

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The term ‘_Universalisation of elementary education in India’ encompasses universal access and enrolment, universal retention and attainment of satisfactory quality of education of all students in primary and upper primary school irrespective of their gender and social categories. Access and enrolment of the pupil in the primary education increased manifold since independence of India. 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 substantial increase in the enrolment of disadvantaged population groups such as Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST), minority communities and children with special needs in the elementary education of India. GER of SC students of primary level increased to 110.9 (provisional) in 2015-16 from 84.8 in 1986-87 and that of the ST students rose to 106.7 (provisional) in 2015-16 from 90.1 in 1986-87 (MHRD, GOI, 2018). At national level about 98% of the rural habitations have at least one primary school within a distance of 1 Km (NUEPA, 2014). These achievements are the result of endless efforts of the government, private sector and Non-Governmental Organisations to keep the international commitments like Education for All (1990), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (2000) and later on the effort was pushed forward by the enactment of Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009.

These quantitative expansions in the elementary education have not been accompanied by qualitative changes in education in India, particularly in terms of learning outcome of the students. Severe learning crisis is seen among the students. Students are coming to school but many of them are not learning the basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy at the primary level. Various steps have been taken to strengthen the accessibility and participation of the pupils but improving the quality aspect of learning has been neglected.

As per 2011 census of India, 30.75 % of the total population is in the age of 0-14 years old (Census 2011). If India is to get ‘demographic dividend’ from this burgeoning share of population, it is imperative to pay due attention on the quality aspect of education at the school level. Several reports revealed the dismal situation of learning outcome both at national and international level. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report (2014) highlights that only in 21 out of 85 countries, fewer than half of the children are learning the basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy. Of these 21 countries, 17 are in Sub-Saharan Africa, others are in India, Mauritania, Morocco and Pakistan. It further revealed that out of 650 million primary school age children, 250 million children are not learning the basics in reading and mathematics. Of these almost 120 million have little or no experience of primary school. In spite of staying four years at school remaining 130 million fail to achieve the minimum learning level. In South and West Asia, 33 out of 100 children are learning basics in

reading. The share ranges from about 90 percent in the Islamic Republic of Iran to less than 30 percent in Pakistan.

Availability of data related with the learning outcome of the students across the states of India is scarce. This lacuna has well been fixed by PRATHAM, a Non-Governmental Organisation which has been bringing out the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) since 2005 on children's schooling status and their ability to do basic reading and arithmetic tasks. This report is based on the household survey covering all districts of India. Over the years these annual reports have been showing the poor learning outcome of the students in the age group of 5-14 years old. ASER 2016 shows that proportion of children in grade III who are able to read at least grade I level is 42.5% and the children who could do a 2-digit subtraction is 27.7 %. The children of grade V who could do simple division problems is 26% and less than half of children in grade VIII could solve a standard IV division problems. ASER 2017 has shifted this target age group to 14-18 years old to capture the status of their present activities, learning abilities, awareness and aspiration for what they want to be in real life. It revealed that post elementary school enrolment fell by 7 million by the year 2015-16. In 2011-12, enrolment in grade VIII was 19 million. After four years when the same cohort of pupils reached grade XII, it turned out to be only 12.2 million pupils. Not only had the total enrolment fallen, the gap between male and female enrolment enlarged at the age of 18. In terms of the ability to read, about 25% of this age group (14-18) cannot read basic text fluently in their own language. Only 43% are able to do simple division (3-digit by 1-digit).

Such is the condition of quality of education measured in terms of learning outcome.

At the government level initiative, National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) conducts National Achievement Survey (NAS) to find out the level of learning outcome among the school children. Average test score of the students of class V in language, mathematics and environmental science in NAS (4th cycle), 2015 has gone down compared to the performance of the earlier NAS (3rd cycle) held in 2012. Out of 34 states and UT only 14 states performed significantly above in reading comprehension. Ten performed significantly above in mathematics and in case of environmental science only 13 performed significantly above the national average. Therefore, it revealed that majority of states and UT performed below the overall average score in all subjects.

