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## QUALITY OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION AND GROUND REALITIES IN UTTAR DINAJPUR DISTRICT

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### Abstract:

Education is the most powerful instrument to change the society. The welfare and economic progress of a country depends on the quality of education because education refers to the development of human skill and knowledge of the people or labor force and education is called human capital. Different education policies during the post independent period focused primarily to improve the enrolment in the primary school in India. In order to access all children up to 14 years of age the different National Education Policies gave priority to universalization of elementary education program on different times and many initiatives like Operation Black Board, Mid-day Meal, Sarvashiksha Abhijan (SSA) and Right to Education Act. Uttar Dinajpur district is not an exception. Literacy and education of the district shows dismal picture and according to census report 2011 the district has the lowest rank in the state. The district is an economically and educationally back ward district.

The present paper is an attempt to study the enrolment trend at the elementary level in the government school and private schools in Uttar Dinajpur during the period 2012-13 to 2016-17 and enquiry into the problems relating to the learning outcomes of the children at the elementary level in government schools of the district. The empirical findings point out many problems such as poor academic performances of the students, wastage of teaching time on mid-day meal related works, irregular attendance of the teachers in the school, teacher-guardian meet, guardians' choice regarding admission of their children, lack of parents' awareness and use of mobile phone in the class room.

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### 1.0 Introduction:

Education is one of the primary needs of the people and where there is proper education there is civilization. The welfare and economic progress of a country depends on the quality of education because education caters to the development of human skill and knowledge of the people. Different educational policies during the post independent period focused primarily on the improvement of the enrolment at the primary school. One of the primary objectives of schooling is to ensure that children are enrolled and that they attend school. Elementary education constructs the foundation of the child's basic knowledge bank. Many positive measures were taken to achieve the goal of universalization of elementary education during post independent period. The Constitutional makers of Indian republic made it a part of the directive principles of the

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constitution. The importance and necessity of the universalization elementary education has been highlighted in various educational documents. Elementary education is the initial phase of the compulsory education that children obtain during the age of 6-14 years of schooling.

India has achieved significant progress in attaining universal enrolment in elementary education but the drop rates and low level of learning is a significant problem of the state and the central government. The Uttar Dinajpur district is one of the most backward districts in west Bengal as well as in the country educationally and economically. In 2001, Uttar Dinajpur was emerged as one of the least literate districts in West Bengal in terms of percentage of total literate. In 1991 total literacy rate was 34.6 and according to the 2001 census it rose to 60.12 which reflected very slow improvement in the literacy rate between 1991 and 2011. This low literacy rate was mainly due to the result of low rural literacy rates in Uttar Dinajpur. The literacy differential was the highest among all the district of West Bengal. Educational backwardness was a primary characteristic of rural Uttar Dinajpur district. So far as the primary enrolment is concerned the government of India and the government of West Bengal initiated number of programmes and projects to attain the goals of universalization of elementary education but despite all those efforts the objective of universal elementary education remains elusive and far from satisfactory outcomes in the district. The government of West Bengal has been providing free primary education along with free uniform, books, shoes and midday-day meal so that the students can get basic education at the elementary level. In spite of providing so many facilities the total enrolment at the elementary level in the government school has been decreased during the period 2012-13 to 2016-17 while in the private school the total enrolment at the elementary level has constantly been increasing day to day as is evident from DISE data. Most of the researchers have focused on various issues relating to elementary education in different states and different districts of India but no studies were carried out on the problems of elementary education in case of Uttar Dinajpur district which is the most backward district educationally in West Bengal. The declining trend in the enrolment rate in the government aided schools and the rapid growth of private schools along with qualitative education of the children in the district demand in-depth empirical exploration. The present paper is an attempt to study the enrolment trend at the elementary level at the government and private schools in Uttar Dinajpur during the period 2012-13 to 2016-17 and enquiry into the problems relating to learning achievements of the children at the elementary level in government schools. The result of the study would be beneficial to the policy makers and planners to make the future policy in order to increase the enrolment in government school and ensure quality education to all the children.

### ***1.1 Objective of the Study:***

The present study has been conducted in the most educationally backward district Uttar Dinajpur of West Bengal with highest illiterate population. The study is therefore an attempt to fulfill the following objectives.

- To analyze the present scenario of elementary education in Uttar Dinajpur
- To examine the academic performances of the students
- To identify the factors affecting the learning performances of the students.

### **2.0 Rationale of the Study:**

The Uttar Dinajpur is the least literate district in West Bengal with literacy rate 60.13% according to the Census 2011 and most of the blocks of Islampur subdivision are educationally backward with less than 60% literacy rate. The district has basically higher concentration of SC, ST and Muslim population and most of the people depend on agriculture. Among all districts, the Uttar Dinajpur is the most backward district in terms of Human Development Index in the State. The

State Government has taken several steps to improve the enrolment in the government schools. Despite several measures, there has been a declining trend in total enrolment between the year 2012-13 and 2016-17 in the district and the enrolments in government schools are found to show a declining trend during the period from 2011-12 to 2016-17 as reported by DISE. Decreasing in enrolment at the government aided primary schools in the district along with migration from public schools to private schools and different annual reports of ASER concerning poor learning outcomes of the children have motivated us to carry out this research study.

