Chapter 5

Literacy and Education in the District

5.1 Introduction

Education is a human right. Education is essential for human emancipation and social development. It contributes to better health, higher productivity, greater income, human freedom, capability and esteemed living, increased participation in community life. Education is the single best development investment and a powerful instrument to develop an economically prosperous society. The long term social and economic return from education is enormous.

Education, as articulated in National Policy on Education (1986), is a "dynamic, cumulative, life long process providing diversity of learning opportunities to all segments of society." The Human Development Reports (HDR) published by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) stress upon the importance of education in human development. The basic underpinning behind the concept of human development is that the income centered understanding of human development cannot manifest the actual development scenario and needs to be attended by other aspects such as education. The Human Development Index (HDI) uses literacy rate and school enrolment rate to develop an index of education. The literacy rate is given a two-third and school enrolment rate a one-third weightage in formulating the index.

5.2 Education Scenario in South 24 Parganas vis-à-vis Other Districts of West Bengal: A Consistent Mediocrity

The literacy rate in South 24 Parganas as per Census 2001 is higher than the literacy rate of West Bengal. The literacy rate in the district fell short of the state literacy rate in 1991. But an impressive decadal movement during 1991-2001 has raised the literacy

Table 5.1: Literacy Rate: The State and the District

State/District	Literacy Rate (Excluding 0-6 Population) in Percentage 1991			Literacy Rate (Excluding 0-6 Population) in Percentage 2001			Percentage Point Change in Literacy Rate (Excluding 0-6 Population) during 1991-2001		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
West Bengal	57.70	67.81	46.56	69.22	77.58	60.22	11.52	9.77	13.66
South 24 Parganas	55.10	68.45	40.57	70.16	79.89	59.73	15.06	11.44	19.16

Source: Census, 1991 and 2001

Table 5.2: Education Scenario of South 24 Parganas vis-à-vis Other Districts of West Bengal

District		HDI Rank for 2004	Education Scenario in the Districts of West Bengal							
			Literacy Rate (Excluding 0-6 Population) in Percentage *				School Enrolment Rate in Percentage **			
			Male Rank in ( )	Female Rank in ( )	Gender Gap Rank in ( )	Person Rank in ( )	Male Rank in ( )	Female Rank in ( )	Gender Gap Rank in ( )	Person Rank in ( )
Kolkata		1	84.07 (3)	77.92 (1)	6.15 (1)	81.31 (1)	77.80 (1)	66.80 (3)	11.00 (10)	72.30 (1)
Howrah		2	83.68 (4)	70.93 (3)	12.75 (4)	77.64 (3)	73.80 (3)	63.30 (5)	10.50 (9)	68.50 (5)
North 24 Parganas		3	84.35 (2)	72.13 (2)	12.22 (2)	78.49 (2)	72.60 (4)	66.50 (4)	6.10 (2)	69.60 (4)
Darjeeling		4	81.28 (6)	63.92 (6)	17.36 (7)	72.87 (6)	71.50 (5)	68.80 (1)	2.70 (1)	70.10 (3)
Burdwan		5	79.30 (8)	61.93 (7)	17.37 (8)	71.00 (7)	64.90 (12)	56.80 (8)	8.10 (5)	60.80 (9)
Hooghly		6	83.05 (5)	67.72 (4)	15.33 (6)	75.59 (4)	71.20 (6)	61.70 (6)	9.50 (7)	66.40 (6)
Medinipur		7	85.25 (1)	64.63 (5)	20.62 (14)	75.17 (5)	74.40 (2)	67.00 (2)	7.40 (3)	70.70 (2)
South 24 Parganas		8	79.89 (7)	59.73 (9)	20.16 (13)	70.16 (8)	69.60 (7)	56.40 (9)	13.20 (11)	63.00 (8)
Nadia		9	72.67 (14)	60.06 (8)	12.61 (3)	66.55 (10)	68.00 (9)	60.30 (7)	7.70 (4)	64.10 (7)
Jalpaiguri		10	73.64 (12)	52.90 (12)	20.74 (15)	63.62 (13)	60.60 (14)	43.20 (13)	17.40 (14)	51.90 (14)
Bankura		11	77.21 (9)	49.80 (14)	27.41 (17)	63.84 (12)	69.40 (8)	51.90 (11)	17.50 (15)	60.60 (10)
Coochbehar		11	76.83 (10)	57.04 (10)	19.79 (12)	67.21 (9)	65.70 (11)	51.90 (11)	13.80 (12)	58.80 (11)
Dinajpur	N	13	59.27 (17)	37.16 (17)	22.11 (16)	48.63 (18)	57.20 (15)	42.00 (14)	15.20 (13)	49.60 (16)
	S		73.30 (13)	55.12 (11)	18.18 (10)	64.46 (11)	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Birbhum		14	71.57 (15)	52.21 (13)	19.36 (11)	62.16 (14)	62.50 (13)	52.50 (10)	10.00 (8)	57.50 (12)
Murshidabad		15	61.40 (16)	48.33 (15)	13.07 (5)	55.05 (16)	53.90 (16)	45.80 (12)	8.10 (5)	49.80 (15)
Purulia		16	74.18 (11)	37.15 (18)	37.03 (18)	56.14 (15)	66.20 (10)	42.00 (14)	24.20 (16)	54.10 (13)
Malda		17	59.24 (18)	41.67 (16)	17.57 (9)	50.71 (17)	45.90 (17)	37.20 (15)	8.70 (6)	41.50 (17)

Source: West Bengal Human Development Report 2004. N: North, S: South, N.A.: Not Available

* Census 2001; **Derived from Central Sample data of the NSS for the 55th Round (1999-2000)

Ranks are calculated for a list of 17 districts of West Bengal. The highest in each case except gender gap is ranked 1. The lowest is ranked 1 in case of gender gap.

CH5

CH5

rate of South 24 Parganas above the state level in 2001. The most satisfactory development was in female literacy rate. Whereas female literacy rate in 1991 was far below the state average, an almost 20 percent point rise in female literacy rate in the district has pushed it near the state average in 2001. The decadal percentage point increase in male and female literacy rate in the district was higher than the increase in male and female literacy rate registered in the state during the same period. The district recorded a higher decadal percentage point increase in literacy from 55.10 per cent in 1991 to 70.16 per cent in 2001. The state literacy level increased from 57.7 per cent in 1991 to 69.2 per cent in 2001. The district observed a note-worthy decrease in gender gap in literacy during the decade.

The West Bengal Human Development Report (2004), following the UNDP HDR, used literacy and school enrolment rate as parameters of education to formulate education index for West Bengal. The performance of the district is near the average when compared to other districts of West Bengal. The district was ranked 8th in terms of overall human development index. The district also stood 8th in respect of both the parameters of education i.e. the literacy rate and the school enrolment rate. Though the comparative position is not favourable, a ray of hope is seen, when the decadal performance of the district is analysed. A comparative study among 18 districts of West Bengal reveals that the decadal percentage point improvement in female literacy in South 24 Parganas ranks 4th highest. The change in overall literacy during the decade is also worth mentioning and is 5th highest amongst the districts of West Bengal.

The West Bengal Human Development Report (2004) found two aspects of education that needs careful policy intervention in the district. Both for literacy and enrolment, the gender gap measured by male female difference, is alarmingly high in the district. It is observed that gender disparity for these two parameters is wider

Table 5.3: Literacy Rates among SCs and STs of South 24 Parganas vis-a-vis Some Other Districts of West Bengal

District	Literacy Rate in Percentage among Scheduled Castes(2001)		Literacy Rate in Percentage among Scheduled Tribes(2001)	
	Male Rank in ( )	Female Rank in ( )	Male Rank in ( )	Female Rank in ( )
Kolkata	63.51	47.25 (1)	64.30 (1)	42.00 (1)
Medinipur	68.66 (1)	39.75	55.57	24.56
South 24 Parganas	64.99 (2)	33.44 (5)	36.43 (11)	12.14 (12)

Source: West Bengal Human Development Report 2004
Ranks are calculated for a list of 18 districts of West Bengal. The highest is ranked 1.

when compared to many other districts of West Bengal. Another alarming observation is the low rate of literacy among the underprivileged classes specially the STs. The district is outperformed on the said two fronts by the contiguous districts e.g. Kolkata, Howrah, North 24 Parganas and Medinipur.

5.3 The State of Elementary Education: An Inter Regional Comparison

Literacy and basic schooling liberate people. They impart skills and confidence and change the lifestyle of learners. They are instrumental in reducing sense of insecurity carried by an illiterate person. Elementary education can be very important to get gainful employment. Literate people are more vocal and are more capable of invoking their rights. Basic education for women is vital as it has a multiplier effect on social development. Women's education influences women's ability to earn independently, to find employment outside the home, and, to gain decision making power within and outside family. Women's literacy and elementary education control fertility rate, mortality rate of children, gender disparity within the family. Educated women marry later and are more likely to send their own children to schools.

It is obvious that any district level development initiative is directed by the policies taken at the state level. The state of West Bengal has long been spending a sizeable proportion of the budget on education. The central programmes on literacy and elementary education are earnestly implemented. The literacy movement has also been taken as a political movement in the state. Though there are variations across districts, this has led to increase in literacy at a rapid rate and the district of South 24 Parganas has really proved it.

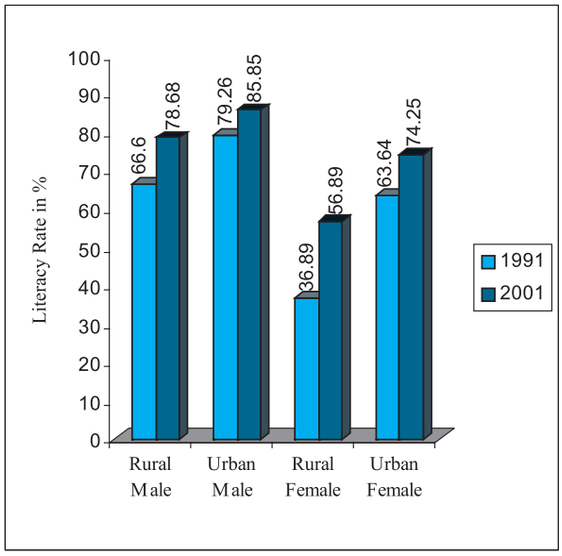
5.3.1. Literacy

The most authentic estimates of block and municipality level literacy are obtained from the Census reports. The latest Census report (2001) found the literacy rate in the district to be 70.16 percent. The male literacy rate of 79.89 percent, is predictably higher than the female literacy rate, which is 59.73 percent. The most spectacular improvement in literacy during 1991-2001

CH5

was observed in respect of rural females (Figure 5.1). An analysis of the decadal growth (1991-2001) of literacy rate reveals that 21 among 29 blocks and 1 among 7 municipalities registered more than 15 percentage point increase in literacy rate (Table 5.4). Municipalities generally are far ahead than blocks in terms of literacy rate indicative of a substantial rural urban gap. Surprisingly, decadal performance in some municipal areas is not worth mentioning. Whereas Rajpur Sonarpur municipality registered only 1.63 percentage point increase during 1991-2001, literacy rate in Maheshtala municipality actually went downward. The administrative reorganisation of the municipality might be the cause of fall in literacy. No remarkable change in the relative position of the municipalities has been seen during 1991 and 2001. Whereas Baruipur, Rajpur-Sonarpur and Maheshtala municipalities were the forerunners in 1991, only Baruipur and Rajpur-Sonarpur retained their positions in 2001. The best percentage point increase of 21.74 percent in literacy rate among municipalities was achieved by Pujali municipality. But the achievement was not enough to raise the relative position of the municipality. Pujali, among municipalities of the district, remained at the bottom in 1991 as well as in 2001.

