

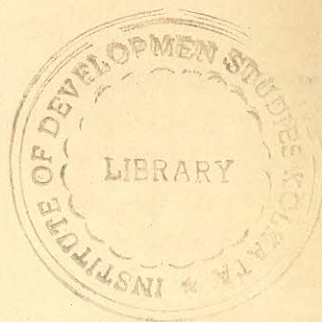
*WORKING PAPER SERIES ON
LITERACY AND PRIMARY EDUCATION*

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**IMPACT OF
DISTRICT PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME (DPEP)
ON
PRIMARY EDUCATION :
A STUDY OF SOUTH 24-PARGANAS**

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Introduction to the Working Paper Series on Literacy and Primary Education

The record of West Bengal on the elementary education and adult literacy front so far, by any reckoning, has not been spectacular. Almost thirty percent of the state's population remained illiterate at the beginning of the present century. A significant proportion of children, especially girls and those belonging to the underprivileged groups, either do not enroll in schools or drop out at an early stage. Although commendable efforts have been made by the government in recent years to spread elementary education among the masses, a great deal remains to be done to realize the goal of universal elementary education in West Bengal. In policy discussions mention is often made of various constraining factors, the empirical and analytical bases of which do not always seem very strong. However, it is now being increasingly perceived that the problem largely lies on the supply side – the low quality of education received in schools, inadequate post literacy and continuing education efforts, and so forth. In this background, it seems obvious that there is an urgent need for further investigation into the scenario of literacy and primary education in West Bengal.

We, at the Institute of Development Studies Kolkata (IDSK), devised a strategy to promote research in this specific area. We invited research proposals from young teachers, scholars and researchers, focusing on different aspects of literacy and primary education in West Bengal. Through a rigorous process of screening, ten proposals were selected and small research grants were offered to the researchers to carry out their proposed research. Professor Prabhat Datta and Dr. Dipankar Sinha of the Department of Political Science, Calcutta University, were in charge of research supervision, who were helped by the faculty of IDSK at various stages. The researchers also drew on the advice of a group of experts at various stages of their research, and all ten of them have completed their studies and submitted reports.

The problem of dropout at the primary stage, for good reason, has been the central theme in almost all the studies. Several studies have confirmed that the demand side problems, such as compulsions of work to supplement family income, are rather less serious than the supply side bottlenecks. Most parents from low-income households – literate or illiterate – do realize the value of education, and many of them spend a

very high proportion of their income on their children's education. Ironically, the high cost of 'free' education to poor families seems to be a major deterring factor – many children drop out because their parents cannot afford to pay for private tutors. In recent years various efforts have been made to improve the situation. Our researchers have found that Sishu Siksha Kendras (SSK) and the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) have made some contribution in this regard, but the effort has to go further and embrace many dimensions that apparently lie outside the narrow domain of education.

We do not intend to summarise all the findings of the studies here. We feel that the results should be widely disseminated among the educationists, scholars, policy makers and others interested in the problems of illiteracy and primary education. With this aim we have planned this Working Paper Series. All the results will ultimately be put together and presented in a monograph in the near future.

Amiya Kumar Bagchi

Director, IDSK

IMPACT OF DISTRICT PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME (DPEP) ON PRIMARY EDUCATION : A STUDY OF SOUTH 24-PARGANAS

Suman Ray*

Abstract

The study, conducted in two areas in South 24 Parganas, aimed at investigating the changes in enrolment, retention and dropout that could be attributed to the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP). It was found that the programme had positive impact on enrolment and dropout. As the dropout was found to be due to economic compulsion, the provision of mid-day meal had been effective in retaining students belonging to the poorer families. The student-teacher ratio has been found to be too high to implement effectively the new techniques of teaching in some of the schools in the study areas. Most of the schools do not have the basic infrastructure like separate classrooms, and this can partly explain non-enrolment and dropout.

Key words : District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), Decentralised Management, Enrolment, Dropout, South 24 Parganas, India,

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INTRODUCTION

As a part of universalization of primary education the Government of India (GOI) has adopted the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) in 1996-97 to increase enrolment ratio and to upgrade the quality of teaching. The GOI has also introduced literacy campaign and mid-day meal programme with the same objective. All these programmes are implemented jointly with the state governments.