As a consequence of several measures taken by the central government and State government on elementary education, the district has made significant progress in terms of enrolment, attendance and drop out, number of schools, number of teachers etc. Though significant progress has been achieved in elementary education but significant variation in literacy rate as well as rate of enrollment in primary education has been found across the district and the spread of literacy has not been uniformed in different block of Islampur Division as compared to that of Raiganj Division as is evident from Census 2011. Red bar diagrams show literacy rate in Islampur subdivision and blue diagram indicates the literacy rate in Raiganj Subdivision.

From Fig. 1, it is evident that there are still educational disparities in some parts of the district. In the northern part of the district there is significant lack in case of educational improvement of the children. The areas are backward in terms of educational development as well as literacy rate. Aided by cultural and linguistic reasons this area has remained backward since long.

Although educational system has extended its coverage to the elementary level in the district and the enrolment rate has increased but there is gender disparity at the elementary level in rural areas. The literacy rate for girls has continued to improve and it is around 53.2% out of the overall literacy of 60.1%, still girls student has lower enrolment rate (48.5% in the year 2016-17) in the district as compared to the rate of enrolment of the boys student. The overall enrolment rate in the district has fallen during the period from 2012-13 to 2016-17 and the enrolment rate in government school has declined by 34% between 2012-13 and 2016-17 which is evident from Fig. 2. Between 2012-13 and 2016-17, a large section of students have been migrating from the government schools to private schools in order to acquire the quality education. The learning outcomes of the students at the elementary level is not encouraging in India as well as in the state which has been reported by ASER-2019 and at least 25% of school children in the four-eight age group do not have age-appropriate cognitive and numeracy skills thereby accounting for a massive learning deficits at the elementary level. In view of the depressing outcomes of learning among the children at elementary level in the state and a sharp declining trend in enrolment in government schools and growth of private schools in the district, the present study is an attempt to look into the problems of elementary education in the district and the results of the study will be effective and beneficial to the policy makers, planners, the State Government and government of India in improving learning outcomes and rate of enrolment in public/government schools.

### **3.0 Data and Methodology:**

In the present investigation, the primary data have been collected by questionnaire schedules to find out the reasons for particular problems of the study. Three questionnaires have been developed, one for schools including questionnaire on performances of children, while the other two are concerned with parents and local people. 100 teachers of various government aided schools, 250 students of several private and government aided schools, 30 schools, 400 guardians and local people, 30 teachers of government aided schools and 10 teachers of private school have been selected randomly and questionnaire was prepared on the basis of 4 point Likert scale to

allow the respondent to indicate the response to the questions. In the present study, secondary data have been collected from various DISE reports, State report cards on elementary education, various U-DISE Flash Statistics, various Census reports, SSA reports and various ASER reports.

The Principal Component Analysis Method (PCA) was applied to analyze the overall scenario of elementary education in the district on the basis of secondary data.

#### **4.0 Area of the Study:**

The District of Uttar Dinajpur came into existence on 1st April, 1992 after the bifurcation of erstwhile West Dinajpur District. The district lies between latitude 25°11' N to 26°49' N and longitude 87°49' E to 90°11' E occupying an area of 3142 Sq. Km enclosed by Bangladesh on the East, Bihar on the West, Darjeeling & Jalpaiguri District on the North and Malda District on the south which is evident from Fig.3

We have conducted our study only to the elementary schools in both Government and Non-Government sector. The study has been conducted throughout the District of Uttar Dinajpur. Efforts have been made in this research work to understand various aspects relating to the problems in elementary education. The study was conducted based on the data collected from field survey through questionnaire and from secondary Source i.e. from schools, SSA records, various published DISE reports on State and district and District primary Council. Survey has been conducted at different schools of nine blocks.

#### **5.0 Scenario of Elementary Education in Uttar Dinajpur District:**

The district Uttar Dinajpur (with head quarter at Raiganj) comes in to effective w.e.f 01/04/1992 with the bifurcation of the erstwhile of the district West Dinajpur (with head quarter at Balurghat). As per 2011 census population of the district is about 30 lakhs which is equals to 3.29% of the populations of the Maharashtra state. The population growth rate of the district is 22.90% which is too much high as compared to state growth rate (13.93%) and the country's growth rate (17.64%). The district has two subdivisions, four municipalities, nine blocks and 98 panchayats. Religious distribution of the people are as follows-50.23% of the people are Muslims, 49% of the people Hindu, 0.565% are Christians. Percentages of SC populations 28.26% and ST populations 5.43%. Most of the people are Bengali speaking and a large portion of the people residing on the part of the Islampur district spoken in Urdu. Long hot summer is the characteristics of the district, hot begins from April. The area of the district is 3140 square kilometres. The district has a Border length of 227 km. with Bangladesh. The district is surrounded by on the north Darjeeling district, on the south by Malda district on east by the country Bangladesh, on the west by the State of Bihar.

Literacy rate of the district is 60.13% which too low as compared to the state literacy rate (77.08%) and country's literacy rate (74.04%). Agriculture is the main profession of the major portion of the people of the district. Survey has been conducted for collection of primary data for the period from January 2018 to November 2019. In the present study, both primary and secondary data have been used. Survey has been conducted both in the government-aided and private Bengali medium school.

From various elementary education report cards as published by DISE, we have collected 14 performance indicators to examine the overall scenario of elementary education of Uttar Dinajpur District.