Figure 5.1: Changes in Literacy Rate in the District during 1991-2001



So far as the blocks of the district are concerned, the blocks of the Sunderban region excepting Sagar and Namkhana are the worst performers in terms of literacy. The situation has not changed much during the decade of 1991–2001. All 5 worst performing blocks, in 1991 and 2001, were in the Sunderban region. Though literacy performance in blocks of Sunderban is poor, all blocks of Sunderban other than Sagar and Mathurapur-I registered a 15

Table 5.4: Changes in Literacy Rate in the Blocks and Municipalities of South 24 Parganas during 1991–2001

Region	Block/ Municipality (M)	Literacy Rate (Excluding 0-6 Population) in Percentage as per Census 1991							
		Male	Rank	Female	Rank	Gender Gap	Rank	Person	Rank
Region-I North West (Kolkata Surroundings)	Thakurpukur-Maheshtala	72.19	11	48.94	9	23.25	11	61.14	10
	Budge Budge -I	68.58	17	47.30	10	21.28	8	58.39	14
	Budge Budge -II	68.52	18	45.39	13	23.13	10	57.41	15
	Bishnupur–I	67.85	22	37.50	22	30.35	22	53.26	20
	Bishnupur–II	70.81	13	46.23	12	24.58	13	59.00	12
	Maheshtala (M)	87.60	3	72.05	3	15.55	5	80.36	3
	Budge Budge (M)	74.06	8	60.78	6	13.28	2	68.43	6
	Pujali (M)	54.88	34	41.17	17	13.71	3	48.61	29
	Sonarpur	73.09	9	50.08	7	23.01	9	62.25	8
	Rajpur Sonarpur(M)	90.23	2	77.38	1	12.85	1	84.05	2
Region-II North East and Mid West	Baruipur	67.63	24	40.31	18	27.32	17	54.54	17
	Baruipur (M)	90.93	1	77.11	2	13.82	4	84.33	1
	Bhangar–I	56.97	32	29.89	31	27.08	16	43.90	31
	Bhangar–II	56.27	33	32.44	30	23.83	12	44.82	30
	Falta	73.03	10	45.27	14	27.76	18	59.68	11
	Diamond Harbour–I	70.11	14	41.71	16	28.40	19	56.48	16
	Diamond Harbour–II	71.20	12	45.13	15	26.07	14	58.59	13
	Diamond Harbour(M)	82.23	5	63.26	5	18.97	7	73.09	5
	Magrahat–I	65.63	28	38.98	19	26.65	15	52.86	22
	Magrahat–II	66.17	27	34.52	26	31.65	27	50.99	28
	Kulpi	67.91	21	35.04	24	32.87	30	52.01	24
	Mandirbazar	68.10	20	33.60	29	34.50	33	51.50	26
Region-III South (Sunderbans)	Canning–I	59.21	30	25.38	32	33.83	31	42.81	32
	Canning–II	48.25	36	17.60	36	30.65	24	33.32	36
	Basanti	54.63	35	24.13	33	30.50	23	39.88	35
	Gosaba	67.69	23	38.47	20	29.22	20	53.61	19
	Joynagar–I	66.78	26	34.35	27	32.43	29	51.26	27
	Joynagar–II	59.44	29	22.80	34	36.64	35	41.81	33
	Joynagar Mazilpur(M)	83.88	4	66.48	4	17.40	6	75.51	4
	Mathurapur–I	68.42	19	33.93	28	34.49	32	51.79	25
	Mathurapur–II	69.44	16	34.67	25	34.77	34	52.87	21
	Kultali	58.93	31	22.01	35	36.92	36	41.16	34
	Patharpratima	69.67	15	37.80	21	31.87	28	54.15	18
	Kakdwip	67.22	25	36.14	23	31.08	25	52.14	23
	Namkhana	77.39	7	46.30	11	31.09	26	62.24	9
	Sagar	79.62	6	49.61	8	30.01	21	65.05	7
Total		**68.45**	–	**40.57**	–	**27.88**	–	**55.10**	–

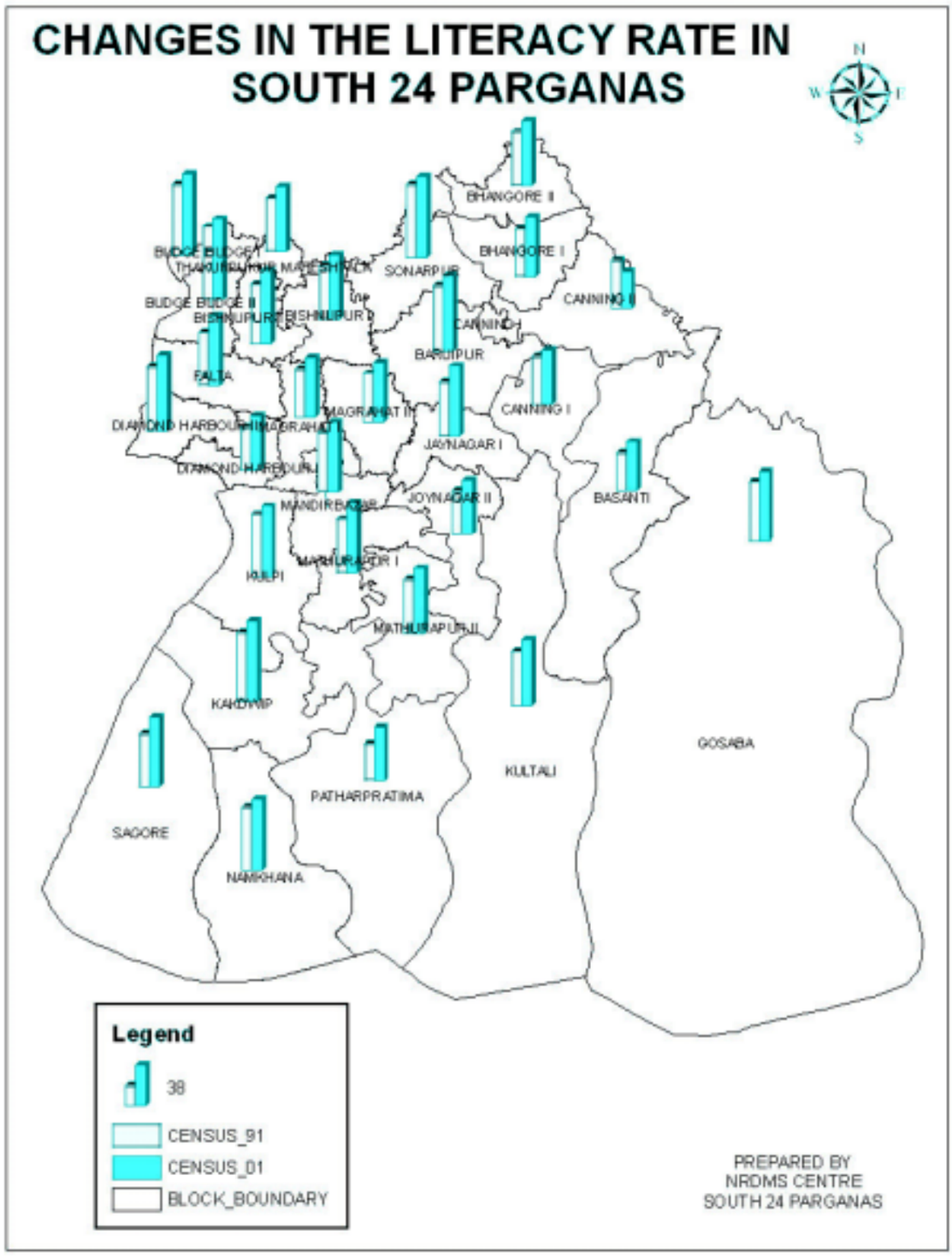
Table 5.4 contd.

Region	Block/ Municipality (M)	Literacy Rate (Excluding 0-6 Population) in Percentage as per Census 2001								
		Male	Rank	Female	Rank	Gender Gap	Rank	Person	Rank	Percentage Point Change over Decade in Aggregate Literacy Rate
Region-I North West (Kolkata Surroundings)	Thakurpukur Maheshtala	82.62	10	67.64	9	14.98	8	75.36	9	14.22
	Budge Budge -I	82.05	14	66.28	10	15.77	10	74.54	10	16.15
	Budge Budge -II	80.98	18	64.94	12	16.04	11	73.30	13	15.89
	Bishnupur–I	82.71	9	60.72	18	21.99	22	72.10	15	18.84
	Bishnupur–II	82.62	10	65.39	11	17.23	12	74.27	11	15.27
	Maheshtala (M)	82.78	8	70.98	6	11.80	5	77.21	8	–3.15
	Budge Budge (M)	82.46	12	71.81	5	10.65	2	77.69	7	9.26
	Pujali (M)	77.15	29	62.91	13	14.24	7	70.35	19	21.74
	Sonarpur	80.47	19	61.40	16	19.07	16	71.16	18	8.91
	Rajpur Sonarpur(M)	91.19	2	79.81	2	11.38	3	85.68	2	1.63
Region-II North East and Mid West	Baruipur	78.79	22	60.09	19	18.70	15	69.77	20	15.23
	Baruipur (M)	93.66	1	89.45	1	4.21	1	91.61	1	7.28
	Bhangar–I	70.59	34	52.04	31	18.55	14	61.57	31	17.67
	Bhangar–II	73.88	31	58.57	21	15.31	9	66.52	28	21.70
	Falta	81.98	15	62.57	14	19.41	17	72.61	14	12.93
	Diamond Harbour–I	77.17	28	57.69	22	19.48	18	67.81	25	11.33
	Diamond Harbour–II	79.91	20	62.04	15	17.87	13	71.20	17	12.61
	Diamond Harbour(M)	85.83	6	74.29	4	11.54	4	80.21	4	7.12
	Magrahat–I	78.49	23	57.50	23	20.99	21	68.35	24	15.49
	Magrahat–II	78.38	24	56.32	25	22.06	23	67.72	26	16.73
	Kulpi	79.85	21	56.16	26	23.69	27	68.38	23	16.37
	Mandirbazar	78.27	25	53.68	29	24.59	30	66.40	29	14.90
Region-III South (Sunderbans)	Canning–I	73.24	32	48.53	32	24.71	33	61.23	32	18.42
	Canning–II	64.43	36	40.35	36	24.08	29	52.72	36	19.40
	Basanti	70.12	35	45.48	35	24.64	31	58.12	35	18.24
	Gosaba	81.39	16	57.43	24	23.96	28	69.67	21	16.06
	Joynagar–I	78.01	26	54.40	28	23.61	25	66.67	27	15.41
	Joynagar–II	72.99	33	46.21	33	26.78	35	60.09	34	18.28
	Joynagar Mazilpur(M)	90.77	3	78.15	3	12.62	6	84.64	3	9.13
	Mathurapur–I	77.88	27	53.19	30	24.69	32	66.00	30	14.21
	Mathurapur–II	81.03	17	55.85	27	25.18	34	68.94	22	16.07
	Kultali	74.90	30	45.56	34	29.34	36	60.81	33	19.65
	Patharpratima	84.99	7	61.31	17	23.68	26	73.44	12	19.29
	Kakdwip	82.22	13	59.86	20	22.36	24	71.35	16	19.21
	Namkhana	89.55	4	68.69	7	20.86	20	79.38	5	17.14
	Sagar	88.87	5	68.31	8	20.56	19	78.92	6	13.87
Total		**79.89**	–	**59.73**	–	**20.16**	–	**70.16**	–	**15.06**

Source: Census Reports 1991 and 2001.

Ranks are calculated for a list of 29 blocks and 7 municipalities of the district of South 24 Parganas. The highest in each case except gender gap is ranked 1. The lowest is ranked 1 in case of gender gap.

Figure 5.2: Changes in Literacy Rate in South 24 Parganas : 1991–2001

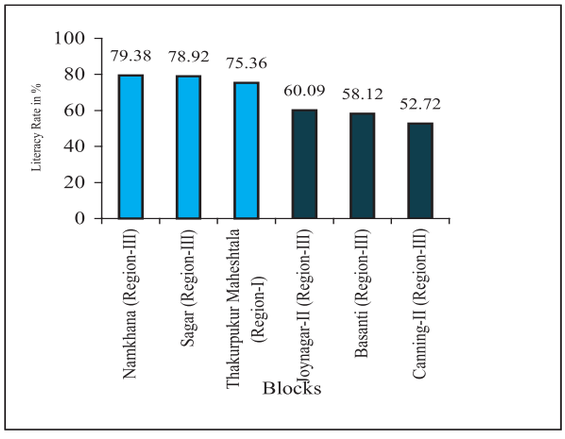


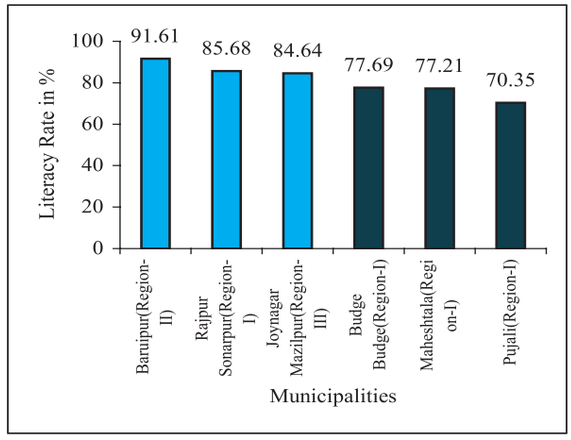
CH5

percentage point increase in literacy during 1991-2001. Sagar and Namkhana were among the best five performing blocks amongst all blocks of the district as per both 1991 and 2001 census estimates. The two blocks ranked poorest in terms of standard of living are also positioned as worst two performers by literacy in 2001. These two blocks, Canning-II and Basanti, were the worst two performers by literacy in 1991 too. The Region of South 24 Parganas that surrounds the district of Kolkata, the district having the highest literacy rate in West Bengal, span between moderate to good performers. No block or municipality in this region of South 24 Parganas is in the list of the last 15 in terms of literacy rate. One notable observation is that the blocks in the district are quietly catching up with municipalities in literacy achievement. Whereas there were no blocks in the best 5 performers list in 1991, Namkhana entered the list of best 5 in 2001 when all blocks and municipalities are considered together. Migration of a large section of people from the district of Medinipur to the blocks of Sagar and Namkhana and their positive attitude towards education may well be a reason for higher literacy rate in these areas.