In West Bengal the Left Front Government has made significant progress in terms of reducing illiteracy, increasing student enrolment, establishing new primary schools and appointing teachers. The government has also implemented several schemes, making school education free, supplying only rations (mid-day meal) of food and free text-books at the primary level, supplying free uniform to a substantial number of girl students and so on. But there are certain problems regarding primary education. Till now there is a considerable section of children of schoolgoing age, who do not enroll in the school; again all the schoolgoing children do not (or cannot) continue their education due to socio-economic obstacles.

One important reason for such non-enrolment and dropout is lack of adequate educational facilities both from qualitative and quantitative aspects. Another important factor which is responsible for such problems is lack of awareness among the parents. Yet another problem of primary education is the quality of education. In most cases children tend to learn little in primary school and depend on private tuition. To reduce dropout and to enhance the quality of education the West Bengal government has initiated the DPEP as per guidelines of the GOI in 1995-96 academic year.

OBJECTIVES

In the context of South 24-Parganas, the present study aims to investigate :

- i) the changes in enrolment, retention and dropout due to the DPEP
- ii) the changes in infrastructure of the primary schools due to implementation of the DPEP, e.g. renovation of school building, improvement of water and sanitation facilities, provision of educational items like books, blackboard etc. and
- iii) to investigate the qualitative change in teaching in the primary schools as well as to examine
- iv) whether the DPEP has achieved more success in presence of mid-day meal programme or not.

METHODOLOGY

We have to take recourse to primary data. It is because there are some discrepancies between the government report and actual situation. Again, these reports are not adequate for this study. So Random sampling technique has been used to select schools. By this the study has selected 10 schools from each area. Sample survey has been carried through the questionnaire method. Again, to judge the implementation of method of teaching the Participatory Observation method has been followed.

This study has investigate the reasons for non-enrolment and dropout. For this purpose direct personal investigation method has been carried among all the teachers and selected parents. 10 parents from each school have been selected randomly i.e., in total 100 parents from each area have been selected for interview.

There is an interrelationship between each factor. Sometimes infrastructure is responsible for enrolment and dropout; and it may be a significant factor in quality teaching. To find out the correlation among different relevant variables grade point technique has been used, i.e., we have quantified (whether necessary) the variables. To represent the observed data suitable charts and graphs have been used.

The hypotheses of the study are the following :

- ⇒ Infrastructure has developed in most of the primary schools, thanks to the DPEP;
- ⇒ Enrolment and dropout situations have improved, i.e., enrolment has been increased and dropout rate has fallen;
- ⇒ Mid-day meal programme is effective to reduce dropout, especially in rural areas where economic position of the students are worse than urban areas;
- ⇒ Techniques of teaching have improved through the DPEP, which is also effective to increase enrolment;

This study has intended to focus on the impact of the DPEP on primary education in West Bengal with special reference to South 24-Parganas. In this study we have selected two areas of South 24-Parganas: Maheshtala Municipal area and Diamondharbour-I Block. Report of this study is divided into four chapters.

UNIVERSE OF STUDY

Areas of survey have been selected purposively. Non-enrolment in schools and the case of dropout vary with the socio-economic nature of the area. Urban and rural nature

of any area may also change the causes. For example, in urban area due to better socio-economic conditions it is found that people are interested to send their children at English medium school ownership of which is mostly private. As a result, enrolment in government schools may decrease. Due to such possibilities we have selected Maheshtala Municipal area and Diamondharbour-I back area.

BRIEF REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There are many studies regarding the impact of DPEP in India. According to the study conducted by In-Depth Review Mission (IDR) in 1997, in the first phase of DPEP, 1,60,000 teachers were trained, 4500 new schools and 5000 class rooms were constructed and 14,400 toilet and water facilities were provided.

A study conducted by the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) found that : DPEP Phase-I districts have vastly outperformed other districts in the country I enrollment from 1993-94 to 1996-97. The differential increase in enrollment between DPEP and non-DPEP schools.