**Table 1: Time Plots of Different Performance Indicators**

Performances indicators (%)	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Single class room schools	13.3	10.8	9	5.5	5.5
Single teacher schools	1.9	1.9	1.7	2.1	2.2
School approachable by all weather road		79.9	80.4	80.2	80.2
School with playground facility	38.3	36.9	39.2	39.1	39.8
School with boundary wall	20.8	22.9	23.7	26	26.6
School with Girl's toilet	56.3	48.7	70.3	98.8	99.2
School with boy's toilet	37.8	96.4	100	99.7	100
Schools with drinking water	99.6	99.7	99.8	99.8	99.9
Schools provided with MDM	97.7	98	98.2	98.9	98.9
Schools with electricity	12	15.9	20.9	53.8	92.3
Schools with computer	1.5	1.9	2.3	2.4	2.6
Schools with ramp	63.5	75.3	79.8	37.8	18.1
Schools established since 2001		30.2	30	30.7	31
Schools with kitchen shed	71.1	74.1	73.01	73.5	74.9
Schools with enrolment <50		5.8	11.2	12.3	16.1
Schools with SMC	34.4	44.2	46.5	51	53.8
Pupil teacher ratio		31	31	30	27
Student class room ratio	0.8	36	33	30	27
Average teacher's per school		4.3	4.2	4.2	4.2
Female teacher		50.01	50	50.3	50.2
Girls enrolment		50.1		49.5	48.5
Enrolment in govt. schools	379192	343391	331114	316946	285085

Source: DISE Report, 2016 and 2017

### 5.1 Findings from Table 1:

From Table 1, it is observed that all the performance indicators in Uttar Dinajpur District have improved during the period from 2012-13 to 2016-17 with single exception of enrollment in government schools. The state government and the central government have provided free books, free midday meal and free uniform, utensils, teachers etc. and have developed infrastructure such as the construction of school building, separate toilet for boys and girls and also extended electricity in the school. In spite of all these facilities, there is a decreasing trend in enrolment rate in government schools during the period from 2012-13 to 2016-17.

## 6.0 Application of Principal Component Analysis (PCA):

Different performance indicators have been used to examine the overall scenario of elementary education in Uttar Dinajpur District during the period from 2012-13 to 2016-17. In the present study, a range of 14 variables have been used and all these variables have been collected from different annual DISE reports as published by Government of India. Principal Component Analysis is a dimensionality-reduction method that is used to reduce the dimensionality of large data sets, by transforming a large set of variables into a smaller one that still contains most of the information in the large set. The present study uses PCA in order to examine the relationship among the several important variables and to explain the maximum possible proportion of the total variation in the dataset. In the present study, PCA is applied to reduce the original variables into a smaller number of new variables (= principal components) explaining most of the variance in the original variables.

**Table 2: Eigen values and Possible Proportion of the total Variation**

Number	Value	Difference	Proportion	Cumulative Value	Cumulative Proportion
1	9.613960	5.857199	0.6867	9.613960	0.6867
2	3.756760	3.409974	0.2683	13.37072	0.9551
3	0.346786	0.064292	0.0248	13.71751	0.9798
4	0.282494	0.282494	0.0202	14.00000	1.0000
5	5.39E-16	2.83E-16	0.0000	14.00000	1.0000

6	2.56E-16	5.65E-17	0.0000	14.00000	1.0000
7	2.00E-16	1.40E-16	0.0000	14.00000	1.0000
8	6.02E-17	1.79E-16	0.0000	14.00000	1.0000
9	-1.19E-16	5.21E-17	-0.0000	14.00000	1.0000
10	-1.71E-16	1.68E-16	-0.0000	14.00000	1.0000
11	-3.39E-16	1.94E-16	-0.0000	14.00000	1.0000
12	-5.32E-16	3.81E-16	-0.0000	14.00000	1.0000
13	-9.13E-16	1.84E-15	-0.0000	14.00000	1.0000
14	-276E-15	--	-0.0000	14.00000	1.0000

Source: Computations from E-views software

Eigen Values: Sum = 14, Average = 1  
Principal Components Analysis  
Sample 2013 – 2017  
Included observations: 5  
Computed using: Ordinary Correlations

### 6.1 Findings from Table 2:

Table 2 shows that the first principal component accounts for 68.67% of the total variations while the second principal component analysis explains 26.83% of the total. The first two principal components account for over 95% of the total variations. Therefore the first two components can be taken into account and other six components are not important enough to include.

**Table 3: Principal Component Analysis of all Chosen Variables’ Eigen Vectors (loadings)**

Variable	PC 1	PC 2	PC 3	PC 4	PC 5	PC 6	PC 7
ELECT	0.250002	-0.297179	0.418554	0.152691	0.008973	0.033270	-0.009489
ER	-0.187028	0.395814	0.296003	0.130654	0.130654	-0.060343	0.136345
FT	0.295121	0.202902	-0.150769	-0.014158	0.153428	0.235179	-0.060895
GIRLS	0.042318	0.510834	-0.005593	0.092953	-0.247291	-0.492709	0.203713
KITCHEN	0.212850	0.378079	0.061912	0.303985	0.183843	0.356048	0.211434
MDM	0.289873	-0.207863	0.276284	0.109421	0.230556	0.009542	-0.140335
PTR	-0.305609	-0.136360	-0.262161	-0.172404	0.721733	-0.163212	0.163698
PLAY	0.302047	0.144464	-0.346225	-0.101731	0.192382	-0.067653	0.106439
SCR	-0.322178	0.021891	0.026415	-0.011954	0.030602	0.396319	0.242744
SMC	0.320760	0.035609	0.108449	0.084242	0.354724	-0.203315	-0.354199
TEACHER	0.249396	0.310445	0.313619	-0.143962	0.160324	0.383373	0.104265
THAN50	0.277057	-0.152432	-0.340483	0.690105	0.067270	0.202790	0.433447
TOILET	0.239259	-0.325453	0.200581	-0.365701	-0.129071	-0.303708	0.644931
WATER	0.311088	-0.001278	-0.422717	-0.164358	-0.282201	0.245685	-0.185803

Contd...