At the international level India participated in Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA) 2009 plus, meant for finding out the status of the knowledge and skills of the 15-year-old students in reading, mathematical and scientific literacy. Only two states from India namely Tamil Nadu (TN) and Himachal Pradesh (HP) participated in this assessment survey. In reading, out of 74 participants, those two states (TN, HP) beat only Kyrgyzstan. In mathematics two states again placed at second and third to last to beat only Kyrgyzstan. In science Tamil Nadu placed at 72 and Himachal Pradesh secured the last position. After this frustrating results India did not participated in PISA anymore.

In West Bengal (WB), ‘Utkarsha Abhijan’—the mission of quality-2013 conducted by the Department of School Education, WB and Pashchim Banga Sarva Siksha Mission (PBSSM) revealed that average marks scored by all children of grade III and IV taken as a whole were 77%, 66% and 68% in numeracy, reading and writing skill respectively and ability to read fluently was the weakest area.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Learning crisis has become a global phenomenon. Delivery of poor quality of education leads to inadequate learning attainment. Quality outcomes can be attained if learners find good environment in school, home and community. Providing quality of education is very important as education has profound effects on future earnings and better livelihood (Card and Kruger, 1992). Existence of vast inequalities in the level of learning attainment among the masses leads to disparities in the capabilities of individuals that results more inequality in income. –Schooling can be a major force in breaking down class barriers, and we have to be especially careful that instead of that, the educational system with different facilities does not end up perpetuating the rigidity of class boundaries.” (Pratichi Trust, 2009, p. 16). Inaccessibility to the good quality of education will have dire consequences on the poor particularly on the weaker section of the society. A major portion of the pupils enrol into the government schools. On the other hand, wealthy and conscious people move to private schools as they consider them better over government schools. Growing preference for the

private schools by parents has opened the debate on the possibility of enlarging learning inequality among the pupils.

But measurement of learning attainment with the help of marks obtained by the pupil in the public examination system has some serious flaws. Under the public examination system pupils are compelled to prepare themselves for the promotion to new grade. It neglects the measurement of actual learning attainment of the pupil at the specific age/grade. The other thing is that public examination system is meant for measuring the cognitive skill only without giving much attention on the non-cognitive skills. At the international level, there are achievement tests like Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) to evaluate the learning outcomes by comparing data of the participating countries. At the national level there are ASER by PRATHAM, NAS conducted by NCERT. In case of ASER, the survey is confined only to rural areas and the unit of data collection is household. For NAS, achievement test covers all districts of India taking the pupils of grade III, V, VIII and X only. District Information System for Education (DISE) gives the information regarding the number of schools, physical facilities of the schools, teachers, medium of instructions, enrolment, transition rates etc. But there is no information about learning attainment of the pupils. Few states conduct achievement test to gauge the learning progress of the pupil but not in regular basis.

Whatever we get finally from the ASER, NAS and results of learning assessment conducted infrequently by states is the ‘outcome’ data based on some predetermined parameters. On the other hand, DISE covers only information on school characteristics. But educational outcome is a complex issue. It depends on the multiple factors like school, family, community and individual characteristics, teaching- learning process etc. Non- availability of data on the learning outcome of the pupils leads many researchers to study the issue of learning outcome independently. Most of such study is done on regional basis and their objective is to find out the present status of the learning outcome of the pupils on that region. Global Monitoring Report (2014) emphasises the need to incorporate regional and international assessment at regular interval all over the world. It further emphasised the incorporation of background characteristics of the students while evaluating their learning outcome. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Education For All Global Monitoring Report (2014) says:

For regional and international learning assessment to facilitate monitoring post 2015 global learning goal, three principles need to be taken into account: All children and young people need to be included in the evaluation of learning, whether they are in school or not. Better information on background characteristics of students is needed to identify which groups of students are not learning. Information on the quality of education system be included as part of the assessment. (p. 91-92)

As per the Census 2011, literacy rate of India is 73%. Male and female literacy rates are 80.9% and 64.6% respectively. In case of urban and rural areas, these figures are 84.1% and 67.8% respectively. Till now 27% of the total population is illiterate. Situation of the rural female in terms of literacy rate is deplorable since it is as low as 57.9%. It deteriorates further when it comes to the question of SC and ST female of rural background. Literacy rate of rural SC female is 52.6% and for ST is 46.9%. Behind these national figures, there exists large variation in the literacy rates across the states, districts, blocks, gender, and socioeconomic categories of people.