CH5

Figure 5.3: Literacy Rate (2001) in Blocks and Municipalities: Toppers and Backbenchers





Educationally Backward Blocks

Which?

- Canning-II, Basanti, Joynagar-II and Kultali.

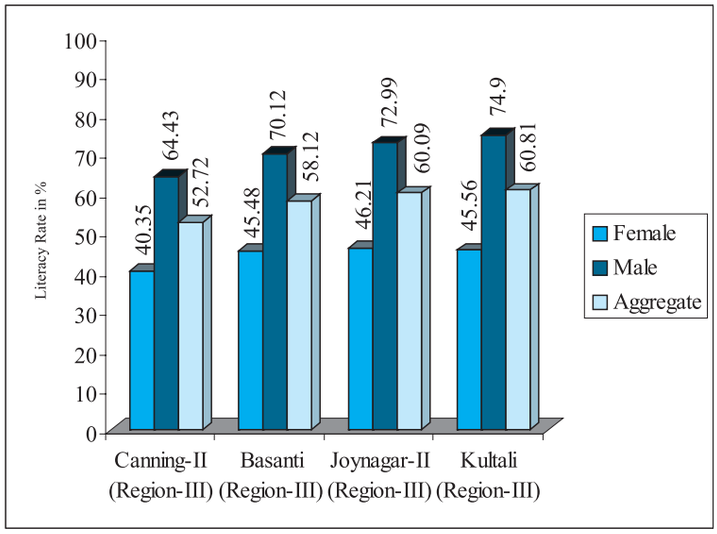
Where?

- Sunderban.

Why?

- Rural female literacy rate as per census estimate of 2001 is at most 46.21 per cent.
- Gender gap in literacy as per census estimate of 2001 is at least 24.08 per cent.

Figure 5.4: Literacy Rate (2001) in Educationally Backward Blocks



Not only in terms of rise in literacy rate, the district made considerable achievement in reducing inter-block/municipality variation in literacy rate. The difference in the maximum and minimum literacy rates achieved by different blocks and municipalities, represented by range of the estimates, fell from 51.01 in 1991 to 38.89 in 2001. The coefficient of variation, indicating the extent to which literacy rates in blocks and municipalities vary among themselves, fell from 21.32% in 1991 to 11.21% in 2001. This implies that areas having low literacy rate had been catching up with the areas having high literacy during 1991-2001.

5.3.2 Enrolment and Drop Out

Literacy improves enrolment. Literate parents are expected to send their children for primary schooling. Primary schooling is almost free in the state and there has been improvement in support services for students such as free textbooks, uniforms, mid-day meal, health care facilities, etc. This has led to a substantial improvement in enrolment at the primary level. Enrolment data are often over-reported. There is also a chance that a particular student has enrolled in more than one institution. However, the achievement of the district in enrolling children cannot be disowned even though the data may be somewhat unreliable.

An indicator of enrolment at the primary level is the proportion of 5 to 8 age group children enrolled in schools. The enrolment of the age group increased from 91.91 percent in 2000-01 to 98.21 percent in 2006-07 (Table 5.5). Predictably enrolment rate for 9 to 14 age group children is lower

CH5

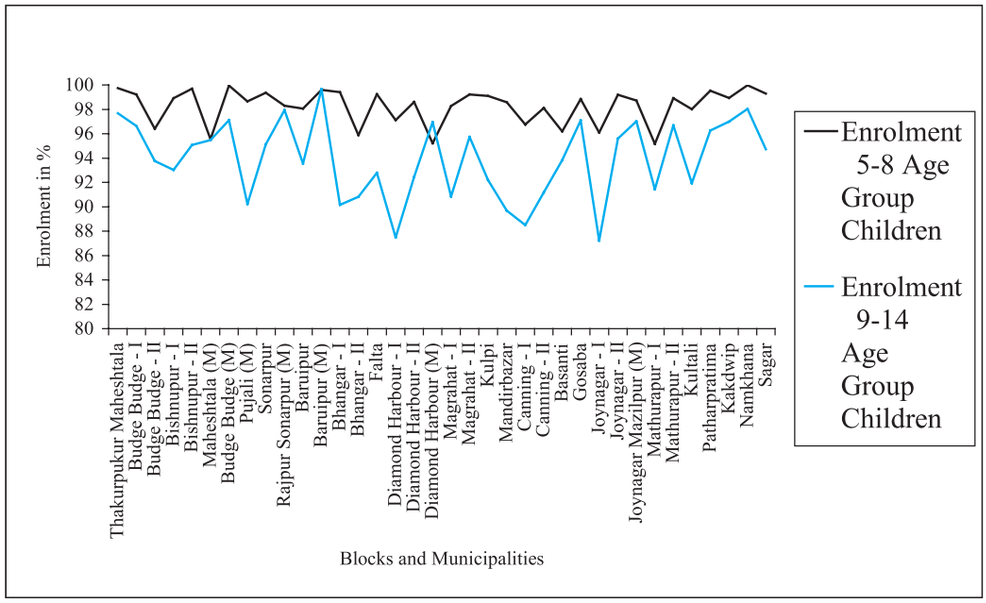
Table 5.5: Enrolment Rates in Percentage of 5-8 and 9-14 Age Group Children

Region	Block/ Municipality(M)	Enrolment Rate of 5-8 Age Group Children (2000-01)						Enrolment Rate of 5-8 Age Group Children (2006-07)		Enrolment Rate of 9-14 Age Group Children (2006-07)	
		Male	Rank	Female	Rank	Person	Rank	Person	Rank	Person	Rank
Region-I North West (Kolkata Surroun-dings)	Thakurpukur Maheshtala	63.76	35	72.02	34	67.68	35	99.74	3	97.69	4
	Budge Budge -I	76.60	32	87.46	25	81.67	28	99.22	11	96.64	11
	Budge Budge -II	71.04	34	81.38	29	75.90	32	96.40	30	93.76	20
	Bishnupur -I	77.07	31	85.86	27	81.23	29	98.90	17	93.01	22
	Bishnupur -II	84.20	25	90.89	24	87.38	24	99.69	4	95.07	17
	Maheshtala (M)	84.74	24	78.43	30	81.82	27	95.56	34	95.49	15
	Budge Budge (M)	58.86	36	59.05	36	58.94	36	99.96	2	97.12	5
	Pujali (M)	81.96	27	77.88	31	80.05	30	98.66	20	90.22	31
	Sonarpur	75.69	33	76.10	32	75.89	33	99.37	8	95.12	16
	Rajpur Sonarpur (M)	81.53	28	72.69	33	77.35	31	98.30	23	97.93	3
Region-II North East and Mid West	Baruipur	91.26	20	95.84	22	93.42	20	98.06	26	93.53	21
	Baruipur (M)	83.75	26	85.42	28	84.55	26	99.59	5	99.66	1
	Bhangar-I	99.65	6	98.78	18	99.24	11	99.40	7	90.16	32
	Bhangar-II	95.77	18	99.47	9	97.52	16	95.87	33	90.82	30
	Falta	88.48	21	96.04	21	92.06	22	99.25	10	92.77	23
	Diamond Harbour -I	99.62	7	99.32	12	99.48	7	97.11	28	87.47	35
	Diamond Harbour -II	81.27	29	99.58	5	90.00	23	98.60	21	92.46	24
	Diamond Harbour (M)	79.28	30	71.22	35	75.45	34	95.22	35	96.94	9
	Magrahat-I	85.98	22	99.75	3	92.50	21	98.28	24	90.84	29
	Magrahat-II	99.81	1	99.52	7	99.67	4	99.21	12	95.75	13
	Kulpi	99.43	10	98.98	17	99.22	12	99.10	14	92.18	25
	Mandirbazar	94.07	19	99.38	11	96.58	18	98.58	22	89.67	33
Region-III South (Sunder bans)	Canning -I	95.81	17	95.35	23	95.59	19	96.75	29	88.50	34
	Canning -II	99.69	4	99.76	2	99.72	1	98.10	25	91.16	28
	Basanti	99.53	9	99.86	1	99.69	2	96.19	31	93.83	19
	Gosaba	85.36	23	86.10	26	85.71	25	98.85	18	97.10	6
	Joynagar-I	99.80	2	99.55	6	99.68	3	96.09	32	87.21	36
	Joynagar-II	99.79	3	99.28	13	99.55	5	99.20	13	95.60	14
	Joynagar Mazilpur (M)	96.17	16	97.08	20	96.60	17	98.72	19	97.02	7
	Mathurapur-I	99.37	11	98.49	19	98.95	15	95.18	36	91.43	27
	Mathurapur-II	98.64	15	99.49	8	99.04	14	98.91	16	96.69	10
	Kultali	99.16	13	99.04	16	99.10	13	98.01	27	91.92	26
	Patharpratima	99.66	5	99.39	10	99.53	6	99.53	6	96.27	12
	Kakdwip	98.99	14	99.63	4	99.29	9	98.93	15	97.00	8
	Namkhana	99.27	12	99.26	14	99.27	10	99.97	1	98.03	2
	Sagar	99.58	8	99.15	15	99.38	8	99.28	9	94.72	18
Total	**91.01**	**-**	**92.92**	**-**	**91.91**	**-**	**98.21**	**-**	**93.83**		

Source: Office of the District Project Officer, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan

than the enrolment rate for the 5 to 8 age group children. The performance of the district in enrolment of 9 to 14 age group children is also very promising. The estimate as per records of 2006-07 is 93.83 percent. Every block and

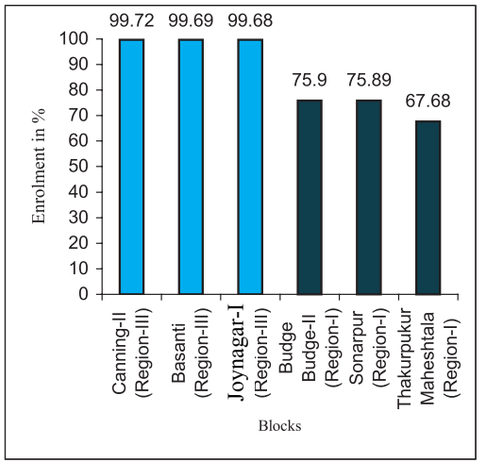
Figure 5.5: Enrolment Rates of Children in Blocks and Municipalities of the District (2006-07)

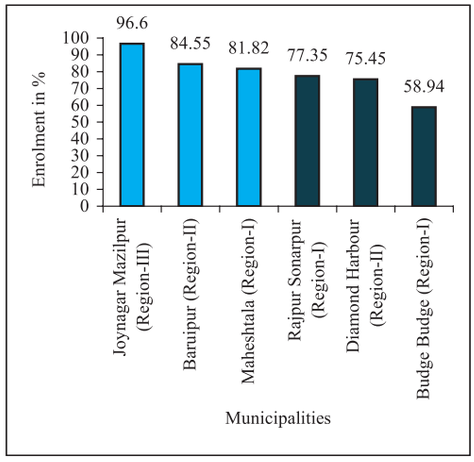


municipality in the district has an enrolment rate above 95 percent in respect of 5 to 8 age group children and above 85 percent in case of 9 to 14 age group children as per the estimates obtained in 2006-07. The inter-block/municipality variation in enrolment is smaller when compared to inter-block/municipality variation between literacy rate. The difference in the maximum and minimum enrolment rate, for 5 to 8 age group children and for 9 to 14 age group children are respectively 4.79% and 12.45% in 2006-07. The coefficient of variation of enrolment rates, representing variability within blocks and municipalities, for the

CH5

Figure 5.6: Enrolment Rates of 5-8 Age Group Children (2000-01) in Blocks and Municipalities: Toppers and Backbenchers



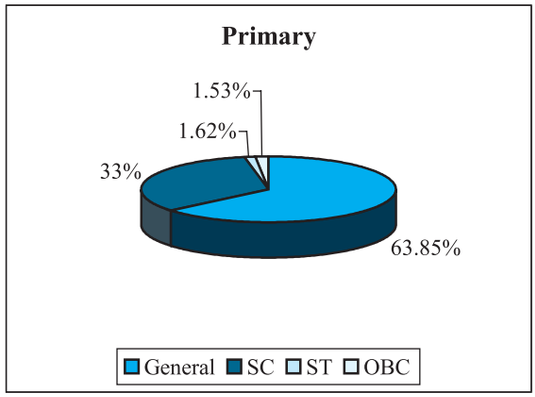


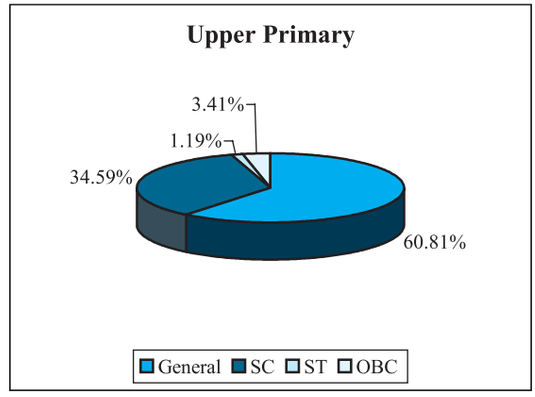
two age groups are respectively 1.46% and 3.45%. The coefficient of variation for 5 to 8 age group children enrolment fell from 11.79% in 2000-01 to 1.46% in 2006-07. Thus, like literacy, areas lagging behind on enrolment are catching up with their counterparts placed ahead. The correlation between literacy and enrolment is observed in the district. The rank correlation coefficient between literacy rate and enrolment rate of 9-14 age group children is 0.71. The result indicates that literate people are more aware about the importance of education. They do not like to withdraw their children from the system of education at upper primary level.