Variable	PC 8	PC 9	PC 10	PC 11	PC 12	PC 13	PC 14
ELECT	-0.054570	0.017996	0.024787	-0.032802	0.012050	0.053838	0.800855
ER	0.003461	0.228754	0.259794	-0.126438	0.618513	-0.049325	-0.046785
FT	-0.298909	0.073372	0.057348	-0.155581	-0.019546	0.802180	-0.011809
GIRLS	0.287680	-0.080711	0.102829	0.326704	-0.347717	-0.060401	0.228110
KITCHEN	-0.003053	0.613993	0.268425	-0.033896	-0.187161	-0.130321	0.089598
MDM	-0.023857	0.210150	0.243997	0.705742	-0.056472	0.033013	-0.323886
PTR	0.338155	-0.031139	0.22045	0.15561	0.102554	0.087777	0.0238675
PLAY	-0.586386	-0.238288	0.204864	0.113452	0.163874	-0.446188	0.152813
SCR	-0.125658	-0.043961	0.682910	-0.080614	-0.410002	0.129983	0.048659
SMC	0.264295	-0.012842	0.253426	-0.512166	-0.290383	-0.086512	-0.146277
TEACHER	0.211893	-0.660305	-0.123309	0.058856	0.100726	0.13611	-0.090955
THAN50	0.131440	-0.014656	-0.171114	-0.253930	-0.129919	0.011943	-0.087197
TOILET	0.088173	0.039306	0.157681	-0.193284	0.137440	-0.009217	-0.217979
WATER	0.458843	0.129185	0.379538	0.055950	0.346358	0.069009	0.154487

Source: Computations from E-views software

### **6.2 Findings from Table 3:**

Table 3 presents the loadings of all principal components and the first principal component (PC1) has a significant positive associations with electricity, female teacher, mid day meal, play ground, school management committee and water as well as significant negative association with student classroom ratio (SCR), pupil teacher ratio (PTR) while the second principal component (PC2) has a significant positive association with enrolment rate (ER), percentage of girls, kitchen shed and average teacher per school as well as negatively correlated with toilet facility. Hence the first component and second component are being primarily a measure of elementary education in the district. The remaining 12 components do not provide any meaningful association with the variables that can be taken into consideration.

### **6.3 Findings from Fig. 4:**

The scree plot (Fig.4) shows that the first two principal components have eigen values greater than one and these two components explain more than 95% of the total variations in the variables. Fig. 4 exhibits that the eigen values start to form a straight line after the second principal component. Since 95% is an adequate amount of variation explained in the data then we will use the first two principal components.

### **6.4 Findings from Fig. 5:**

Biplot of orthonormal Loadings identifies the variables that have the largest effects on each component. Loadings close to +1 and -1 indicate that the variable strongly influences the component. Fig. 5 shows girls enrolment, mid day meal, Playground, toilet, school management committee, average teacher per school, female teacher per school, kitchen shed and school with less than 50 students have moderate positive effect on the first component and school classroom ratio (SCR) and Pupil teacher ratio (PTR) and enrolment have moderate negative effect on first principal component. Fig. 5 also demonstrates that the total enrolment and girls' enrolment are positively correlated with the second component.

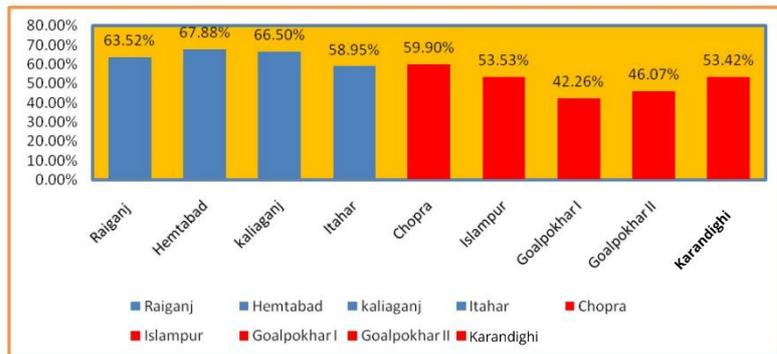
### **6.5 Overall findings of Principal Component Analysis:**

Therefore the Principal Component Analysis shows that all the variables taken for examining the overall scenario of elementary education in Uttar Dinajpur district are important. In the study the PCA fails to identify the variables explaining the most variation within the set of variables. Since 1950, all efforts were focused on the provision of several facilities like mid day meal scheme, school classroom infrastructure, growth in the number of teachers, Playground, toilet, school management committee, female teacher per school, kitchen shed and retention rate and all these facilities and different programmes reached to the target group. In addition to these factors, there are other factors which have been emerged from the present field survey study and these should be taken into account to realize the goals of universalisation of elementary education in the district.