Yash Agarwal has mentioned in his study that the number of enrolment in 1996-97 in 39 out of 42 DPEP phase-I districts, increased by 6,30,000 compared to 1995-96. This was more than the all-round enrolment increase of 6,00,000 during the period. Primary school enrolment of the girls is increasing faster than boys in many districts.

A study by National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in 7 DPEP Phase-I states, to compare learning achievement of students in 1997 over the baseline of 1994, revealed that learning scores of class students in all project districts improved substantially both in language and mathematics over the baseline of 1994.

Studies on community mobilization by different institutions and researchers have mentioned about well-functioning of VECs. On the basis of these studies the present study tried to find out the changes of the status of primary education due to implementation of the DPEP in West Bengal with special emphasis on South 24-Parganas. Before going in to the findings of this study let us discuss about the DPEP in the next section. The Programme of Action (POA) 1992 provided fresh insights and directions for achieving Universalisation of Elementary Education. It called for an integrated and decentralised approach to the development of primary education with focus on building capacities, particularly at district and sub-district levels. Imbibing the spirit of this policy initiative, the DPEP emerged in 1994.

OBJECTIVES OF DPEP

- Provide all children with access to primary education (classes I to V)
- Reduce primary dropout rates for all students to less than 10 percent.
- Reduce differences in enrolment, dropout rates, and learning achievement among gender and social groups to less than 5 percent.
- Raise the average achievement levels of students by at least 25 per cent in language and mathematics and at least 40 percent achievement levels in other subjects.
- DPEP also seeks to strengthen the capacity of national, state and district institutions and organisations for planning, management and evaluation of primary education.

In the first phase of the DPEP five districts - Bankura, Birbhum, Cooch behar, Murshidabad and South 24 Parganas - have been covered and in phase-II this has been extended to Jalpaiguri, Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur, Maldah and Purulia. Target group population (5-9 years) for 10 districts is 3854585 covering 26483 schools.

Estimated flow of fund to West Bengal

DPEP Phase-I	Rs. 266 Crores
DPEP Phase-II	Rs. 284 Crores

IMPACT

Though DPEP started in West Bengal in 1998-99 planned activities in all the functional areas of DPEP started in 1999-2000. This year the entire WBDPEP machinery along with all the key institutions and stakeholders unleashed a concerted effort towards the programme objectives which led to substantial achievements in all the fields.

ENROLMENT

The Gross Enrolment Ratio crossed the mark of 90 percent during 1999-2000 in Bankura (71percent) while the Net Enrolment Ratio touched 85 percent mark except again in Bankura thus emerged as the district needing special enrolment drive undertaken during 2000-2001.

Similarly, percentage of girl students in the total enrolment has risen between 1999

and 1999-2000 in all the districts both in terms of gross enrolment enrolment, varying from 0.07 percent to 1.18 percent and from 0.33 percent to 0.74 percent respectively.

