- these are organized throughout the year. This creates lot of problem in discharging day-to-day responsibilities. SISs need to fill-up a variety

of evaluation forms, some of which are very cumbersome. SISs are also responsible for maintenance of service books of primary school teachers and disbursement of their salary and pension. A considerable time of them goes in managing the salary/pension and related queries. As a result, SISs fail to discharge their main function- inspection of schools. There are instances where an SIS fails to visit most of the schools even once a year. SIS/AISs do not have any power to take disciplinary actions on errant teachers. SISs are not even given feedback on the action taken on their written complaints. As a result the authority of the SISs is very seriously eroded and the delivery system in the schools suffers almost beyond repair.

6. Assignments for the Trainee Officers

The WBCS officers who are posted as Deputy Magistrate & Deputy Collector (on probation) are to take up the following assignments during their district training and submit report to the respective counselor at ATI. The report must contain the points mentioned below. But it is only a guide line. They may add any noticeable point, which they realize as worth-mentioning.

6.1 Understanding Causes of Remaining Out of School

Visit one backward village and find out how many children below 14 years are employed including how many have left the village for job and get the socio-economic reason for their compulsion to leave education. Also, find out how many are not enrolled or enrolled but do not go to school/dropped out and reasons thereof. The officer should meet parents of a couple of such children to get their views of non-participation in schooling and what are the possible solutions in ensuring their continuing at least up to class VIII. Get views of the teachers about whether they track such children and their views as well as those of the local GP functionaries.

6.2 Assignment on School Education

Select one primary and one upper primary schools from the same Block (preferably one EB Block, if one exists). Before going to the field visit, collect data about those schools from DISE report and check the following:

- (i) record the infrastructure of the schools, verify with the DISE report--the condition of building, drinking water and toilet (whether separate toilet for boys & girls and how the same is utilized).
- (ii) the stock of TLM, its regular use by the teachers.
- (iii) Peruse the inspection book or register, record the date for last visit of SI and his remarks.

- (iv) Peruse the minutes book of PTM, mother's meeting and VEC committee meeting-record anything notable or irregular or praiseworthy.
- (v) Enquire about the MDM programme going on there.
- (vi) Take feed back from a few guardians about teaching and MDM related services.
- (vii) Check the access of upper primary school and the most distant village from which students come to the school and its distance. Also, find out the number of primary and upper primary school in the Block and check the ratio.
- (viii) Check the number of students in class VIII and number of students in class V of the same school three years ago and find how many have left and get the socio-economic background of those who have left and reasons for their leaving schools.
- (ix) Check the number of teachers and students and calculate the PTR. Check the number of students in one class (section, if there are more than one sections) on an average in primary & upper primary level.
- (x) Check the average attendance from the school record and the attendance on the day of visit.
- (xi) Prepare a detail report about your visit, show to the DPO, SSA of your district.

6.3 Assignment on Shishu Shiksha Karmasuchi

Select one SSK and one MSK for inspection from the same Block (preferably one EB Block, if one exists). Before going to the field visit, collect data about the SSK and the MSK from DISE report and check the following:

- (i) First ten points same as above.
- (ii) Prepare a detail report about your visit, show to the DNO, SSK of your district

6.4 Visiting Adult & Continuing Centers/ NFE Centres

- Collect the detail of such centres from the District Mass Education Extension Officer/Block MEE Officer?
- Visit a couple of centres and check the functioning of those centres.
- Check the effectiveness and efficiency of functioning of those centres and the system of supervision and evaluation.