## **7.0 Primary Data Analysis and Findings:**

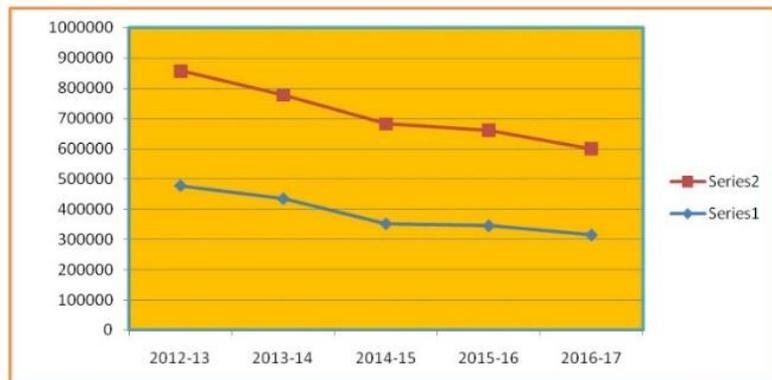
Primary data analysis is the original analysis of the information obtained directly from the field of survey. Analyzing the primary data is the process of making a sense of the collected information to answer the specific research questions and hypothesis of the research study. The primary data have been collected through questionnaire in order to examine the problems of elementary education in the district.

**Fig. 1: Literacy Rate in Nine Blocks of Uttar Dinajpur**



(Source: Information System for Education Data, Census 2011)

**Fig. 2: Overall Enrolment and Enrolment in Govt. Schools where Series 1 represents enrolment in Govt. Schools of the district and Series 2 indicates overall enrolment in the district**



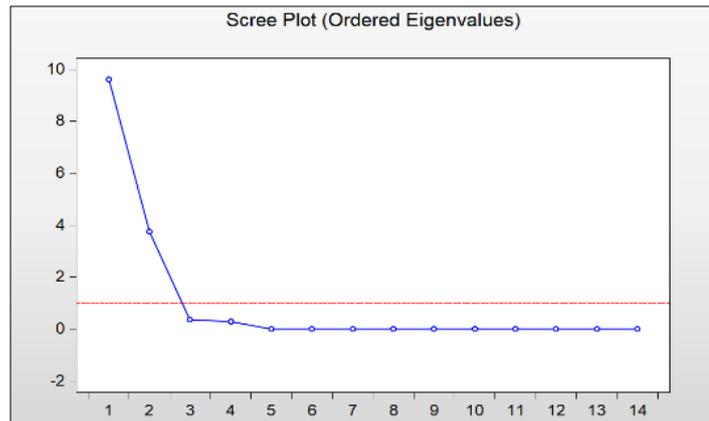
(Source: Information System for Education Data. Various annual reports)

**Fig. 3: Map of the District of Uttar Dinajpur**



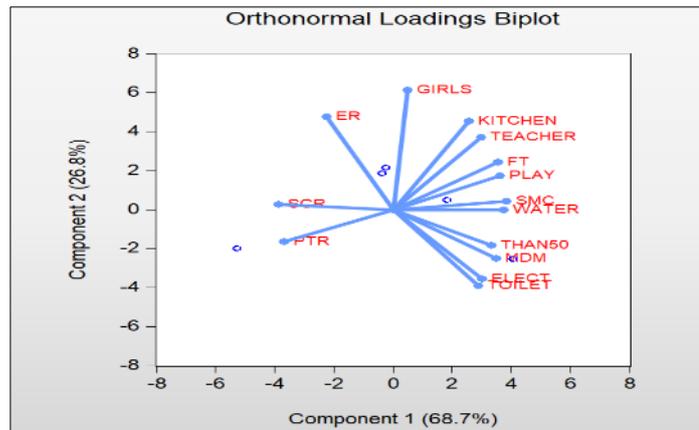
(Source: Adopted by the authors from the Official Website of the Uttar Dinajpur Zilla Parishad (<https://www.udzp.in>))

Fig. 4: Scree Plot



(Source: computations from E-views software)

Fig. 5: Biplot of Orthonormal Loadings



(Source: computations from E-views software)

During survey some elementary questions were asked to 500 odd students of classes IV, taking 250 from government aided school and 250 from private school and total 27 questions were asked. The results collected from them are tabled below.

**7.1 Learning Outcomes:**

Table 4 shows the subject wise responses collected from the students of 30 government aided school from the various parts of the district Uttar Dinajpur.

**Table 4: subject wise responses from Government schools**

Number of questions answered out of 27 questions	Number of respondents out of 250 respondents	Percentage (%) of respondents	Number of questions answered correctly on mathematics*	Number of question answered correctly on English#	Number of question answered correctly on General knowledge@
Not more than 3	75	30%	1	1	1
Not more than 7	155	62%	3	2	2
Not more than 11	10	4%	5	2	3
Not more than 15	5	2%	6	3	3
Not more than 19	3	1.2%	8	3	6
Not more than 23	2	0.08%	10	5	5
Up to 27	0	NA	NA	NA	NA
Total	250	100%			

Source: Data obtained from field survey, 2019



Questions on different subjects are mentioned in questionnaire  
 \* Mathematics carries 11 questions  
 # English carries 9 questions  
 @ General Knowledge carries 7 questions

Table 5 presents the subject wise responses collected from the students in private school at the various parts of the district Uttar Dinajpur.

**Table 5: subject wise responses from private schools**

Number of questions answered	Number of respondents	Percentage (%) of respondents	Number of question answered correctly on mathematics	Number of question answered correctly on English	Number of question answered correctly on General knowledge
Not more than 3	0	0	0	0	0
Not more than 7	0	0	0	0	0
Not more than 11	22	8.8%	4	3	4
Not more than 15	43	17.2%	6	5	4
Not more than 19	60	24%	8	6	5
Not more than 23	85	34%	10	7	5
Up to 27	40	16%	11	9	6
Total	250	100%			

Source: Data obtained from field survey, 2019

Questions on different subjects are mentioned in questionnaire  
 \* Mathematics carries 11 questions  
 # English carries 9 questions  
 @ General Knowledge carries 7 questions

To compare the performances of the students in both government schools and private school, we apply t-test to compare the average performances of the students between the government school and private school.