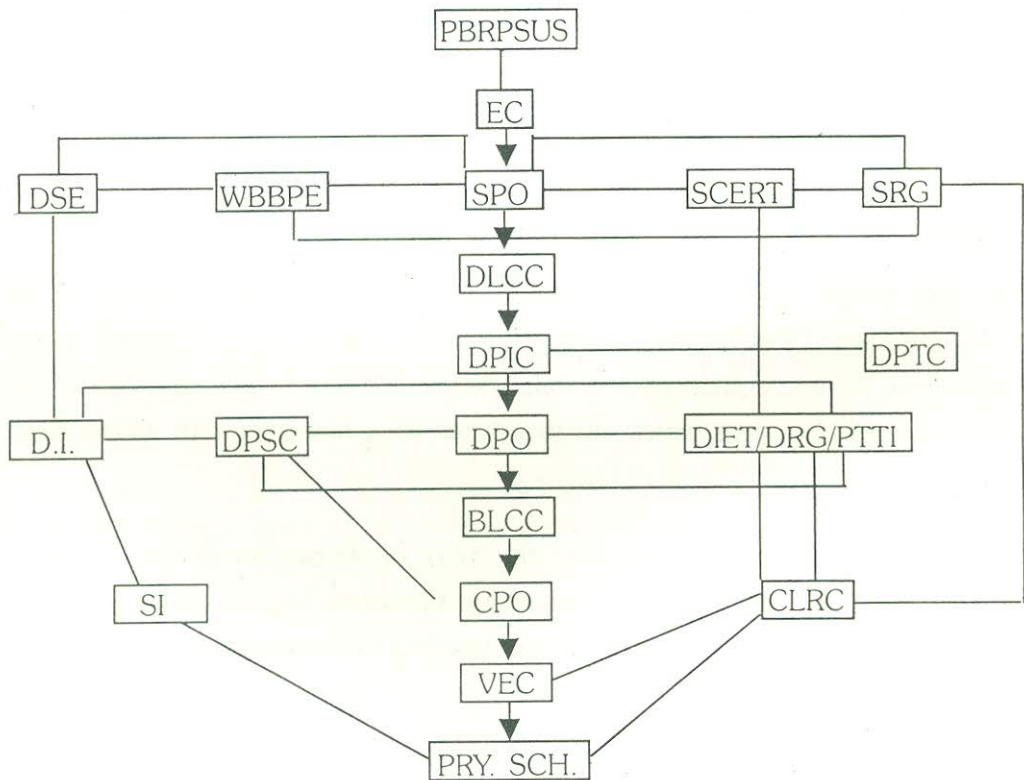
It is also encouraging to note that the gross increase and net increase enrolment have been higher than the total gross and net increase. The difference varies from 0.16 percent to 3.63 percent for gross increase and from 0.74 percent to 2.34 percent for net increase.

RETENTION

In the DPEP training programme for the teachers is arranging in every year and all the teachers of the DPEP covered districts are participating in these programmes. As a result, teaching method has also been developed.

Implementation of the Programme

The central body for the implementation of DPEP in West Bengal is Paschim Banga Rajya Prathamik Siksha unnyayan Sansatha (PBRPSU). The project implementation structure is as follows :



Abbreviations

PBRPSUS	Paschim Banga Rajya Prathamik Siksha Unnayan sansatha
EC	Executive Committee (of the Sanstha)
DSE	: Directorate of School Education
WBBPE	: West Bengal Board of Primary Education
DLCC	: District Level Coordination Committee
DPIC	: District Project Implementation Committee
DPTC	: District Pedagogy and Training Committee
DI	: District Inspector of Schools (Pry. Education)
DPSC	: District Primary School Council
BLCC	: Block Level Coordination Committee
DIET	: District Institute of Education & Training
PTTI	: Primary Teachers' Training Institute
SRG	: State Resource Group
DRG	: District Resource Group
CLRC	: Circle Resource Centre
CPO	: Circle Project Officer
VEC	: Village Education Committee (WEC or Ward Education Committee is its equivalent in urban areas)

Apart from this new schools have been established in almost all the districts. In South 24-Parganas 116 new schools have been set up in the year 2001-2002. In 2002-2003, 92 more schools have been set up.

In spite of these activities till now non-enrolment and dropout are major problems in South 24-Parganas. The next section has presented the situations of primary education in South 24-Parganas which we have found in the field study in Maheshtala and Diamondharbour areas.

THE LOCALE : SOCIO-ECONOMIC FEATURES

On the backdrop of overall impact of the DPEP in West Bengal and South 24-Parganas let us now focus on the impact of this programme on two areas studied. Regarding settlement pattern of these areas we can see some differences between these two areas. Maheshtala is an urban area whereas Diamondharbour-I block is a rural area. Naturally these areas distinct socio-economic nature. Before examining the impact of the DPEP let us first observe the socio-economic status of the students interviewed in each area.

In this study three basic categories have been taken into consideration viz. religion, caste and educational status. Observations regarding these issues have been represented in Table 3.2.1 in Appendix.