Enrolment of children in higher income areas might be more than that in lower income areas. The blocks of Sunderbans in South 24 Parganas have a long history of backwardness. Interestingly these blocks do not exhibit lagging behind when enrolment rates are analysed. The best 3 blocks in terms of 5 to 8 age group enrolment in 2000-01 were in the Sundarban region. Namkhana, one block in the Sundarban region, has the highest enrolment rate in 5 to 8 age group according the latest available estimate of 2006-07. The block maintains the impressive performance for enrolment of 9 to 14 age group children also.

CH5

Figure 5.7: Social Group-wise Students Enrolment in Schools (2007–08)





The social group wise analysis of enrolment in primary and upper primary schools shows that a sizeable proportion of children from backward groups enroll themselves in schools. Proportion of students coming from SC, ST and OBC community more or less remains same at primary and upper primary level. While 36.15 percent of students from SC, ST and OBC community get enrolled at primary level, enrolment of students from these communities marginally increases to 39.19 percent at upper primary level.

But all those enrolled children do not

Table 5.6: Block/ Municipality-wise Report on Cohort Study of Primary and Upper Primary School Students (2004-05)

Region	Block/ Municipality(M)	Primary Schools						Upper Primary Schools					
		CRF %	Rank	DROP %	Rank	REP %	MIG %	CRF %	Rank	DROP %	Rank	REP %	MIG %
Region-I North West (Kolkata Surroundings)	Thakurpukur Maheshtala	64.10	9	13.62	9	18.72	3.56	33.79	17	33.39	12	29.94	2.88
	Budge Budge - I	58.35	11	10.84	6	29.23	1.58	23.56	34	42.24	26	31.66	2.54
	Budge Budge - II	48.44	17	15.96	16	33.82	1.78	21.58	36	48.01	34	28.99	1.42
	Bishnupur - I	46.44	21	22.24	27	29.55	1.77	26.94	30	40.19	23	31.29	1.58
	Bishnupur - II	47.11	20	15.70	15	35.71	1.48	38.17	8	25.02	8	32.78	4.03
	Maheshtala (M)	68.88	6	15.28	14	12.85	2.99	35.89	10	34.18	15	26.56	3.37
	Budge Budge (M)	74.51	3	10.78	5	13.4	1.31	29.73	25	29.73	10	33.84	6.7
	Pujali (M)	84.35	1	3.39	1	10.81	1.45	26.17	31	20.09	6	37.38	16.36
	Sonarpur	45.49	23	17.19	20	35.32	2	24.64	32	18.56	3	52.58	4.22
	Rajpur Sonarpur (M)	51.77	15	20.60	23	25.85	1.78	28.51	27	20.02	5	47.36	4.11
Region-II North East and Mid West	Baruipur	46.04	22	13.11	7	36.07	4.78	35.74	11	23.88	7	35.39	4.99
	Baruipur (M)	83.60	2	3.66	2	12.45	0.29	59.53	1	17.16	2	16.33	6.98
	Bhangar - I	70.10	5	6.43	3	20.64	2.83	28.10	28	38.70	20	28.28	4.92
	Bhangar - II	68.88	6	17.88	21	8.52	4.72	38.21	7	38.34	19	22.4	1.05
	Falta	44.44	25	21.90	26	31.95	1.71	33.69	18	38.96	21	26.39	0.96
	Diamond Harbour - I	35.59	33	22.69	28	40	1.72	31.24	20	31.18	11	36.6	0.98
	Diamond Harbour - II	57.34	12	14.41	10	26.28	1.97	34.49	13	18.74	4	43.33	3.44
	Diamond Harbour (M)	36.41	32	14.67	12	44.29	4.63	28.64	26	11.68	1	50.52	9.16
	Magrahat - I	44.26	27	37.45	36	16.39	1.90	34.01	15	33.79	13	30.14	2.06
	Magrahat - II	41.04	30	29.67	33	26.75	2.54	30.96	21	47.17	33	19.13	2.74
	Kulpi	35.49	34	23.62	29	37.32	3.57	41.46	5	36.11	18	19.08	3.35
	Mandirbazar	41.44	29	18.64	22	37.15	2.77	27.04	29	42.62	27	23.16	7.18
Region-III South (Sunderbans)	Canning - I	39.13	31	30.06	34	28.51	2.30	22.42	35	39.31	22	36.44	1.83
	Canning - II	44.31	26	32.02	35	22.10	1.57	24.02	33	57.11	36	17.69	1.18
	Basanti	53.06	14	21.50	25	23.69	1.75	29.98	24	45.61	31	21.06	3.35
	Gosaba	47.58	19	16.61	18	28.74	7.07	37.10	9	35.52	17	25.25	2.13
	Joynagar - I	61.31	10	14.66	11	22.6	1.43	42.39	3	33.85	14	21.14	2.62
	Joynagar - II	44.83	24	27.17	31	25.39	2.61	41.68	4	42.83	28	14.93	0.56
	Joynagar Mazilpur (M)	72.45	4	13.45	8	8.09	6.01	32.86	19	41.34	25	24.15	1.65
	Mathurapur- I	28.97	36	25.87	30	41.73	3.43	30.84	22	46.86	32	15.93	6.37
	Mathurapur- II	41.51	28	21.30	24	31.98	5.21	30.26	23	40.64	24	26.71	2.39
	Kultali	55.65	13	27.99	32	10.27	6.09	34.12	14	52.95	35	11.36	1.57
	Patharpratima	32.76	35	16.67	19	45.06	5.51	35.27	12	44.33	30	19.07	1.33
	Kakdwip	51.26	16	15.21	13	26.98	6.55	33.88	16	43.26	29	20.29	2.57
	Namkhana	48.39	18	16.06	17	32.62	2.93	41.10	6	27.40	9	30.57	0.93
	Sagar	66.22	8	9.32	4	20.30	4.16	48.69	2	34.85	16	13.55	2.91
Total		**48.43**	**-**	**20.53**	**-**	**27.81**	**3.23**	**33.61**	**-**	**36.5**	**-**	**26.91**	**2.98**

Source: Office of the District Project officer, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan
CRF %: Percentage of students completing the course in 4 years
DROP %: Percentage of students dropping out
REP %: Percentage of students who repeated
MIG %: Percentage of students who migrated
Ranks are calculated for a list of 29 blocks and 7 municipalities of the district of South 24 Parganas.
The highest in CRF % is ranked 1. The lowest is ranked 1 in case of DROP %.

CH5

complete their education. The problem of drop out is severe at every stage of education. Students drop out for several reasons. Drop out is caused by unfavourable education infrastructure, non-adaptability to the teaching learning process and consequent alienation from the education system, detention in the same class and more importantly pressure to join work force as a child labour. A more reliable analysis about the dropouts could have been made if data regarding the social, economic and religious composition of the dropped students were available. The block/municipality wise cohort study (Table 5.6) throws some light on dropouts in different blocks and municipalities of South 24 Parganas. A Cohort study analyses performance of same student in consecutive academic years to investigate whether the student drops out or repeats or promotes to the next class successfully every year. The reported figures for primary schools are based on 202284 students of 3321 schools of the district. A similar cohort study was carried on 97061 upper primary students of 751 upper primary schools. These studies show that drop out is a critical problem at both the primary and upper primary stage. The drop out rate increases with higher stages of education. A higher percentage of students withdraw from the upper primary level.

Figure 5.8: Drop-out Rates in Primary and Upper Primary Schools (2004–05)

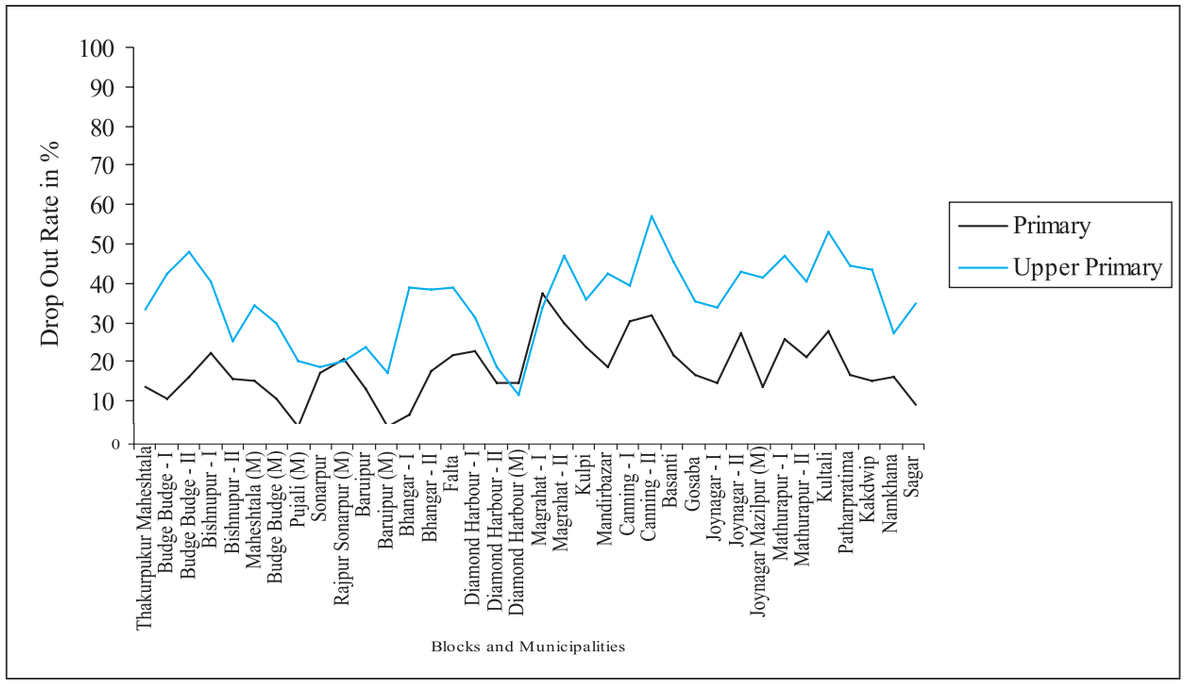
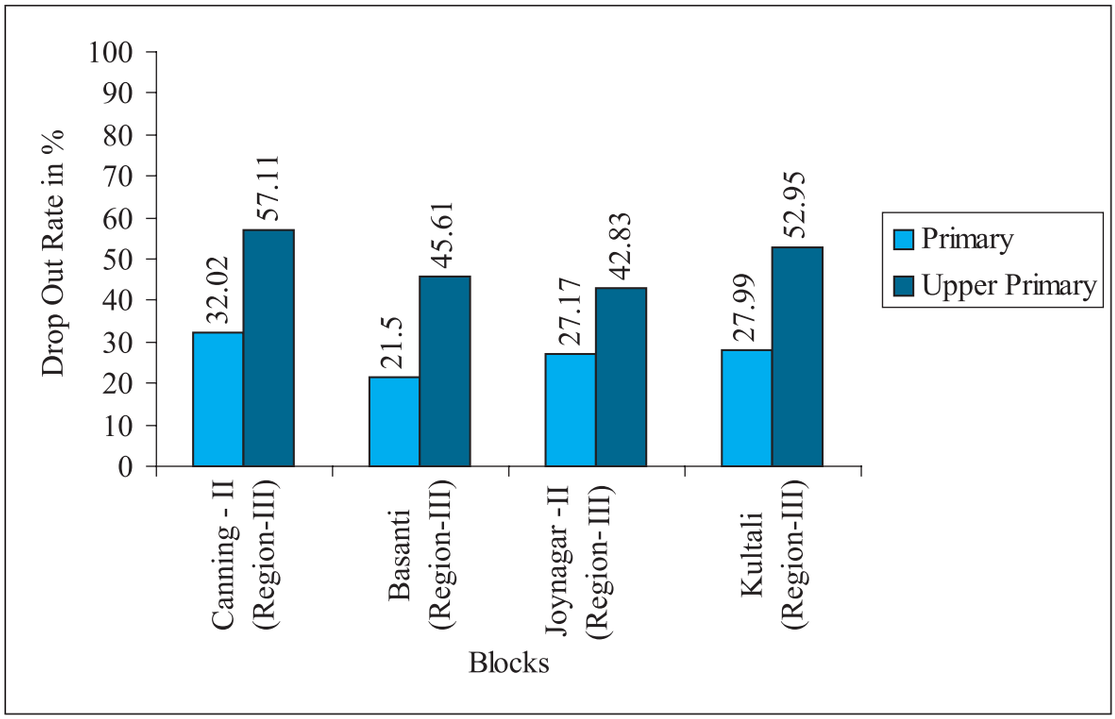


