

## ABSTRACT

Since Independence of India, the country has significantly progressed in the areas of access and participation in elementary education. Most of the rural areas have at least one primary school within the 1 km of the habitation. Participation of both boys and girls in elementary education measured in terms of Gross Enrolment Ratio and Net Enrolment Ratio have increased manifold. In case of primary education (I-V), Gross enrolment ratio (GER) rose to 95.12 percent in 2016-17 from 42.6 percent in 1950-51 and Net enrolment ratio (NER) reached 83.62 percent in 2016-17. There has been a commendable progress in the participation of underprivileged and marginalized section of the society in school education compared to the pre-independence period. But such kind of quantitative advancement in education sector of India has not been accompanied by qualitative progress especially in the areas of learning attainment of the pupil of elementary school education. At the international level, India participated in Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA) in 2009 and performed very poorly. At the national level, this deplorable condition has been frequently reflected in the reports of Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), Pratiche Trust and National Achievement Survey. At the regional level, a good number of studies by individual researchers have also highlighted this dismal condition of learning attainment of the students on regular basis. Therefore, severe learning crisis is present along with regional variations. If India is to harness the advantage of demographic dividend from its young population, the quality of education must be raised at the desired level. Having identified the research problem in this way, this study focussed on the problems of learning outcome at regional level. The study raised some specific questions. In order to solve these questions, some hypotheses were formulated and later on the study tried to solve those problems logically. To accomplish this task, research methodology along with tools and techniques has

been framed. This study used both primary and secondary data. Method of sampling was stratified random sampling and purposive sampling. The study was conducted in Alipurduar, 20<sup>th</sup> district of West Bengal in order of formation of the district. Since the class 4 is the terminal class of the primary education of West Bengal, so it is expected that the students of class 4 should have learned basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy. So the students of class 4 have been taken into consideration for the evaluation of learning outcome. The study made an extensive review of literature to synthesize past researches on this topic. Since the study focussed on the problems of deficiency in learning attainment of the school going children at the primary level, it looked into the persistent debate over the relative influence of school resources and socioeconomic status of the learner on the learning outcome of the student. The seminal literary work of Coleman (1966) revealed that it was the socioeconomic status of the learners and not the school resources that has an important role in shaping the educational outcome of the learners. The study by Heyneman and Loxley (1983), Rutter (1983) and many others found contrary findings. Their observations were that school resources have dominant role to play on the learning outcome of the students of low-income countries because usually such countries have severe resource constraints. Later on the study by Baker et al. (2002) and Hanushek and Luque (2003) found that the influence of family background on the learner educational outcome does not depend on the status of development of any country. However, most of these studies were done on developed countries. By conducting an extensive review of literature Chudgar and Shafiq (2010) concluded that most of the researches in South Asian countries focussed on access, drop out, graduation rate, participation of the students in school. Very little attention has been paid to the issue of learning attainment of the learners. On other hand, most of the studies defined the socioeconomic status of the learners narrowly by taking the parental education, income and occupation only. This study tried to address this research gap by focussing on the factors that

have potential in influencing the learning attainment of the students. To accomplish this task, the study took into account exclusively family level characteristics of the learners only. Family background characteristic have been broken down into three capitals, namely, human capital, material capital and social capital. This is consistent with the suggestion put forward by Coleman (1988). Three separate indexes of the above mentioned capitals have been constructed from the background information of the learners by using Multiple Correspondence Analysis. In addition to these indexes, gender of the learner, category of school learner studying i.e., government or private and presence of pre-primary schooling experience of the learners have been taken as independent variables. In order to explain the variations in scores obtained by the learners, an achievement test was performed by taking the students of class 4 only. Score obtained by the learners in the achievement test has been used as dependent variable. Finally Multiple Regression has been used to explain the variances in the test scores of the learners. The model revealed that the social capital inside the family along with the material capital has statistically significant effect on the learning attainment of the student. In addition to that, type of school is also another predictor that has statistically significant influence on learners' learning outcome. The study has also tried to find out the factors behind the school choice of the parents for their children. By using Logistic Regression, the study found that educational level of the mother and financial condition of the family of the learners were the two important deciding factors for the selection of schools by the parents for their children. Since financial condition of the family is an important predictor of the learning outcome of the learners, government should take necessary steps to uplift the economic conditions of the people. On the other hand, since the study found that social capital inside the family have statistically significant influence on the educational outcome of the learners, so school authority must sensitize the parents in this respect.