From Table 3.2.1 we can observe that Maheshtala Municipal area is more Hindu-dominated compared to Diamondharbour-I block area. Again, among the Hindus 42 households belong to general category or upper caste whereas only 26 households out of 100 households interviewed are Hindu "general" category in Diamondharbour-I block area. Out of 100 households in Maheshtala Municipal area only three households belong to other religious group (2 Christians, 1 Buddhist), but in Diamondharbour-I block only one household in Christen.

So far as educational status is concerned, the number of educated persons is more in Maheshtala than Diamondharbour-I. Again number of illiterate persons is more in Diamondharbour area (38 percent). In total out of 200 households interviewed for this study 77 persons are just literate and 61 are educated and the rest 62 persons are illiterate. From the data it is clear that there is a considerable portion of total population who are illiterate. That is, the students coming from these families are first generation learner. This phenomenon plays an important role in any developmental programme.

If we consider the occupational pattern of households we get two different pictures in two areas (Table 3.2.2A). In this study four types of occupation have been considered – cultivation, agricultural labour, non-agricultural labour and others. In Maheshtala Municipal area most of the households are engaged in non-agricultural activities. Only 16 percent (cultivation – 10 percent, agricultural labour – 6 percent) are engaged in agricultural activities whereas in Diamondharbour-I block 52 percent households (cultivation – 22 percent, agricultural labour – 32 percent) are dependent on agriculture. This feature clearly shows its rural nature.

So far as the income distribution (Table 3.2.2B) is concerned it can said that most of the households in Maheshtala area belong to middle- and upper- income group whereas in Diamondharbour-I the scenario is totally opposite. Here 60 percent households belong to lower (< Rs. 1,500) and lower-middle income group (< Rs. 2,500). Only 13 households in Diamondharbour-I block have income more than Rs. 5,500 per month but it is 26 in Maheshtala Municipal area. So it can be found that students in Maheshtala area are coming from economically –off families better family than that of Diamondharbour-I area. This issue is vital regarding enrolment, retention and dropout.

IMPACT ON PRIMARY EDUCATION

Given the above socio-economic conditions let us now examine the impact of the DPEP on primary education in these areas. Along with this the relevance of key factors of the DPEP on the development of the schools concerned will also be examined. Impact of the DPEP on primary education have been categorized in three parts :

- impact on infrastructure
- impact on enrolment and dropout, and
- impact on quality of teaching.

These issues have been discussed in following sections.

Impact on infrastructure

When we talk about infrastructure both the issues of physical and educational infrastructure of the schools concerned come to the fore. Physical infrastructure includes type of building, i.e., whether the school building is *kutchha* or i, existence of separate classrooms for each class, availability of drinking water and toilet facilities and proper sitting arrangement. Educational infrastructure includes the availability of books and other learning materials, number of students per teacher and number of trained teacher. Let us discuss them one by one.

In India most of the primary schools have poor physical infrastructure. Poor quality-building, insufficient sitting arrangement and lack of drinking water and toilet facilities cannot attract the non-enrolled students. Private schools are more attractive to the children because of their developed infrastructure. This study has examined whether the DPEP has changed the state of infrastructure of the school or not. For this purpose we have considered three things :

- type of building
- existence of separate class room, and
- drinking water and toilet facilities.

Observations regarding these issues have been furnished in the following way.

Type of building : In this study we have observed that there exist both *kutchha* and *pucca* construction of school building. Apart from this some have permanent concrete roofs and some have temporary roofs, made by tally, asbestos and tin. Observations regarding type of building have been represented in Tables 3.2.3A and 3.2.3B.

In Maheshtala Municipal area (Table 3.2.3A) all the schools had *pucca* construction before the DPEP which is unaltered after the implementation of the DPEP, though some renovation and repairing works have been done with the help of the grants sanctioned in the DPEP. But among 10 schools in this area only three had temporary roofs. These are Bholanath Halder Smrity G.S.F.P. School, Putkhali F.P. School and Vidyasagar Vidyabhavan F.P. School. But after the DPEP only one school (Bholanath Halder Smrity GSFP School) has temporary roof. The other two schools have constructed their permanent roof not only by the grant of the DPEP, but also from the grants sanctioned by Maheshtala Municipality.