Figure 5.9: Drop-out Rates in Educationally Backward Blocks at Primary and Upper Primary Level



CH5

Drop out rates at the primary level are low in municipal areas such as Pujali, Baruipur and Budge Budge. Drop out rates at Rajpur Sonarpur and Diamond Harbour municipality falls at the upper primary level, though marginally, when compared to primary level. A significant rise in drop out rate, from primary to upper primary, is observed in municipal areas of Maheshtala and Budge Budge. These are the areas where industries employ child labourers. Drop out rate is more than thrice at the upper primary stage at Pujali and Joynagar Mazilpur municipality in comparison with drop out rate at the primary level.

Careful examinations of drop out rates in different blocks reveal a miserable education scenario. Drop out rate at the upper primary level is higher for every block except Magrahat-I and in many cases the drop out rate is more than double of the rate of drop out at the primary stage. The scenario is deplorable in blocks of Sunderban. Canning-II, an educationally backward block, has a drop out rate above 50 percent in the upper primary level. Drop out rates in other educationally backward blocks are also alarmingly high (Figure 5.8). A good performer on literacy, Sagar, has performed well in reducing drop out rate at the primary level. This may be a sign of positive attitude towards education shown by literate parents. Good performers in terms of standard of living such as Thakurpukur Maheshtala and Budge Budge-I are success-

ful in reducing drop out rates at primary level. Among blocks, Bhangar-I has shown commendable performance in controlling dropouts at the primary stage but the success dwindles out when data regarding drop out at the upper primary stage is compared with data at the primary stage.

Why do students drop out? There may be several causes as stated earlier behind drop out but the most important cause might be the use of child labour or use of children as domestic help. It is unfortunate that poor parents often are compelled to treat their child as an income earning asset. They induce children to leave schools and join the workforce and thus earn income for the household. Students studying at the primary level are not generally capable to join the labour force. But as age increases, a child becomes a child labour and drops out from the education system. This is one of the important determining factors behind higher drop out rates at the upper primary level. A moderate rank correlation coefficient of 0.44 between incidence of and rate of drop out at the upper primary stage, when only blocks are considered, imply that students drop out more in areas where the incidence of poverty is high. The relationship between incidence of poverty and rate of dropout at the primary stage is not so strong. This indicates that poor parents withdraw children of 9-14 age group more than children of 5-8 age group. The Rural Household Survey (2004-05) surveyed households that have a dropped out child in the 9 to 14 age group. The obtained results (Table 5.7) clearly indicates that a high proportion of the dropped out students worked either inside or outside the household. An inference can be readily drawn that the pressure to take up work has forced them to drop out from the system of education. The tendency to leave schools and to join the workforce is more severe in backward regions. A regional-wise study of dropouts reveal that the north west blocks of South 24 Parganas, closer to Kolkata, are less vulnerable to the problem. Bhangar-I, the block for which dropout rate increases dramatically at the upper primary stage when compared to the primary level, has almost 80 percent of dropped out children working inside or outside the family. The tendency to leave schools and join work force is most severe in the blocks of Sunderban. More than 90 percent of students dropping out work either inside or outside the household in Kakdwip block.

It has been already stated that literacy improves enrolment of 9-14 age group children in the district. Literacy has also a positive impact on controlling drop out. A literate mother is more conscious about the education needed by her child. She is more sincere about enrolling her children in the education system. The rank correlation coefficient between female literacy rate and drop out rate at the primary

Table 5.7: Activity of 9-14 Age Group Children: Why?

Region	Block	Percentage of Dropped Out Children Who Work Either Inside or Outside Family	Rank
	Takurpukur Maheshtala	61.08	1
Region-I: North West (Kolkata Surroundings)	Budge Budge-I	70.09	2
	Budge Budge-II	75.53	6
	Bishnupur-I	78.77	10
	Bishnupur-II	81.25	15
	Sonarpur	84.87	23
Region-II: North East and Mid West	Baruipur	75.31	5
	Bhangar-I	78.84	11
	Bhangar-II	73.42	4
	Falta	78.67	9
	Diamond Harbour -I	78.60	8
	Diamond Harbour -II	84.96	24
	Magrahat -I	72.47	3
	Magrahat -II	78.14	7
	Kulpi	82.20	17
	Mandirbazar	84.26	21
Region-III: South (Sunderbans)	Canning -I	82.80	18
	Canning -II	88.29	27
	Basanti	83.64	20
	Gosaba	80.59	14
	Joynagar -I	81.27	16
	Joynagar -II	79.36	12
	Mathurapur -I	84.66	22
	Mathurapur -II	83.51	19
	Kultali	79.98	13
	Patharpratima	85.23	25
	Kakdwip	90.77	29
	Namkhana	85.64	26
	Sagar	88.30	28

Source: Rural Household Survey (2004-05)
Ranks are calculated for a list of 29 blocks of the district of South 24 Parganas. The lowest is ranked 1.

level, when all blocks and municipalities are considered together, is 0.62. The same coefficient when female literacy rate and drop out rate at upper primary level is considered is 0.59. This suggests that more effort to improve female literacy will be helpful in controlling drop out at the primary and upper primary stage.

CH5

5.3.3 Gender (Dis)parity: A Missing Woman Syndrome

The well-known Millennium Development Goal calls for targeting universal primary education and to reduce gender gap at all levels of education. Women's education promotes equal participation across genders in the decision making process, supports women so that they can exercise their right, reduce the gap between women's and men's access and control of resources and benefits of development. An analysis of any indicator for educational achievement shows that historically women are less privileged than men.

The literacy figures for the blocks and municipalities of South 24 Parganas show that women are lying far behind men. Five blocks namely Canning-I, Canning-II, Basanti, Kultali and Joynagar-II are blocks where female literacy is less than 50 percent. These blocks are in need of gender targeted policies to enhance female literacy rate. Blocks performing well in male literacy are generally good performers of female literacy also. Namkhana and Sagar, though in the Sunderban region, perform well in male as well as female literacy. Predictably female literacy is higher in urban areas. Kultali, Bhangar-I and Bhangar-II are blocks that have achieved a high percentage point increase in female literacy during 1991-2001. Though the present situation calls for further intervention, a sincere effort has led to reduction in gender gap during 1991-2001. Whereas there were 16 blocks having a gender gap of literacy above 30 percent in 1991, there is no block with the same exceeding 30 percent in 2001. A regionwise comparison of female literacy reveals that the spirit of educational development in Kolkata may have been transmitted to its contiguous regions. Blocks in this region such as Thakurpukur Maheshtala, Budge Budge-I and Bishnupur-II are the best performers in female literacy.

Female Education: Some Individual Experiences

Subhadra Sarkar passed class VIII and was then forced to get married. She was living with her family in a remote village named Bharatgarh in Sunderban region. She was eager but was not able to continue her studies due to financial constraints and family obligations. She was inspired to resume her studies. She took admission in class IX in Maheshpur Prafulla Balika Vidyalay in 2002-03 session after some years of her married life. She was provided with all kinds of necessary support in the school and passed madhyamik examination in 2004-05 with high second division marks. She went on continuing her studies and passed higher secondary examination from the same school.

Tripti Tarafdar of Nafarganj lost her parents at an early age of her life. She continued her studies up to class VIII fighting against dire poverty and later went to Delhi in search of jobs and was absorbed as a housekeeper there. She worked for more than two years, saved some money and came back. She took admission in a school in the district. She started living in the school hostel, studied assiduously and stood first in all the unit tests held in the class. She is expected to perform well in the annual examination also.

Table 5.8: Gender Gap in Literacy: A Decadal Comparison

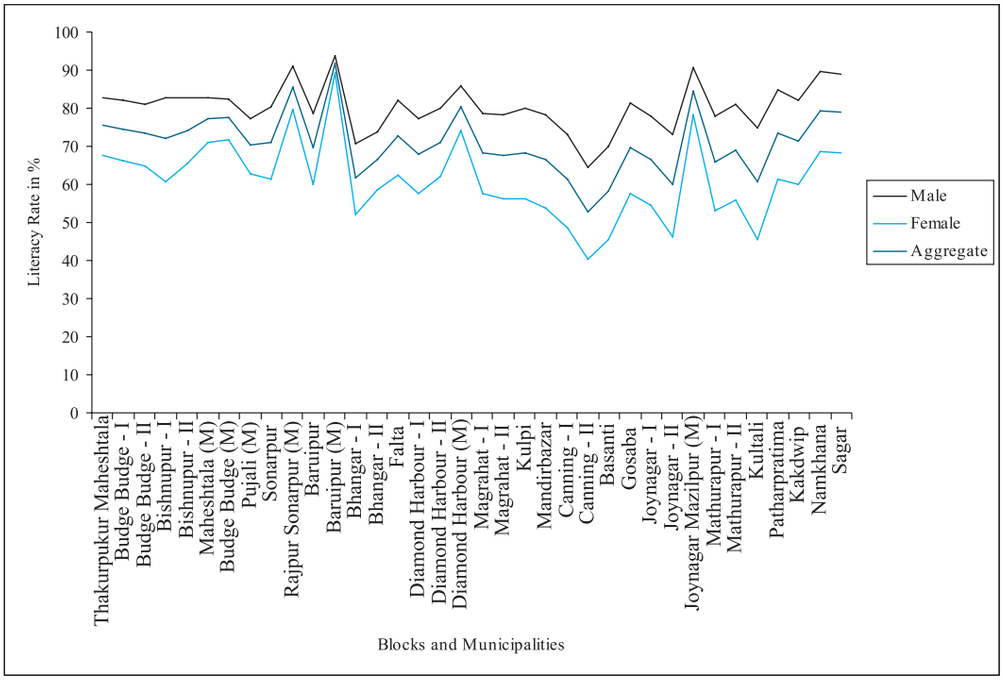
Gender Gap in Literacy	Number of Blocks/ Municipalities as Per Census 1991	Number of Blocks/ Municipalities as Per Census 2001
Upto 10%	0	1
Above 10% to 20%	7	17
Above 20% to 30%	13	18
Above 30%	16	0

Source: Census 1991 and 2001.

Performance of blocks and municipalities is more dispersed in case of female literacy when compared with male literacy. The coefficient of variation for female literacy (16.87%) is more than double of that for male literacy (7.65%) in 2001. The difference in female literacy rate of the highest achiever i.e. Baruipur municipality and the worst performer i. e. Canning-II is alarmingly high at 49.10%. The corresponding estimate in case of male literacy is only 29.23. But the situation is fast improving. The coefficient of variation for female literacy rate, which was 36.56% in 1991, fell sharply to the present level during a span of 10 years. Similarly the difference in achievement of the best and the worst performer fell from 59.78% in 1991 to 49.10% in 2001. Female literacy rate is poor in income

CH5

Figure 5.10: Gender Gap in Literacy Rate (2001) in Blocks and Municipalities



CH5

poor areas. The rank correlation coefficient between female literacy and poverty rate, when only blocks are considered, is 0.45 implying that female literacy falls as rate of poverty rises. Income constraints female education more stiffly than male education.