West Bengal is not an exception to this scenario. In terms of literacy rate, it ranks 20th among 35 states and union territories in 2011. A considerable variation in the literacy rate is seen in case of inter district, inter caste and as well as on the basis of gender and place of residence. As the attainment of basic elementary education assumes an important role for the development and expansion of human capabilities on which prosperity of both the individual as well as nation depends, it is necessary to explore what the present scenario of primary education of West Bengal is.

Over the years our planners emphasised on the issue of access and participation of masses into the basic elementary education but little effort has been given to the quality learning. Merely access and participation do not ensure regular attendance, retention and completion of a particular education cycle and transition from one educational cycle to the next one and all these things significantly vary between the subgroups like girls and boys, upper caste and lower caste, urban rich and rural poor etc.

Regarding the quality aspect of the primary education in West Bengal, there are some studies. They are mainly from the Pratichi (India) Trust (2002, 2009), Rana (2010), and Centre for Studies in Social Sciences Calcutta (CSSSC) (2010). Pratichi (India) Trust reports are based on their field survey on some selected districts of West Bengal comprising the districts of Birbhum, Puruliya, West Medinipur, Bardhaman (undivided), Murshidabad and Darjeeling. CSSSC report is based on the survey conducted on the districts of Bankura, South-24 Pargana, North 24 Pargana, Coochbehar and one district from Jharkhand (Dumka). Results from these studies are quite indicative and reflect the present status of the primary education in a true manner. Pratichi Trust report (2002) shows the grim reality of the quality of education which is being delivered at the primary level of West Bengal. It finds that 30% of the students in class III and IV cannot write their own names. In their later report (2009), though the number has come down to 5%, but such type of evaluation is a continuous process. It further shows that SC, ST, Muslim and Others children of classes III and IV who cannot read are 13%, 29%, 25% and 8% respectively and in the case of writing these are 13%, 43%, 27% and 8% respectively. This clearly indicates that there exists acute learning deprivation as well as much learning inequality among the groups. Amartya sen in The Pratichi Education Report II (2009) observed that “It is, of course, right that Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) are seen as being, in general, disadvantaged with very few exceptions.” (p. 11).

By developing a wealth index, Jalan (2010) in the study conducted by Centre for Studies in Social Sciences Calcutta (CSSSC) finds that poorest

blocks of the selected districts of West Bengal perform badly. The average scores in Mathematics and Bengali across the six selected districts were 27.6% and 21.7% that fall short of pass mark of 34%. In addition to that, there exists variation in the achievement scores across the districts as well as among all the different socioeconomic groups. Upper caste Hindu boys are the highest and Muslim girls are the lowest scorers in the learning achievement test. National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) conducted National Achievement Survey (NAS) throughout the country on November 13, 2017 for classes 3, 5 and 8 in government and government aided schools. NAS 2017 reveals that as regards the test scores of the students of class III in all the districts of West Bengal in all the subjects (i.e. environmental science, language and mathematics) with a very few exceptions lowest scoring students have been from either SC, ST or OBC among all categories of students.

As the progress in primary education in West Bengal is very uneven across the state and across the different socioeconomic categories of people even after the 75 years of independence, it is the high time to study the issue of quality of learning more in-depth at the regional level. This will be in consistent with the observation of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Global Monitoring Report (2014):
-Regional and international assessment must increase understanding of the impact of poverty, ethnicity, location and gender on learning outcomes-----
- and how policies can respond.” (p. 91)

In this background Alipurduar district has been selected due to the reasons stated below. Alipurduar district is the 20th district of West Bengal in terms of formation of districts. The district is mostly inhabited by the marginalised section of the society comprising 56.25% of the total population, out of which SC is 30.63% and 25.62% is ST population. According to Census 2011, literacy rate of the district is 73.03% and occupies 15th position out of 23 districts of West Bengal. The literacy rate of female ST is worst among all the categories having 51.50% only. The literacy rate gap between male-female is 13.66% which is above the state average of 11.15%. This gap is more acute in the rural areas of Alipurduar. In the rural areas of all blocks of Alipurduar the literacy gap among the ST community is not less than 15%. Among all categories SC community of the rural Kalchini Block has the highest male- female literacy gap of 21.3%. Therefore, large variation in literacy rate is there across different communities and locations.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The main objective of the present study is to evaluate the learning outcome of the students of the primary schools of the district of Alipurduar in West Bengal. The other objectives of the study are as follows:

- 1) To assess the status of learning attainment of the students of primary schools in the study area in terms of social classes they belong to.
- 2) To analyse the socioeconomic background of the learners and its relationship with their learning outcome.
- 3) To study the level of learning outcome of the pupils by their place of residence and gender.