In Diamondharbour-I block (Table 3.2.3B) the condition of buildings is comparatively poorer even after the coming of the DPEP. Before implementation of the DPEP Surobala F.P. School had *kutchha* construction of the school building and its roof was temporary. Two other schools, viz. Nabasham Primary School and Nawsha F.P. School, had constructed their roofs, though the school buildings were already *pucca*. After the implementation of the DPEP, we have found that Nawsha F.P. School has no roof in their school building for two years. At present the teachers are taking classes at verandah of a high school situated in that locality. So in Diamondharbour area the school buildings have not been developed markedly due to the DPEP. However, some renovation work has been done in almost all schools.

Existence of separate classroom : Existence of separate classroom is one of the important criteria of developed infrastructure in school. It is necessary for the proper functioning of each class. If there is no separate classroom for each class or each section of the same class the students of different classes sit in one room which makes a lot of disturbance. Again, the teacher cannot take different classes simultaneously. Even if the teacher takes different classes in a single room, the students cannot grasp the lessons which are taught by the teacher. This issue has been represented in Tables 3.2.4A and 3.2.4B.

From Table 3.2.4A we find that in Maheshtala area only five schools out of 10 had separate class rooms before the implementation of the DPEP. These schools are Nungi Primary School, Vivekananda Vidyamandir F.P. School, Bangla Jatya Siksha Mandir Primary School, Vidyasagar Vidyabhavan F.P. School and Batanagar Young Bengal Primary School. But the 5 other schools did not have separate classrooms. These schools are Chandannagar F.P. School, Jagtala F.P. School, Bholanath Halder Smrity, G.S. F.P. School, Putkhali F.P. School and Parbangla Panchanan F.P. school. As a part

of the DPEP, Rs. 2,000/- have been given to each school every year for infrastructure development. By using this grant every school has partitioned their classroom for different classes. After the implementation of the DPEP in Maheshtala area, except one school (Parbangla Panchanan F.P. School) all schools have created separate classrooms. Therefore, the DPEP has a definite role in developing such infrastructure. This trend is also found in Diamondharbour-I block.

From table 3.2.4B we can see that Diamondharbour-I block there were only three schools (R.K. Mission Sarisha, Unit IV, R.K. Mission Sarisha Unit III, and Tafa F.P. school) only three schools had separate classrooms. But after the implementation of the DPEP there are only 3 schools which do not have separate classrooms. These schools are Surbala F.P. School, Sarisha Primary School and Nwsha F.P. School. Among them, Surobala F.P. School is newly established. Though not all schools have such facility, overall improvement has been found in Diamondharbour-I block.

Drinking water and toilet facilities : To attract the non-enrolled students and to minimize the dropout problem all schools should have drinking water facility and toilet facility. It is also a positive indication that all schools had these facilities before the implementation of the DPEP. So we do not get any special impact of DPEP on this count.

EDUCATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Educational infrastructure contains :

- availability of books and learning materials
- number of students per teacher (student-teacher ratio), and
- number of trained teachers

Availability of books and learning materials

It was found that in schools of both areas there is delay in delivering text-books. On occasion this delay is extended to four to five months. As a result, all the students cannot follow classroom teaching and they are lagging behind students who have the books. The heads of the institutions complain about lethargy of the responsible persons in distribution of books.

So far as learning materials are concerned we can find a satisfactory scenario in all schools. Learning materials include black-boards, chalks, dusters, charts and models.

As part of the DPEP Rs. 500 per year is given to each teacher for providing teachers' learning materials (TLM). Before the implementation of the DPEP these facilities were not available in all schools.

Number of students per teacher

Student-teacher ratio is one of the important factors in educational infrastructure. Most of the schools suffer from inadequate number of teachers. On occasions, a single teacher has to take two or three classes simultaneously. As a result, proper care could not be given to any class. In this study we get some interesting results in each area, which may be evident from Tables 3.2.5A and 3.2.5B.