In the null hypothesis we assume that

H<sub>0</sub>: Government schools provide better education than private school

H<sub>1</sub>: Government schools do not provide better education than private school

Government School

$$N_1: 7, df_1 = N - 1 = 7 - 1 = 6, M_1: 174.71, SS_1: 543923.43, s^2_1 = SS_1/(N - 1) = 543923.43/(7-1) = 90653.9$$

Private School

$$N_2: 7, df_2 = N - 1 = 7 - 1 = 6, M_2: 668.14, SS_2: 1259180.48, s^2_2 = SS_2/(N - 1) = 1259180.48/(7-1) = 209863.41$$

t-value Calculation

$$s^2_p = ((df_1/(df_1 + df_2)) * s^2_1) + ((df_2/(df_2 + df_1)) * s^2_2) = ((6/12) * 90653.9) + ((6/12) * 209863.41) = 150258.66$$

$$s^2_{M1} = s^2_p/N_1 = 150258.66/7 = 21465.52$$

$$s^2_{M2} = s^2_p/N_2 = 150258.66/7 = 21465.52$$

$$t = (M_1 - M_2)/\sqrt{(s^2_{M1} + s^2_{M2})} = -493.43/\sqrt{42931.05} = -2.38$$

The t-value is- 2.38143. The p value is .017336. The result is significant at  $p < .05$ . Since the t value is significant, therefore we can reject the null hypothesis. So the given data indicate that the students of private schools are performing better than that of government schools.

### 7.1.1 Findings from Table 4 & 5:

From the above results, it is found that subject wise responses collected from the students of class IV of the government aided schools are not satisfactory or rather very poor. The results confirm that the students of private schools do perform better than government schools with respect to mathematics, English and General Knowledge. Table 5 reflects that 75% students of private schools

have been able to provide the correct answers on more than 19 questions while 92% students of the government schools have been able to provide the correct answers on 7 questions only with respect to Mathematics, English and General Knowledge. Hence the sample data confirms the learning deficits among the children of the government schools in Uttar Dinajpur district.

### 7.2 Work Load of Mid-Day Meal:

A remarkable percentage (62%) of the teachers including head of the institutions opined that work load of Mid-day meal hampers day to day work of teaching learning process. Survey was conducted among 100 teachers in the government aided schools and it was asked whether or not the mid day meal system affected the daily activities of the teaching learning process? Their responses are cited in tabular form.

**Table 6: Responses of teachers on Mid-day Meal**

Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents	Responses of teachers
100	62	Yes, they are involved in mid day meal duty and it hampers day to day teaching learning activities during the school hours
	23	No comments
	15	No, it does not hamper the daily teaching learning activities of the school
Total	100	

Source: Data obtained from field survey. 2019

During survey, data have been collected from the teachers of the government aided primary schools. Questions asked 100 teachers and collected their responses about the work load of the Mid-day meal system running in the school. It is observed that 62% of the teachers reported that their involvement in the midday meal system hampers the daily activities of the teaching learning process.

#### 7.2.1 Findings from Table 6:

From the above results and Table 6, it is found that most of the teachers are concerned with their involvement in Mid-day meal program while only 15% teachers are not concerned. Since the teachers have been given the responsibility for collecting MDM rice and others foods items from the concerned authority and for purchasing the vegetables and other ingredients from the local market along with the distribution of MDM and consequently, the teaching learning process has been impacted for the teachers' involvement in Mid-day meal programme.

During survey it is also noticed that school authority spent more time for procuring, cooking and serving of the Mid-day meal during class hours. Raising this issue amongst 40 head masters and having asked them as to how many hours teachers spend on the procurement, cooking and serving of mid day meals. Most of the headmasters and headmistress said that mid day meal has become a responsibility for teachers and head of the institutions. They are responsible for record keeping, stocking of food, monitoring the cooking process, maintaining the accounts and serving the meal. Their responses are recorded in Table 7.

**Table 7: Time spent on procurement, cooking and serving of MDM**

Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents	Responses
23	57.5	2 hours
7	17.5	1 and ½ hours
7	17.5	1 hour
3	7.5	No

Source: Data obtained from field survey, 2019

Survey was conducted amongst 40 headmasters of government aided primary schools and collected the data on time spent by the teachers over the Mid-day meal per day.

### 7.2.2 Findings from Table 7:

From the above result it is found that the teachers spent more than one hour on Mid-day meal during class hours so the teachers are getting less time in the class room teaching which is a perennial issue that has a direct impact on the quality of education. It is a counter-productive for teachers to spend time on Mid-day meal.

### 7.3 Arrival & Departure of Teachers:

In the survey process, we meet 300 numbers of guardians and local people and asked them about the attendance (arrival and departure) of the teachers of the government aided school and mixed responses came from their end which are cited in Table 8.