A completely different scenario is observed in case of school enrolment of 5 to 8 age group children. The 2000-01 estimate of enrolment shows that many blocks and municipalities are better performers in female enrolment than male enrolment. In blocks where female enrolment is less than male enrolment, the difference in the two enrolment rates is marginal. Such a good performance in female enrolment indicates that female literacy rate is going to rise in near future. Though the age distribution of the non-literates is not available, poor performance in female literacy may be due to higher incidence of illiteracy in the adult age group.

A social group wise breakup of girls' enrolment at primary and upper primary levels indicates that the district has achieved distinctively in enrolling students of backward classes. Enrolment of SC, ST and OBC girls as a proportion of total girls' enrolment at the primary level is 35.47 percent. The same proportion at the upper primary level is 36.72 percent. Girls' enrolment as a proportion of total students' enrolment of that social group shows that backward group girls are taking the opportunity of education as after as backward class boys.

Though female enrolment at the elementary stage of education is quite impressive, the enrolment figures at higher stages reduce sizeably. The impressive performance more or less continues upto the madhyamik level. The female enrolment in high school level according 2004-05 estimate is even higher than the male enrolment. At a higher level, female enrolment falls drastically. This may be due to parental unwillingness to support studies of the girl child at a higher level. There are cases when a parent supports education of the male child but withdraws the girl child. The financial requirement needed at a higher level of study often discourages parents to support their girl child. Another important factor behind this falling female enrolment can be attributed to early age of marriage of girl child. The sudden drop of female enrolment at the higher secondary level indicates early marriage of girl child reducing female enrolment. Drop out between high school and higher secondary school stage requires proper scrutiny since drop out between higher secondary and college stage is interestingly minimal. Female enrolment in professional and technical institutions

Figure 5.11: Social Group Enrolment of Girls as Percentage of Total Girls Enrolment

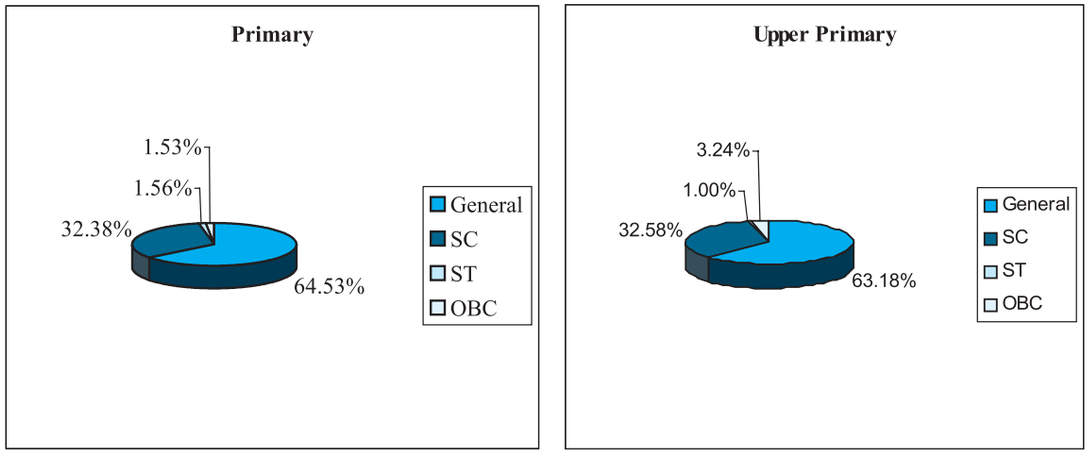


Table 5.9: Social Group-wise Girls' Enrolment as Percentage of Total Enrolment

Social Group	Girls Enrolment as Percentage of Total Students Enrolment from that Social Group	
	Primary Schools	*Upper Primary Schools*
General	50.89	53.66
SC	49.39	48.64
ST	48.45	43.55
OBC	50.29	49.00

Table 5.10: Number of Students by Gender in Different Levels of Institutions

Institution	Number of Students (2000-01)		Number of Students (2004-05)	
	Male	Female Percentage of Total in ( )	Male	Female Percentage of Total in ( )
Recognised Primary Schools	410683	402927(49.52)	67094	633025(48.55)
Recognised Middle Schools	25572	26375(50.77)	26574	33909(56.06)
Recognised High Schools	114677	94663(45.22)	121570	140013(53.52)
Recognised Higher Secondary Schools	113288	53520(32.08)	174144	106442(37.93)
General Degree College	16078	8137(33.60)	25058	14244(36.24)
Technical Schools	101	104(50.73)	1515	506(25.04)
Technical Colleges	97	59(37.82)	3540	1047(22.83)

Source: District Statistical Handbook 2005: Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics, Government of West Bengal

5.4 Education Infrastructure

Provision and accessibility to school level infrastructure is important in educational development. If school infrastructure is not widespread and well distributed across is also very low. Female enrolment was around 25 percent of total enrolment in both technical schools and colleges in 2004-05. Thus females getting into education stream do not reach up the top of the ladder as males do. Girl students miss the privilege of higher education and they silently vanish from the system.

CH5

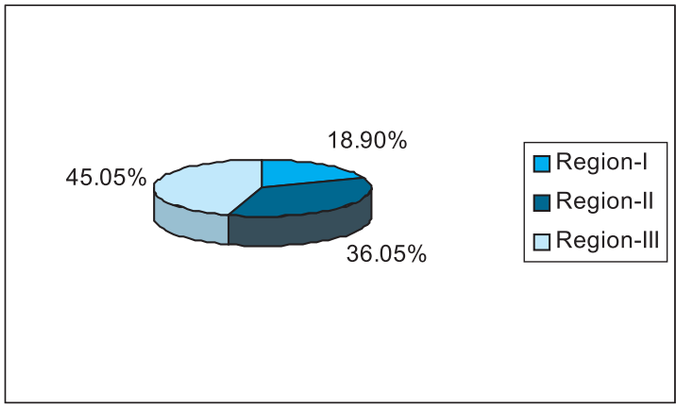
CH5

regions, students have to lose time in commuting and may have to incur additional monetary costs for commuting. This often discourages them to join or continue schooling. Apart from the number of schools, the structure of the schools, availability of basic amenities such as drinking water and sanitation in school premises are also parts of educational infrastructure.

5.4.1 Development of Primary School Level Infrastructure

There has been reasonable increase in number of primary schools in South 24 Parganas in recent years. Whereas there were 3524 primary schools in the district in 2000-01, the number increased to 3656 by 2006-07. The accessibility aspect to primary schools can be assessed from the average population served by a school. The average population served by a primary school in municipalities is higher than that for blocks. As municipal areas are more densely populated, setting up of more schools is necessary in these areas. The average population served by a primary school is lowest in the blocks of Sunderban. One primary school, on an average, serves the need of more than 1700 population approximately in this region. Apart from the average population served, average area served by a school speaks for the accessibility scenario. It is recommended that every primary school going child should get the opportunity of attending a school within 1 kilometer radius from her residence. Lower distance implies lower time loss and lower commuting cost. While average population served by schools in municipalities is high due to congested urban settlements, the average area served is always below 1 square kilometer. The situation reverses in blocks. Though the average area served has fallen during 2001-2007 with increase in number of schools, it is well above the targeted limit in most of the blocks. Scenario in this aspect in the blocks of Sunderban such as Basanti, Canning-II, Kultali and Namkhana is bleak and provision of more schools is necessary. A more interesting observation is that Basanti, Canning-II and Kultali are notable poor performers in literacy. The weak

Figure 5.12: Distribution of Primary Schools Across Regions



performance in literacy may be partly due to inaccessibility to primary school infrastructure.

Provision of two amenities, water and sanitation, are basic necessities in a school. If pure drinking water is not provided in the school premises, then either the children have to bring water with them or they have to use nearby water source which may not be safe. Many children carry water in urban areas. This overloads the bag the children carry. But children in rural areas are not generally habituated with bringing water and hence resort to nearby sources. This results in health hazards caused by waterborne diseases and sizeable expenditure on treatment of diseases like diarrhoea. Sanitation facility is also a must in a school. Proper sanitation facility reduces the chance of outbreak of some diseases which may affect children seriously. Lack of sanitation facility is a major problem for girl children and there may be cases when a girl child would be unwilling to join or continue a school without having sanitation facility. There is considerable increase in provision of drinking water and sanitation facility in schools during 2001-2007. But around 20 percent and 30 percent of primary schools in the district are not provided with water and sanitation facility respectively. The provision of water and sanitation facility is best in the schools of Region-I. The situation is worse for Region–II and worst for Region-III.

As far as the basic infrastructures are concerned, the shortage of space is the most crucial infrastructural bottleneck in primary schools of the district. The standard indicator of insufficient space is the space student ratio below 7 square feet. The level of congestion in such classrooms may even hamper the teaching learning process. Though there is considerable addition of infrastructure during 2001-2007, the proportion of schools where the space student ratio is below 7 square feet is still alarmingly high and at around 60 percent. As in water and sanitation facilities in schools, the space shortage problem deteriorates from Region-I to Region-III. The high proportion of schools not having the required space student ratio in the southern region demands fresh fund flow. The shortage of space has far reaching adverse impacts on quality of education which will be discussed later.

Table 5.11: Provision of Primary School Level Infrastructure

Region	Block/ Municipality (M)	Number of Schools		Average Population Served *	Average Area Served in Square Kilometer		Number of Schools Not Having Drinking Water Facility		Number of Schools Not Having Toilet Facility		Number of Schools Where Floor Area per Student is ≤7 Square Feet.	
		2006-07	2000-01		2006-07	2000-01	2006-07	2000-01	2006-07	2000-01	2006-07	2000-01
Region-I: North West (Kolkata Surroundings)	Thakurpukur Maheshtala	54	49	2793	1.17	1.29	9	9	18	17	19	49
	Budge Budge - I	45	36	2776	0.59	0.74	12	23	8	23	18	36
	Budge Budge- II	92	87	1993	0.85	0.9	7	40	30	46	41	85
	Bishnupur - I	109	107	1928	1.07	1.09	14	24	27	62	57	107
	Bishnupur - II	106	101	1887	0.77	0.81	15	53	35	64	37	101
	Maheshtala (M)	92	90	4280	0.48	0.49	24	27	24	18	49	87
	Budge Budge (M)	21	21	3596	0.43	0.43	3	5	7	5	7	21
	Pujali (M)	13	11	3078	0.65	0.77	5	4	7	6	7	11
	Sonarpur	82	68	2461	1.47	1.77	9	24	23	29	38	68
	Rajpur Sonarpur (M)	77	68	4951	0.72	0.81	25	16	15	12	48	68
	Region Total Percentage of Region Total in ( )	691	638	2831	0.87	0.95	123 (17.80)	225	194 (28.08)	282	321 (46.45)	633
Region-II: North East and Mid West	Baruipur	164	152	2312	1.38	1.49	9	33	40	86	111	148
	Baruipur (M)	17	17	2641	0.53	0.53	7	1	1	3	9	17
	Bhangar - I	98	95	2151	1.57	1.62	9	10	7	55	72	95
	Bhangar - II	93	90	2306	1.74	1.8	10	10	13	53	56	89
	Falta	148	145	1528	0.88	0.9	45	96	64	124	62	145
	Diamond Harbour - I	81	76	1754	0.84	0.9	12	23	12	52	35	74
	Diamond Harbour - II	118	115	1436	0.81	0.83	16	28	21	69	45	115
	Diamond Harbour (M)	17	16	2327	0.61	0.65	6	1	7	4	3	16
	Magrahat - I	111	108	2114	1.07	1.1	24	62	12	87	81	107
	Magrahat - II	134	134	1955	1.02	1.02	12	50	22	106	91	133
	Kulpi	206	203	1195	1.02	1.04	56	81	106	174	101	196
	Mandirbazar	131	128	1430	0.9	0.92	40	51	78	122	71	127
	Region Total Percentage of Region Total in ( )	1318	1279	1784	1.09	1.13	246 (18.66)	446	383 (29.06)	935	737 (55.92)	1262
Region-III: South (Sunderbans)	Canning - I	114	112	2184	1.65	1.68	27	41	23	49	87	107
	Canning - II	87	84	2332	2.47	2.56	20	28	26	51	81	81
	Basanti	147	144	1934	2.75	2.81	58	56	83	111	99	140
	Gosaba	155	150	1485	1.91	1.98	30	17	77	98	130	148
	Joynagar - I	107	105	2086	1.22	1.25	8	45	21	87	72	103
	Joynagar - II	109	101	2070	1.71	1.84	27	36	67	75	93	99
	Joynagar Mazilpur (M)	17	18	1295	0.3	0.29	6	9	4	13	13	18
	Mathurapur - I	123	122	1349	1.2	1.21	43	52	55	113	85	122
	Mathurapur - II	125	125	1586	1.82	1.82	30	51	42	95	81	124
	Kultali	96	91	2065	3.19	3.36	5	26	16	64	77	91
	Patharpratima	203	199	1449	2.39	2.43	47	76	36	169	119	199
	Kakdwip	143	137	1746	1.77	1.84	49	85	65	97	103	136
	Namkhana	98	96	1673	3.78	3.86	20	2	14	77	50	95
	Sagar	123	123	1509	2.29	2.29	30	21	31	94	79	123
	Region Total Percentage of Region Total in ( )	1647	1607	1754	2.12	2.18	400 (24.29)	545	560 (34)	1193	1169 (70.98)	1586
Grand Total Percentage of District Total in ( )		3656	3524	1959	1.52	1.57	769 (21.03)	1216	1137 (31.09)	2410	2227 (60.91)	3481