In Maheshtala the number of teachers has not decreased (ref. 3.2.5A). Either it has remained the same or has increased. The student-teacher ratio has decreased due to an increase in number of teachers only in three schools (Jagtala F.P. School, Putkhali F.P. School and Chandannagar F.P. School). But in other schools where student-teacher ratio has decreased it happened due to a fall in number of students. In Parbangla Panchanan F.P. School and Batanagar Young Bengal Primary School the number of students has drastically fallen. For these schools the student-teacher ratio falls even if the number of teachers remains the same. In Bangla Jatiya Siksha Mandir Primary School we get the same situation though here the number of students has decreased slightly (from 282 to 263). Another important point is that excepting three schools (Chandannagar F.P. School, Jagtala F.P. School and Putkhali F.P. School) no other school has four teachers – a number which is needed for having one teacher per class. In the pre- of DPEP days only one school (Chandannagar F.P. School) satisfied this criteria.

In Diamondharbour-I block we have four schools in which the student-teacher ratio decreased due to increase in number of teachers (Table 3.2.5B). These four schools are Sarisha Primary School, Narayantala Primary School, Amira Primary School and Surobal F.P. School. But for other schools in which this ratio came down, the reason is the fall in number of students. In this area the student-teacher ratio is the highest in Mohisgote Primary School in which only one teacher works as the head of the institution. He takes all classes - from I to IV - and performs the official work. Nabashan Primary School and Amira Primary School have also very high student-teacher ratio.

In both the areas the student-teacher ratio is very high. A common reason is that during the last five to six years the recruitment of teacher in primary school was not adequate. But in the same period enrolment has increased in general. One of the reasons behind increasing enrolment is the natural increase in population in each area.

This high student-teacher ratio is a major bottleneck for the implementation of new techniques of teaching introduced in the DPEP.

Number of trained¹ teacher

Quality of teaching personnel is one of the important criteria for educational infrastructure in primary schools. To judge the quality of the teachers the study has considered the issue of number of trained teacher in total number of teacher in each school. Tables 3.2.6A and 3.2.6B reveal this issue in each area.

In Maheshtala Municipal area (Table 3.2.6A) only one school has 100 percent (Nangi Primary School) trained teachers. But in most of the cases the maximum number of teachers are non-trained. In six schools (Jagtala F.P. School, Vivekananda Vidyamandir F.P. School, Bangla Jatiya Siksha Mandir F.P. School, Bholanath Halder Smrity G.S.F.P. School, Vidyasagar Vidyabhavan F.P. School and Putkhali F.P. school) only headmistress/headmaster are trained. Due to lack of training the non-trained teachers hardly adopt the new techniques of teaching.

In Diamondharbour-1 block the percentage of trained teacher is higher than that of Maheshtala area (Table 3.2.6B). There are 4 schools (R.K. Mission, Sarisha, Unit-IV, R.K. Mission Sarisha, Unit-III, Amira Junior Basic School and Mohisgote F.P. School) where all teachers are trained. Other than these, in Sarisha Primary School out of six teachers four and in Nabashan Primary School, two teachers are trained.

In the study it is found that the newly - appointed teachers are mostly trained. But the teachers who are working for long time are non-trained. Due to this the percentage of trained teachers is higher in Diamondharbour-I block compared to Maheshtala Municipal area.

Impact on enrolment and dropout

Non-enrolment and dropout are two major problems in our state. In the case of South 24-Parganas the problems are alarming. This study has tried to examine the success of the DPEP regarding the elimination or reduction of these problems. We have analyzed the situation of enrolment and dropout due to the DPEP one by one. First, let us explain the situation of enrolment before and after the implementation of the DPEP.

¹ Trained means only Primary Teachers' Training

In the course of the DPEP the net enrolment in South 24-Parganas has increased significantly, though gross enrolment rate has slightly declined from 94 percent-93 percent during the period 1998-99 and 1999-2000. In this study it is found that in Maheshtala Municipal area the overall percentage of enrolment has decreased by 18.5 percent and in Diamondharbour-I block enrolment rate has increased by 7.5 percent after the implementation the of DPEP. Detailed observation of the study regarding the pattern of enrolment have been furnished in Tables 3.2.7A and 3.2.7B.