- 4) To make a comparative analysis of the level of learning outcome of the pupils studying in government and public schools.
- 5) To find out the relationship between the school characteristics and the learning outcome of the pupils.
- 6) To examine the effects of pre-primary schooling on the subsequent primary school performance of the students in the study area.
- 7) To study the growth pattern in the number of schools of both government and private sectors and their corresponding enrolment in West Bengal during 2002-03 to 2016-17.

1.4 Research Questions

The present study has made an attempt to find answers to the following research questions:

- 1) What is the present status of learning attainment of the students belonging to different social category of the primary schools in the study area?
- 2) How does the socioeconomic background of the pupils of primary schools in the study area influence their learning attainment level?
- 3) Do pupils in urban area on an average have more learning attainment than the pupils in rural area?
- 4) Is there any significant difference between male and female students in the level of learning attainment on the basic of skills of reading, writing and numeracy?

5) Is there any inequality in the level of learning attainment of the students of government schools and their counterpart in private schools in the study area?

6) To what extent do school characteristics relate to the learning attainment of the students in the study area?

7) Is there any significant influence of pre-primary schooling on the subsequent learning outcome of the students of the study area?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

We have tested the following research hypotheses related to the study:

1) There is a significant difference between the learning attainments of the socially disadvantaged pupils than that of the others.

2) There is a significant difference between the learning attainment of the pupils in the urban and rural areas of government and private schools.

3) There is significant difference of learning attainment between boys and girls.

4) Both social and economic class identity has significant impact on school choice.

5) There is a significant difference between the learning attainments of the students who have taken pre-primary schooling and who have not.

1.6 Research Methodology

To accomplish the objectives of the present study the research was of both

descriptive and explanatory in nature.

Study Area

This study was conducted in Alipurduar district, the 20th district of West Bengal in terms of formation of districts. The district has been formed from the undivided Jalpaiguri district in 2014.

Reasons for choosing Alipurduar District

In order to justify the selection of Alipurduar district, the following scenario needs to be put in perspective. National Achievement Survey (NAS) at school level is a nationally representative survey comprising all districts of India. The objective of such large survey is to find out the present status of learning outcome of students of class III, V, VIII and X. This survey is undertaken by the Ministry of Education, Government of India. Results of NAS, 2017 across the districts of West Bengal are shown in Table 1.1 Since the present study focussed on primary education only, average performances of students of class III in Language, Environmental Studies (EVS) and Mathematics have been given below.

Table 1.1: Average Performance of The Students of Class III in different Subjects across the Districts of West Bengal in National Achievement Survey 2017

Dist	Environmental studies (EVS) III	Language (LANG) III	Mathematics (MATH) III
Alipurduar	64.39	70.64	64.26
Bankura	64.93	70.93	62.32
Bardhaman	75.87	79.36	75.38
Birbhum	68.13	69.49	66.55
Dakshin Dinajpur	73.78	78.05	73.27

Howrah	75.06	78.1	74.56
Hoogly	72.82	74.05	72.07
Jalpaiguri	55.74	59.21	57.01
Coochbehar	75.9	80.88	74.75
Kolkata	79.58	82.04	77.86
Maldah	69.96	76.07	69.24
Murshidabad	68.31	73.17	67.03
Nadia	72.88	77.58	72.11
24 Pargana (N)	68.29	73.71	67.58
Paschim Mednipur	73.66	76.18	73.24
Purba Mednipur	74.91	77.33	75.95
Puruliya	68.1	73.07	67.38
Siliguri	66.23	68.12	63.49
24 Pargana (S)	72.57	76.92	73.91
Uttar Dinajpur	61.97	69.87	62.32
Mean	70.15	74.24	69.51
SD	5.68	5.27	5.65
CV	8.09	7.09	8.12

Source: National Achievement Survey, 2017

Table 1.1 reveals that mean performances of the students of class of III at the state level in EVS, language and mathematics are 70.15, 74.24 and 69.51 respectively. Standard Deviations (S.D) of those three subjects are 5.68, 5.27 and 5.65 respectively. The variability of the performances across the district is measured by Coefficient of Variation (C.V). Corresponding C.V of those subjects are 8.09, 7.09 and 8.12. Therefore, performances in Mathematics revealed a little bit more variability compared to EVS and language subjects at class 3.