Source: Office of the District Project Officer, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan C=2006-07; P= 2000-01

* As per number of schools in 2000-01 and population in 2001

5.4.2 Secondary and Higher Secondary School Level Infrastructure: The Quantity Aspect

The network of primary schools in the district is vast and widespread, but the number of schools at a higher level is insufficient. The ratio between number of primary schools and number of secondary and higher secondary schools in the district is 4.62:1 implying that one secondary higher secondary school is fed by more than 4 primary schools. Secondary and higher secondary schools, on an average, serve a larger population than a primary school in every block and municipality. Similarly, on an average, the area served by each secondary and higher secondary school is larger than the area served by a primary school. The scenario is not unexpected but the point of concern is the increase in number of population or area served by a secondary and higher secondary school compared to a primary school unit. This implies that students incur huge loss in terms of commuting time and traveling cost for attending classes while studying at a secondary and higher secondary school. This may result in irregular

Figure 5.13: Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools Across Regions

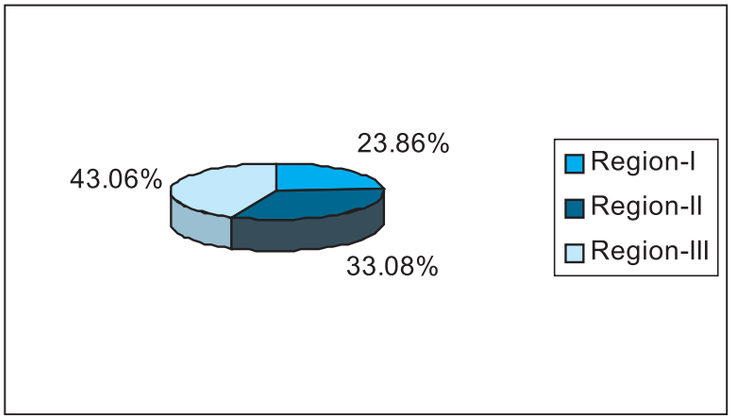
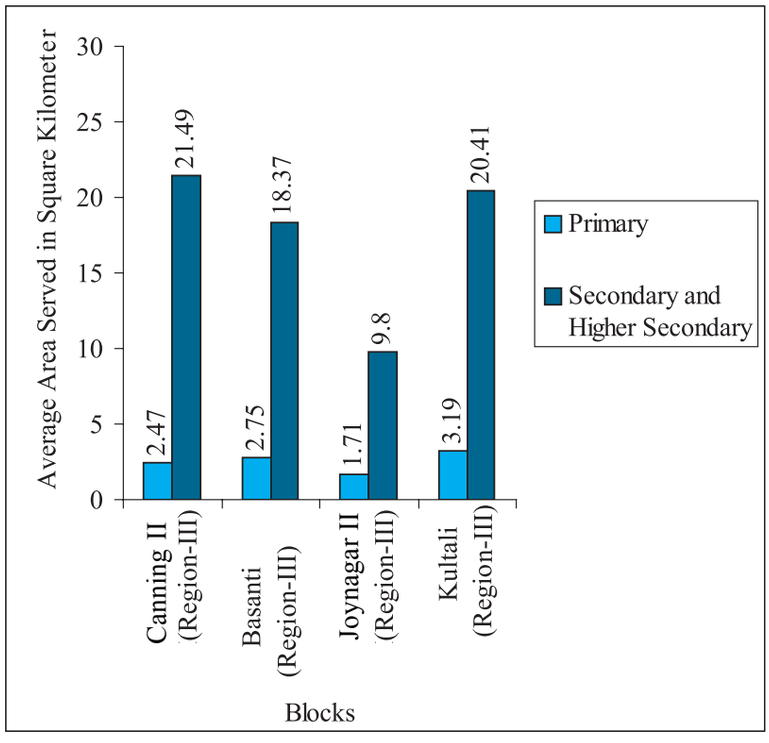


Figure 5.14: Average Area Served per School : Educationally Backward Blocks



CH5

attendance and drop out from the institution ultimately. Thus there is need to extend the network of secondary and higher secondary schools in the district.

The population served per secondary and higher secondary school is quite high and in the range of 10000-15000 in many blocks and reaches maximum in the block of Canning-II. The typical secondary and higher secondary school in the block of Canning-II serves a population of around 20000. The inaccessibility can be an important determining factor behind poor educational attainment in the block. Whereas, area served by most of the primary schools is in the range of 1-3 square kilometer, area served by secondary and higher secondary schools in many blocks ranges above 10 square kilometer. Average area served per school is above 20 square kilometers in Kultali and Canning-II. Students in almost all blocks of the Sunderbans face severe accessibility problem. The average area served per school is above 10 square kilometer in this region. The inaccessibility to high school institutions may even discourage parents to send their children in primary schools (Table 5.12).

The district has made considerable achievement in provision of basic amenities like drinking water and sanitation facility in secondary and higher secondary schools. The non-coverage is below 10 percent of total secondary and higher secondary schools. The performance is impressive when compared to the provision of drinking water and sanitation facility in primary schools. The percentage of non-coverage across regions is more or less similar. The proportion of schools not having drinking water facility is more than the proportion of schools not having sanitation facility in every region. The performance is relatively poor in region-II in both fronts. Special attention needs to be given to improve the coverage of schools within the net of safe drinking water supply in this region.

5.4.3 College and Professional Education

Inaccessibility to higher education is an often cited cause behind non-enrolment and drop out from the higher education system. Average square kilometer area served by a college level institution is more than that served by a lower level institution. This is common for any district of West Bengal and not an exception in case of South 24 Parganas. A wholehearted effort has increased the number of degree colleges from 22 in 2000-01 to 28 in 2004-05. There are 10 open university centers operating in the district along with these degree colleges. In recent times there is a huge demand for technical institutions. The district has responded accordingly and

Table 5.12: Provision of Secondary and Higher Secondary School Level Infrastructure

Region	Block/ Municipality (M)	Number of Schools	Average Population Served *	Average Area Served in Square Kilometer	Number of Schools Not Having Drinking Water Facility	Number of Schools Not Having Toilet Facility
Region-I: North West (Kolkata Surroundings)	Thakurpukur-Maheshtala	15	9126	4.20	2	0
	Budge Budge - I	13	7688	2.04	2	0
	Budge Budge - II	22	7883	3.55	0	1
	Bishnupur - I	18	11465	6.46	3	0
	Bishnupur - II	23	8288	3.55	2	1
	Maheshtala (M)	37	10412	1.19	0	1
	Budge Budge (M)	9	8392	1.01	1	1
	Pujali (M)	4	8464	2.12	1	0
	Sonarpur	12	13950	10.05	0	0
	Rajpur Sonarpur (M)	36	9352	1.54	2	0
	Region Total	189	9556	3.19	13	4
	Percentage of Region Total in ( )				(6.88)	(2.12)
Region-II: North East and Mid West	Baruipur	30	11714	7.54	2	1
	Baruipur (M)	4	11228	2.27	0	0
	Bhangar - I	17	12022	9.04	0	0
	Bhangar - II	13	15967	12.46	0	0
	Falta	34	6520	3.84	10	2
	Diamond Harbour - I	18	7409	3.80	4	0
	Diamond Harbour - II	25	6609	3.82	1	2
	Diamond Harbour (M)	7	5319	1.48	0	1
	Magrahat - I	27	8456	4.41	4	2
	Magrahat - II	23	11395	5.95	1	0
	Kulpi	35	6935	6.02	7	6
	Mandirbazar	29	6314	4.07	3	1
	Region Total	262	8710	5.49	32	15
	Percentage of Region Total in ( )				(12.21)	(5.73)
Region-III: South (Sunderbans)	Canning - I	15	16308	12.52	1	0
	Canning - II	10	19596	21.49	2	0
	Basanti	22	12663	18.37	4	
	Gosaba	40	5570	7.42	4	2
	Joynagar - I	23	9525	5.69	5	0
	Joynagar - II	19	11007	9.80	3	0
	Joynagar Mazilpur (M)	7	3330	0.74	1	0
	Mathurapur - I	26	6332	5.66	3	1
	Mathurapur - II	31	6396	7.33	1	4
	Kultali	15	12532	20.41	1	0
	Patharpratima	41	7034	11.82	2	0
	Kakdwip	39	6136	6.48	1	1
	Namkhana	22	7301	16.84	0	0
	Sagar	31	5988	9.10	1	0
	Region Total	341	8265	10.25	29	8
	Percentage of Region Total in ( )				(8.50)	(2.35)
Grand Total		792	8720	6.99	74	27
Percentage of District Total in ( )					(9.34)	(3.41)

Source: Office of the District Project Officer, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, (2006-07)
* As per number of schools in 2006-07 and population in 2001.

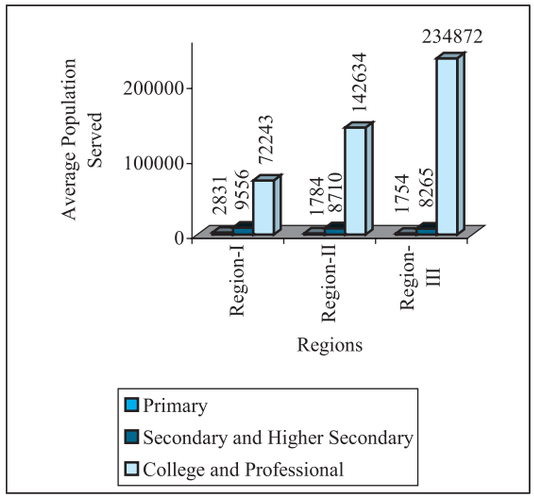
Table 5.13: Spatial Distribution of Colleges and Professional Institutions

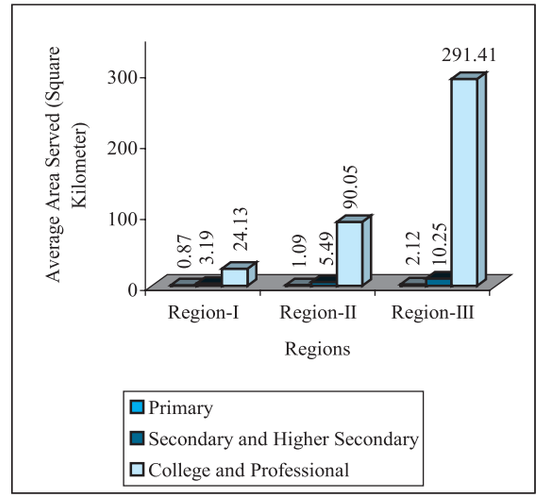
Region	Block/ Municipality (M)	Number of General Colleges and Universities	Number of Professional and Technical School and College
Region-I: North West (Kolkata Surroundings)	Part of KMC area	9	0
	Thakurpukur Maheshtala	0	1
	Budge Budge - I	0	1
	Budge Budge - II	1	0
	Bishnupur - I	0	2
	Bishnupur - II	1	0
	Maheshtala (M)	1	0
	Budge Budge (M)	1	0
	Pujali (M)	0	1
	Sonarpur	0	3
	Rajpur Sonarpur (M)	2	2
	Region Total	15	10
	Percentage of District Total in ( )	(53.57)	(40)
Region-II: North East & Mid West	Baruipur	2	0
	Baruipur (M)	0	0
	Bhangar - I	1	1
	Bhangar - II	0	0
	Falta	0	1
	Diamond Harbour - I	0	0
	Diamond Harbour - II	0	6
	Diamond Harbour (M)	1	1
	Magrahat - I	0	0
	Magrahat - II	1	0
	Kulpi	0	0
	Mandirbazar	1	1
	Region Total	6	10
	Percentage of District Total in ( )	(21.43)	(40)
Region-III: South (Sunderbans)	Canning - I	1	0
	Canning - II	0	0
	Basanti	0	1
	Gosaba	1	0
	Joynagar - I	1	0
	Joynagar - II	0	0
	Joynagar Mazilpur (M)	0	0
	Mathurapur - I	0	0
	Mathurapur - II	1	1
	Kultali	0	0
	Patharpratima	1	1
	Kakdwip	1	1
	Namkhana	0	1
	Sagar	1	0
	Region Total	7	5
	Percentage of District Total in ( )	(25)	(20)
District Total		**28**	**25**