In Maheshtala Municipal area the highest increase in enrolment (Table 3.2.7A) has been found in Jagtala F.P. School (+37.7 percent). The next position is of Putkhali F.P. School (+29.8 percent). The highest fall in enrolment is in Batanagar Young Bengal Primary School (-47 percent). Enrolment is highest in Jagtala F.P. School because of the existence of sufficient classrooms. It is also because the school starts in day time (from 11 a.m. to 3.30 p.m.) – a time preferred by most guardians who are mostly engaged as agricultural labour, non-agricultural labour, in small business or as maid-servant. The second highest enrolment is found in Patkhali F.P. School. Here enrolment rises because there is no alternative to the students to be admitted to other school. Again, most of the students of this school come from poor family; most of their parents are engaged in agricultural activities and in making fireworks. So they cannot meet the extra cost incurred for traveling a long distance to attend school, and they prefer to admit their children to the school nearby. For other schools in which enrolment has increased, two factors are responsible :

- i. non-existence of an alternative nearer to the schools which is evident in Chandannagar F.P. School; and
- ii. Provision of high school education in the same school, which is found in Vivekananda Vidyamandir F.P. School and Nungi Primary School.

It is also noted that only in the case of Bholanath Halder Smrity F.P. School the enrolment remains unaltered because there is no adequate infrastructure to provide such new students. Again, in this situation the preparatory level class (the so-called infant class) is continuing. For this purpose they have some space for the children.

In this area, for three schools enrolment has been decreased prominently. These schools are Batanagar Young Bengal Primary School (-47 percent), Parbangla Panchanan F.P. School (-38 percent) and Vidyasagar Vidyabhavan F.P. School (-17.3 percent). One common factor that is responsible is the absence of high school facility in the same premises. But there are other factors for falling enrolment in each school. For Batanagar

Young Bengal Primary School poor infrastructure is one of the important factors. Here condition of school building is bad. Another factor is that there are four schools within the half kilometer of this school which have high school units. So the parents in this locality prefer to admit their children in those schools. In Parbangla Panchanan F.P. School enrolment rate has been decreased in the last 2-3 years. According to the headmistress of this school, only the children of poor families enroll in this school but children of middle-class and upper-middle class families enroll in different English medium schools situated in the locality. This reason is also true in case of Vidyasagar Vidyabhaban F.P. School.

Yet another important point is that for some specific schools enrolment has increased due to mid-day meal programme, which was started in this area at the same time of that of the DPEP. According to the headmistresses of Chandannagar F.P. School and Jagtala F.P. School, a number of students come to the school to take dry rice which is provided by the mid-day meal programme. From the survey it is found that there is a definite role of the mid-day meal programme in some schools, if , not for all schools. Information regarding this issue will be discussed subsequently.

In Diamondharbour-I area the overall enrolment has increased by 7.5 percent (Table 3.2.7B). Rise in enrolment is the highest in Surobala F.P. School (81.81 percent). This is due to the new establishment of this school. Three years ago this school was set up and at that time there was a small room made by bamboo and mud, but after that a *pucca* school building was constructed. As a result, new students could be admitted. In Sarisha Primary School we get the same reason for increasing enrolment. In Narayantala Primary School development of infrastructure is one of the reasons behind the increase in enrolment but another reason is the provision for mid-day meal. According to headmaster of this school, sometimes he has to face some external pressure to provide mid-day meal to the students who do not have the required attendance in school. According to him, the students of this school are coming from very poor families and they have to depend heavily on dry-rice provided in mid-day meal programme.

In this area for some schools a negative trend has been found with regard to the enrolment. In R.K. Mission, Sarisha, Unit-III, it is highest (12.5 percent). According to headmistress of this school, the students coming from comparatively better-off family are taking admission to English medium unit of Sarisha R.K. Mission and they do not admit their children to Bengali medium units. The same reason holds true for Unit-IV of R.K. Mission, Sarisha. Another common factor is the system of promotion to higher class. In both these schools the students securing less than the stipulated pass marks