In order to rank the performances of all districts in three test subjects, a composite score has been computed by Z-score method (Table 1.2). Firstly, all individual subject values were standardized by calculating Z values which are mean deviations per unit of variation. Secondly, composite score was found by adding all individual Z score.

**Table 1.2: Z values of Average Performances of the Districts in
Different Subjects and the Composite Z-scores**

Dist	Z Values_ EVS III	Z Values_ LANG III	Z Values_ MATH III	Composite Z Score
Kolkata	1.66	1.48	1.48	4.62
Coochbehar	1.01	1.26	0.93	3.20
Bardhaman	1.01	0.97	1.04	3.02
Purba Mednipur	0.84	0.59	1.14	2.56
Howrah	0.86	0.73	0.89	2.49
Dakshin Dinajpur	0.64	0.72	0.67	2.03
24 Pargana (S)	0.43	0.51	0.78	1.71
Paschim Mednipur	0.62	0.37	0.66	1.65
Nadia	0.48	0.63	0.46	1.57
Hoogly	0.47	-0.04	0.45	0.89
Maldah	-0.03	0.35	-0.05	0.27
24 Pargana (N)	-0.33	-0.10	-0.34	-0.77
Puruliya	-0.36	-0.22	-0.38	-0.96
Murshidabad	-0.32	-0.20	-0.44	-0.97
Birbhum	-0.36	-0.90	-0.52	-1.78
Alipurduar	-1.01	-0.68	-0.93	-2.63
Bankura	-0.92	-0.63	-1.27	-2.82
Siliguri	-0.69	-1.16	-1.07	-2.92
Uttar Dinajpur	-1.44	-0.83	-1.27	-3.54
Jalpaiguri	-2.54	-2.85	-2.21	-7.60

Source: Calculation from Table 1.1

Table 1.2 shows that Kolkata is in the top and Jalpaiguri is in the bottom of the list of composite score. Alipurduar has been placed at the 5th from the last. Bankura, Siliguri, Uttar Dinajpur and Jalpaiguri were behind the district of Alipurduar in the composite score.

Table 1.3 shows the percentage of SC, ST and non-SC-ST population inhabiting in those poor-performing districts. It is to be noted here that DISE considers Siliguri as a separate education district. Comparing the percentages of social categories of the population of the districts, it is found that except Alipurduar all five districts have more skewed representation of SC, ST and non-SC-ST population. In contrast, Alipurduar has a little better

representation of all three categories. In other words, SC, ST and non-SC/ST communities are distributed more proportionately in Alipurduar district compared to other districts. Apart from that, Alipurduar as a district has found a little attention by scholars since the district came into existence in 2014 carved out of the erstwhile Jalpaiguri district. All these had played an important role for the selection of Alipurduar as a sampled district for the study.

Table 1.3: Percentage of SC, ST & Non SC-ST Population in selected districts

Community	Jalpaiguri	Uttar Dinajpur	Siliguri	Bankura	Alipurduar
% SC	42.05	26.87	25.04	32.7	30.63
%ST	14.68	5.41	12.51	10.3	25.62
% Non-SC&ST	43.27	67.72	62.45	57	43.75
Total (%)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100	100.00

Source: Census, 2011

According to 2011 census, literacy rate of the district is 73.03% which is close to the national average of 73% but below the state average of 76.26%. In terms of literacy rates, the Alipurduar district ranked 15th out of 23 districts of West Bengal. Male-female gap in literacy rate of Alipurduar is 13.66% which is above the state average of 11.15%. Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribe population of the district occupy a major share (56.25%) of the total population having 30.63% in SC and 25.62% in ST population (Table 1.3). The main objective of the study is to measure the extent of learning inequality of the pupil of the primary schools in terms of socioeconomic category and try to find out its causes.