**Table 8: Responses of guardians and local people**

No of people	Percentage of respondent	Cumulative	Responses of guardians and local people
147	49%	147	Strongly agree that most of the teachers attended school after 11.30 a.m. and leaves before 4p.m. they are not regular also.
60	20%	207	Agree that few teachers attended school every day delayed and they are involved in other jobs besides teaching
30	10%	237	Strongly disagree
63	21%	300=N	Disagree
Total	100%		

Source: Data obtained from field survey. 2019

### 7.3.1 Findings from Table 8:

During survey some guardian voluntarily reported raised objections about the timely attendance of the teachers and from collected information as reported Table 8, it is observed that 69% of teachers attended school every day in a delayed manner which hampers teaching learning process and also the learning environment of the school.

In case of private school we meet 100 guardians and local people and asked them about the attendance (arrival and departure) in school and responses are mentioned in Table 9.

**Table 9: Responses of guardians about the teacher's attendance in private school**

Number of people	%	Responses
98	98%	Strongly agree, they are satisfied, teachers enters into the school before prayer line and sometimes worked beyond school hours on and for the benefit of the students
02	2%	Agree
Nil	0%	Strongly disagree
Nil	0%	Disagree

Source: Data obtained from field survey. 2019

### 7.3.2 Findings from Table 9:

From Table 9, it is found that attendance of the teachers in the private schools is satisfactory and they enjoy less leave as compared to the teachers of government schools. Because the teachers of the private schools believe that their job is insecure and they are guided by the private management. The academic performance of the students in private schools is far better than that of government schools because of the active involvement of the teachers and strict supervision of the head of the institutions.

## 7.4 Parent-Teacher Meeting

During the survey period, we meet 30 teachers of the government aided school and asked the questions as to whether parents-teachers meetings are held at fixed intervals? The responses are recorded in Table 10

**Table 10: Responses of teachers about parent-teacher meeting**

Number of teachers	Percentage	Responses of teachers
23	76%	System is there but not fruitful. All the guardians do not attend the school for the discussion about performances and deficiency of the students. Sometimes few guardians came to the school raising objection against the school about midday meal and other scholarship scheme.
05	16%	No comments.
02	8%	They sometimes meet with guardians in home and discussing with them about the progress and deficiency of the children but guardians have no interest to hear their problems make solutions since they are first generation Lerner.

Source: Data obtained from field survey, 2019

### 7.4.1 Findings from Table 10:

The given data from Table 10 indicate that most of the teachers (76%) do not meet the parents which directly impact the learning outcomes of the students. There is a provision of parent-teacher meeting in the government schools and the meeting has not conducted mainly due to lack of awareness among the guardians and teachers' apathy towards parent-teacher meeting.

During the survey we meet 30 guardians of the students (government aided school) and they were asked the questions that whether they attend any meeting called by the school authority? The responses are recorded in Table 11.

**Table 11: Responses of guardians about parent-teacher meeting**

Number of Guardians	Percentage	Responses of guardians
28	93%	No interest to discuss about the performances and deficiency of their children rather they have greater interest for earning. Most of them belong to the poor class but out of them 20 guardians openly express their views that they sent their children for free midday meal
02	7%	No comments.

Source: Data obtained from field survey. 2019

### 7.4.2 Findings from Table 11:

The given data shows that most of the guardians do not attend the parent-teachers meeting. Most of the parents are not concerned with their child's academic performances due to their lack of awareness and their socio economic conditions.

In the survey process we meet with 30 teachers of Private school and asked the questions as to whether compulsory guardians and teacher meeting after a certain interval is held or not? The responses are recorded in Table 12

**Table 12: Responses of teachers about parents-teachers meeting**

Number of teachers	Percentage	Responses of teachers
28	93%	Compulsory system is there. All the teachers meet with guardians after a certain interval and they also discuss with the guardians about the deficiency and performances of the students and also give suggestion for improvement. This makes the students to meet challenges and competitions with others.
01	3.5%	No comments.
01	3.5%	Not fruitful because guardians just hear the problems of their children but do not take any corrective action.

Source: Data obtained from field survey, 2019

During survey time we meet 30 guardians and collect their responses which are recorded in Table 13.

**Table 13: Responses of guardians about meeting**

Number of Guardians	percentage	Responses of guardians
28	93%	Strongly agree about the effectiveness, because teachers meet with us after certain interval and they also inform us about the success and failure of the students.
02	7%	Agree
Nil	0%	Disagree
Nil	0%	Strongly disagree

Source: Data obtained from field survey. 2019

#### 7.4.3 Findings from Table 12 & 13:

The survey results reveal that 93% teachers and guardians are very much concerned with the parents –teachers meeting and both teachers and guardians attend the meeting at regular interval about the child’s learning and progress. Teachers apprise the parents about the child’s attendance, behavior and progress which are necessary to improve the quality of education.

#### 7.5 Use of Mobile Phone:

In the survey process question were asked to 60 teachers of the government aided school as to whether they use the mobile phone during the class hours.

**Table 14: Responses of teachers about mobile phone**

Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents	Responses of teachers
45	75	Using cell phone
10	16.66	Silent
05	8.33	Not using cell phone

Source: Data obtained from field survey. 2019

#### 7.5.1 Findings from Table 14:

The data demonstrate that most of the teachers are using the mobile phone during the course of teaching. During survey some guardians pointed the matter for using mobile phone in the class room by some teachers. Teachers most of the times are involved in mobile chatting or long call after giving tasks to their children and students thereby lose their concentration and make noises in the class room, affecting the discipline of the school.