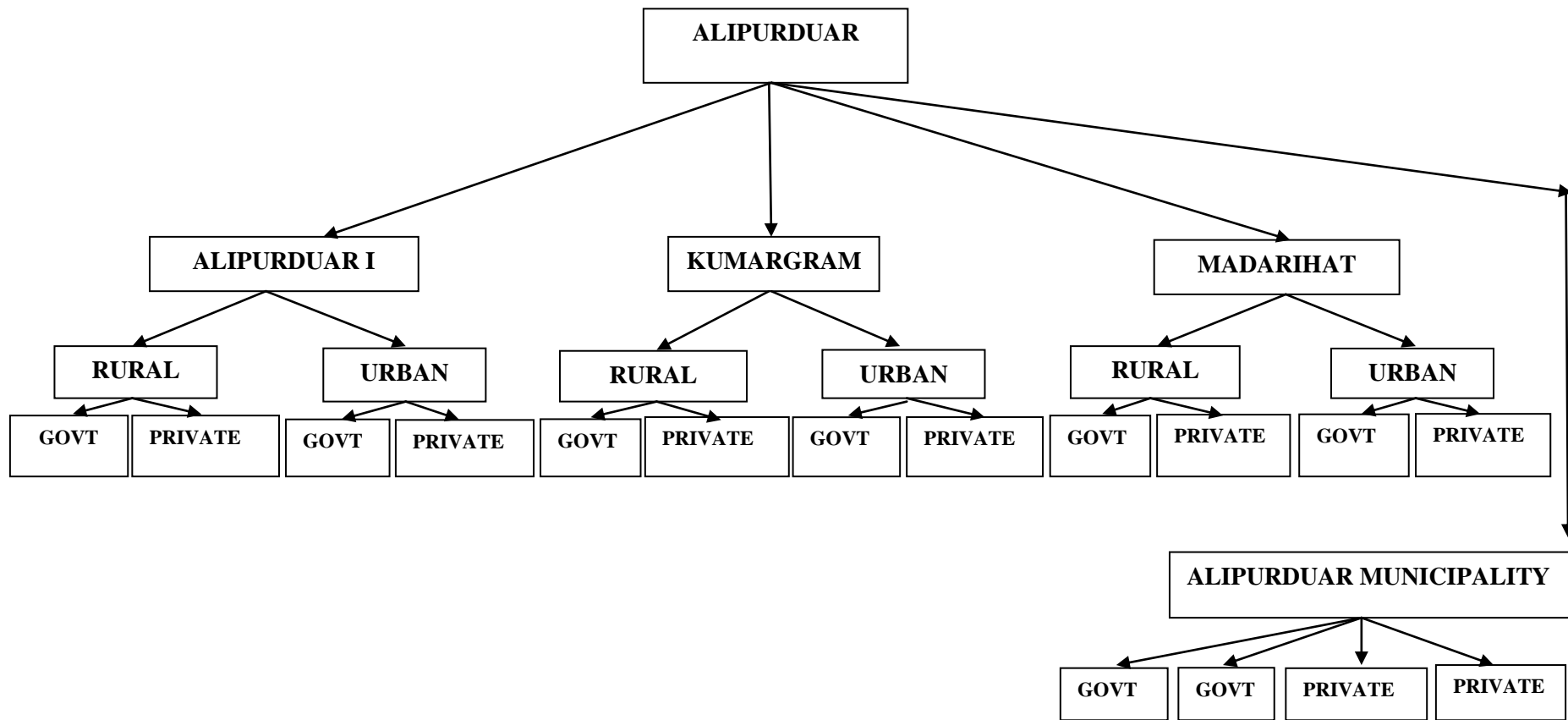
Sample Design

The present study is based on both primary and secondary data. The method of sample draws was stratified random sampling as well as purposive sampling. The following procedure was followed.

Alipurduar has six community blocks and one municipality. The six blocks are Alipurduar I, Alipurduar II, Kumargram, Kalchini, Madarihat and Falakata. The only municipality is Alipurduar. Initially blocks were arranged in terms of literacy rates and the order was as follows. Alipurduar I, Alipurduar II, Falakata, Kumargram, Kalchini and Madarihat. From the list, blocks with high and low literacy rates i.e Alipurduar I and Madarihat respectively were selected. Out of the two blocks with moderate literacy rates namely, Kumargram and Falakata; Kumargram block has been chosen randomly. Therefore, selected blocks were Alipurduar I (high literacy rate), Kumargram (moderate literacy rate) and Madarihat (low literacy rate). Each block has been stratified into rural and urban areas. From each of the selected blocks one village from rural areas and one census town from urban areas were selected randomly. Then from each of the selected village and town two categories of primary schools i.e. one government and one private school were selected purposively. Therefore, twelve schools were selected from the three blocks. To make the findings more representative 4 schools from the Alipurduar municipality were included of which two were government and other two were private schools. Therefore, out of sixteen schools, eight schools were government and remaining eight were private schools. The respondents of the sample of the study were all students of class IV of the 16 schools.

Figure 1.1: The hierarchy of the sample

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Tools and Techniques of data collection

The process of primary data collection had two stages. In order to find out the extent of learning attainment among the pupils of the selected schools, a learning achievement test of both oral and written in nature, was conducted by the researcher based on the questions that measured the basic learning capabilities on reading, writing and numeracy of the pupil of class IV only. Questions were prepared following the NCERT guidelines, i.e., specific standard of learning to be achieved at specific grade level. Examination to all the schools was held on the same set of question papers so that the evaluation of all pupils was judged at uniform level. Apart from that, information on the physical infrastructure and teaching-learning inputs of the schools was collected in consultation with the head of the institution and teachers of the concerned schools. For this purpose structured questionnaire was used.

In order to find out the relationship between the learning outcome and household factors of the pupils participated in the achievement test, information on the students' background was collected by conducting household survey at the house of students who appeared in the achievement test. This was done in the second phase of the study. A structured questionnaire was used for this purpose. Secondary sources of data were the various international and government reports, periodicals, books and documents related to present study. The analysis was undertaken by using percentage, mean, coefficient of variation, chi-square test, Kendall's coefficient of concordance (W), multiple correspondence analysis, multiple regression analysis and logistic regression analysis.

Rationale for taking students of class IV only for the test

As the students of class IV are in a position to transit from primary to upper primary school, it is expected that they have learned basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy. Therefore, it was appropriate to take class IV only.

1.7 Chapterisation scheme of the study

Chapter I discussed about the need of the study and identified the relevant problems. Keeping those research problems in mind, objectives of the study along with specific research questions have been laid down. Hypotheses were framed to find logical solution of the research questions. To accomplish this task, this chapter stated the research methodology along with the necessary statistical tools and techniques. Chapter 2 provided a critical review of literature related with the present study before finding the research gap from the earlier studies. Based upon the critical analysis of the past research works, we have drawn a conceptual framework for analysing the learning outcome of the learners. Chapter 3 gave a brief profile of the study area. Chapter 4 discussed the quantitative progress of educational inputs in West Bengal during the period of 2002-03 to 2016-17. Chapter 5 provides the status of educational outcomes in West Bengal on some parameters like access, participation, internal efficiency and learning outcomes. Chapter 6 critically described the results of the field survey. In this chapter we have also tested the hypotheses that were stated in the chapter 1. Chapter 7 gave the summary of each chapter before offering concluding observations of the study along with some recommendations.

The present study has been divided into following chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Review of literature

Chapter 3: A brief Profile of study area

**Chapter 4: A critical review of educational inputs of primary education
in West Bengal**

Chapter 5: Educational outcome of primary education in West Bengal

Chapter 6: Determinants of learning attainment level of the pupils

Chapter 7: Summary, conclusion and recommendations

1.8 Limitations of the study

Though the result will not be conclusive keeping the small sample size in mind but it would be indicative.

- 1) The study was confined to three blocks of Alipurduar and Alipurduar Municipality.
- 2) Study took into account the all students of class IV of the sampled 16 schools from those three blocks and Alipurduar municipality. Here the size of population was all students of class IV of the three selected blocks of Alipurduar district namely Alipurduar I, Kumargram and Madarihat and Alipurduar municipality. Other than class 4, no other classes of primary schools have been taken.
- 3) The study has taken cross sectional data. Since the evaluation of learning

outcome of the students is a continuous process, it is imperative to include time element in the analysis of learning achievement of the learner.

4) This study focussed on household factors only that have the potential to influence the learners' learning outcomes. The study did not include school and community related factors for explaining the learning outcomes.

5) Learner's innate capacity may be one the important factors in determining his/her academic performance. This study did not consider it