#### 7.6 Supervision of the School Inspector

During survey process question were asked to the 30 head of the institution of the government aided schools regarding the supervision of overall function of the school at the regular interval for the improvement of teaching learning process. Responses are reported in Table 15

**Table 15: Responses of the headmaster about the supervision of SI**

Total number of respondents in government aided school	Responses of headmaster/headmistress about the supervision of SI of school	Number of respondents	Percentage of the number of respondents
30	SI of school did not visit	21	70
	SI visited the school	6	20
	No response	3	10

Source: Data obtained from field survey. 2019

### 7.6.1 Findings from table 15:

The data shows that most of the school inspectors have not visited the school to look after the overall academic environment of the school. But SI of the schools should remain in charge of inspecting the primary schools in his circle.

### 7.7 Parents' Awareness about Child's Progress

Survey was conducted among 30 guardians of the students of government aided schools and 30 guardians of the students of private schools to know their cognition and interest concerning their children's learning outcomes.

**Table 16: Responses of parents' awareness**

Types of Respondents	Number of Respondents	Whether Checked home work every day?	Whether concerned about child's learning outcomes?	Whether the child depends on private tuition?	Whether times spent on child education
Guardians of government aided school	30	No	No	Yes	No
Guardians of private school	30	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: Data obtained from field survey. 2019

#### 7.7.1 Findings from Table 16:

During field survey, it is noticed that most of the guardians of the government aided school specially fathers have no interest about the education of their children, because of the poverty and in search of daily earnings, both father and mother are engaged in the work (temporary nature). Since most of the learners are first generation learners and their parents do not get involved in their child's education. Parents of government aided schools of rural areas are completely indifferent about the child's home task and their learning performances. In case of private schools, parents are spending time on child's education and the regular supervision of the school authority regarding child's academic performances which is completely absent in government aided schools.

### 8.0 Major Findings & Concluding Remarks:

The main objective of the Sarva Shikha Abhiyan (SSA) is to universalize primary education in India. One of its important objectives emphasizes on elementary education of satisfactory quality. However, the SSA has by and large become a program for providing all kinds of facilities and increasing enrolments in schools as is evident from the present study. All the efforts taken by the SSA have played a significant role in the expansion of primary education in the district. The lack of focus is evident from the learning outcomes of the students of the government aided schools and several factors hampering the elementary education have been revealed from the present study. The present study comes out with some important findings which should be addressed to ensure the quality of education. All these major problems on different dimensions in connection with the elementary education in the district are being presented below.

- The academic performances of the students of the government aided schools are not satisfactory as compared to the students of private schools. The students of government aided schools have not attained foundational numeracy and literacy and the students are migrating to fee charging private schools owing to the belief in parents that private schools offer better teaching than government schools.
- Most of the teachers of government aided schools remain busy for collecting MDM rice and others foods items from the concerned authority and for purchasing the vegetables

and other ingredients from the local market along with the distribution of MDM. Most of the teachers spent more than one hour on mid day meal during class hours and so the teachers are getting less time in the class room teaching. So the teaching learning process has been adversely impacted by this scheme.

- Teacher's dedication to their job is pivotal to ensure the success of education system and teacher attendance is directly related to the academic outcomes of the students. If the teachers do not attend the classes on time the allotted classes will not be completed or will be completed in unsatisfactory manner. The study reveals that most of the teachers are not attending the school on time which directly affects the quality of education.
- Parent-teacher meetings play a significant role in enhancing a child's education. It is an effective platform for both parents as well as teachers to discuss how the child has been doing in school. The present study reports that most of the teachers do not meet the parents which directly impact the learning outcomes of the students. There is a provision of parents meet in the government aided schools but the meetings were not organized mainly due to lack of awareness among the guardians and also due to teachers' apathy.
- Teachers most of the times are busy with mobile phones after giving tasks to their students which disrupts the teaching learning process and students thereby lose their interest in the learning process at the class room. The study reveals that 75% teachers out of chosen sample use Mobile phone at the class room which has impacted the quality of education in rural areas in a big way.
- Most of the school inspectors did not visit the school to look after the overall academic environment of the school. But each SI of the schools remains in charge of inspecting the primary schools in his circle and SI of the school is responsible for school inspection. The administrative authority is not concerned with the learning achievements of the students of the government aided schools in rural areas.
- The study reveals that the parents of government aided schools of the rural areas are completely indifferent about the child's home task and their learning performances while the parents of private schools are very much concerned with the child's education. The study reports that learning differences between the governments aided schools and private schools are very common in rural areas.

### **9.0 Concluding Remarks:**

Uttar Dinajpur is an economically backward district. Agriculture is the main profession of the greater portion of the people in the district. Elementary education in Uttar Dinajpur district needs to be spread amongst the deprived, marginalized and socioeconomically backward sections of the society. Most of the poor people send their children to the government aided school for acquiring education because they have no capacity to bear the burden of expenditure on private school where quality of education is imparted. The study shows that the children are not achieving class appropriate learning level in the government aided schools. The abysmal condition of primary school causing a flight of students from public schools to private schools and this is evident from the fact that in 2014 30.8% of all 6-14 years old children in rural area were enrolled in private schools as opposed to 29% in 2013. The study paints a pretty sad picture of Uttar Dinajpur district and the study highlights the ground realities of the elementary education of the district as noticed during field survey which severally affects the overall academic ambience and learning achievements of the students. The overall findings obtained from the study are consistent with Annual Status of Education Report 2019. Moreover, the study can provide important insights into the areas in which the planner and policy makers should focus to ensure that all children learn.

From the study it is observed that there exists a significant gap between the policy and the reality and this can be filled by restructuring the education system.

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