Source: District Statistical Handbook 2005: Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics, Government of West Bengal

a number of technical schools and colleges have been set up. Whereas there were 4 and 1 technical schools and college respectively in 2000-01 in the district, the number increased to 17 and 8 respectively by 2004-05. But the real problem is the distribution of the institutions across regions. A region-wise analysis indicates that most of the degree colleges and technical colleges are situated in the outskirts of Kolkata. Nine degree colleges are actually situated in the Kolkata Municipal Corporation area. There are 16 blocks in the district where there is no degree college at all. Many students residing in nearby blocks and municipalities of Kolkata take the opportunity of studying in premier institutions in Kolkata. But higher education aspirants in other regions not only face the accessibility problem but also miss the opportunity of studying in a quality college. There has been a sustained effort to increase the number of higher education institutions in remote areas and the effort needs to be continued. Additionally, provision of infrastructure such as manpower, library and computer facility and laboratories in these colleges should attract immediate attention. Inaccessibility to higher education institution in every region can be tracked from huge population and wider area served by an institution. Population and area served is least for primary level institutions and highest in case of college and professional level institutions in every region. Population served is lowest in Region-I and highest in Region-III in the district. The provision of primary, secondary and higher secondary schools increases from Region-I to Region-III implying that more schools are provided to fulfill the need of greater number of population. But this is not the case for college and professional institutions. Inaccessibility scenario for college and professional level institutions is grim when Region-II and Region-III are considered (Figure 5.15). It is well known that social return from elementary education is high. But private return from education is higher in upper level institutions when compared to that in elementary education. The inaccessibility to higher education institutions in the district is so critical that students and parents may not foresee any future private return and lose interest in education even at a lower level. It is to be noted that the accessibility scenario analysis is limited by the fact that some parts of the district are not actually inhabited.

Figure 5.15: Accessibility and Higher Level Institutions Across Regions





5.4.4 Other Educational Infrastructure

Public libraries take an important role in developing reading habits among people. Such libraries facilitate people who are not able to buy books but are eager to read. The Government of West Bengal is conscious about the fact and a separate ministry controls and supports such libraries. Improvement in literacy rate has led to increase in number of users in these libraries. More and more people are now getting interested in using the facility. Around 10-15 percent of total enrolled users visit libraries in the district per day. There is increase in number of books available in these libraries in consonance with increase in number of users. Free reading rooms are generally complementary to libraries where users can read materials without borrowing them. Such centers are specially helpful for people searching daily newspapers and periodicals. The growth of mass literacy centers and their distribution across blocks and municipalities of the district has led to proper utilisation of public libraries and reading room facilities.

ICDS centers on an average serve 30 students per institution, SSKs serve 110 students per institution and MSKs serve 135 students per institution. Thus special effort to improve infrastructural facilities like drinking water and sanitation, teaching personnel, teaching aids, etc., is needed. Non-formal institutions has achieved remarkably in enrolling girls. Many girl children do not get the access to a formal education system and girls drop out more frequently than boys. Going to school for a girl child is often thought of as a privilege. Poor parents, who can not afford expenditure on education for their children, send their boys to school. Girl children are put to domestic work and have little time for school. Thus there is a need to teach girls close to home and for hours favourable

CH5

to them. Non-formal institutions have performed well in providing such an opportunity for girl children in the district. As per estimates for 2004-05, girls' enrolment in both ICDS and SSKs are around 50 percent of total enrolment.

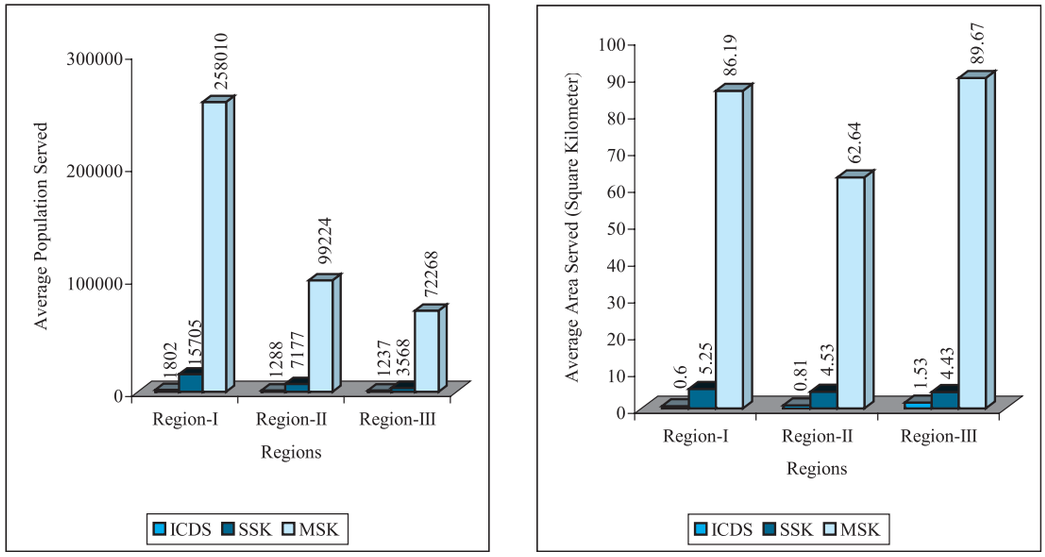
Table 5.14: Spatial Distribution of Libraries, Reading Rooms and Literacy Centers

Region	Block/Municipality(M)	Number of Libraries	Total Number of Members	Total Number of Books	Number of Free Reading Rooms	Number of Mass Literacy Centres
Region-I: North West (Kolkata Surroundings)	Thakurpukur Maheshtala	7	2598	28438	7	96
	Budge Budge -I	3	1570	13066	3	65
	Budge Budge -II	5	1253	16934	5	81
	Bishnupur -I	2	241	4041	2	122
	Bishnupur -II	6	6191	59846	6	132
	Maheshtala (M)	7	N.A.	N.A.	7	0
	Budge Budge (M)	1	N.A.	N.A.	1	0
	Pujali (M)	1	N.A.	N.A.	1	24
	Sonarpur	5	2265	21675	5	133
	Rajpur Sonarpur (M)	6	N.A.	N.A.	6	103
	Region Total	43	-	-	43	756
	Percentage of District Total in ( )	(29.86)			(29.86)	(21.81)
Region-II: North East and Mid West	Baruipur	4	2289	27252	4	198
	Baruipur (M)	3	N.A.	N.A.	3	0
	Bhangar-I	5	2339	17828	5	122
	Bhangar-II	3	962	10159	3	123
	Falta	4	1368	11631	4	147
	Diamond Harbour -I	1	135	6043	1	85
	Diamond Harbour -II	4	2779	29718	4	99
	Diamond Harbour(M)	2	N.A.	N.A.	2	0
	Magrahat-I	3	1116	9689	3	114
	Magrahat-II	5	1061	20510	5	158
	Kulpi	6	1209	17746	6	61
	Mandirbazar	4	1287	16333	4	118
	Region Total	44	-	-	44	1225
	Percentage of District Total in ( )	(30.56)			(30.56)	(35.34)
Region-III: South (Sunderbans)	Canning -I	4	1285	13230	4	93
	Canning -II	4	797	7491	4	112
	Basanti	4	2232	12017	4	168
	Gosaba	6	2671	26273	6	149
	Joynagar-I	5	2931	46386	5	133
	Joynagar-II	4	N.A.	N.A.	4	54
	Joynagar Mazilpur(M)	2	N.A.	N.A.	2	16
	Mathurapur-I	4	881	10890	4	106
	Mathurapur-II	3	752	9352	3	128
	Kultali	3	726	8581	3	0
	Patharpratima	6	1394	17108	6	177
	Kakdwip	2	436	10285	2	135
	Namkhana	5	2164	13256	5	100
	Sagar	5	1415	16002	5	114
	Region Total	57	-	-	57	1485
	Percentage of District Total in ( )	(39.58)			(39.58)	(42.84)
	District Total	**144**	**-**	**-**	**144**	**3466**

Sources: District Statistical Handbook 2005: Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics, Government of West Bengal and Office of the District Project Officer, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan

N.A.: Not Available

Figure 5.16: Accessibility of Non-Formal Institutions Across Regions



5.4.5 Non-Formal Education

Non-formal education (NFE) is designed to complement the formal education system. NFE centres are specially meant for students who face accessibility problem or have dropped out. The basic philosophy is to design convenient teaching hours and to bring educational infrastructure nearer to the students. The formal educational institutions are not so distributed that every child willing to join a primary school can get admitted in an institution within 1 kilometer radius from her residence. Non-formal institutions provide them the opportunity to join educational institutions in a nearby place. A large number of non-formal institutions have been established in the district in recent years. Though in some cases these non-formal institutions are sharing the same physical infrastructure used by formal institutions, there are many examples where they have an independent infrastructural facility.

The main forms of non-formal institutions are Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) centers, Sishu Siksha Kendras (SSK), and, Madhyamik Siksha Kendras (MSK). The ICDS centers run by the Department of Social Welfare provide preschooling opportunity for students upto age 6. Special attention in these centers is given to health of the children. Regular monitoring of their health and additional nutritional support are provided to the students. ICDS centers even satisfy the need of a pregnant mother. They are given necessary medical attention and food as a carrying mother is in need of such supports during pregnancy. SSKs are to provide education for students upto class

CH5

Table 5.15: Non-Formal Education: Centers and Enrolment

Region	Block/ Municipality(M)	Total Number of Centers	Total Enrolment of Students	Total Number of Centers	Total Enrolment of Students	Total Number of Centers	Total Enrolment of Students
		ICDS		SSK		MSK	
Region-I: North West (Kolkata Surroundings)	Thakurpukur Maheshtala	219	5326	7	922	0	0
	Budge Budge - I	104	3115	27	2804	2	249
	Budge Budge - II	100	2780	12	1057	0	0
	Bishnupur - I	172	4831	4	374	1	289
	Bishnupur - II	217	4961	34	3200	0	0
	Maheshtala (M)	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Budge Budge (M)	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Pujali (M)	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Sonarpur	190	3509	31	2303	4	693
	Rajpur Sonarpur (M)	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Region Total Percentage of District Total in ( )	1002 (19.83)	24522	115 (9.40)	10660	7 (10.14)	1231
Region-II: North East and Mid West	Baruipur	246	6348	39	4218	5	385
	Baruipur (M)	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Bhangar - I	151	5235	57	8999	3	446
	Bhangar - II	158	6095	18	2233	3	600
	Falta	201	4627	36	3000	4	502
	Diamond Harbour - I	128	5061	22	2277	0	0
	Diamond Harbour - II	130	3260	33	3321	2	201
	Diamond Harbour (M)	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Magrahat - I	227	7067	31	3057	1	166
	Magrahat - II	192	6832	25	2911	3	375
	Kulpi	190	5991	35	3381	1	85
	Mandirbazar	149	3707	22	2703	1	164
	Region Total Percentage of District Total in ( )	1772 (35.07)	54223	318 (26)	36100	23 (33.33)	2924
Region-III: South (Sunderbans)	Canning - I	170	5332	86	8903	2	310
	Canning - II	185	6277	32	4239	7	1364
	Basanti	229	5320	88	9734	6	732
	Gosaba	184	5347	43	3017	0	0
	Joynagar - I	200	5581	27	3061	0	0
	Joynagar - II	148	5954	41	5435	1	153
	Joynagar Mazilpur (M)	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Mathurapur - I	165	4597	50	4313	10	1120
	Mathurapur - II	160	6798	48	4340	1	196
	Kultali	189	7516	32	3911	0	0
	Patharpratima	225	6864	129	16230	2	181
	Kakdwip	166	5678	76	10339	9	975
	Namkhana	121	3409	80	8938	0	0
	Sagar	137	4003	58	7421	1	117
	Region Total Percentage of District Total in ( )	2279 (45.10)	72676	790 (64.6)	89881	39 (56.53)	5148
	District Total	**5053**	**151421**	**1223**	**136641**	**69**	**9303**

Source: Office of the District Project Officer, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (2006-07)

CH5

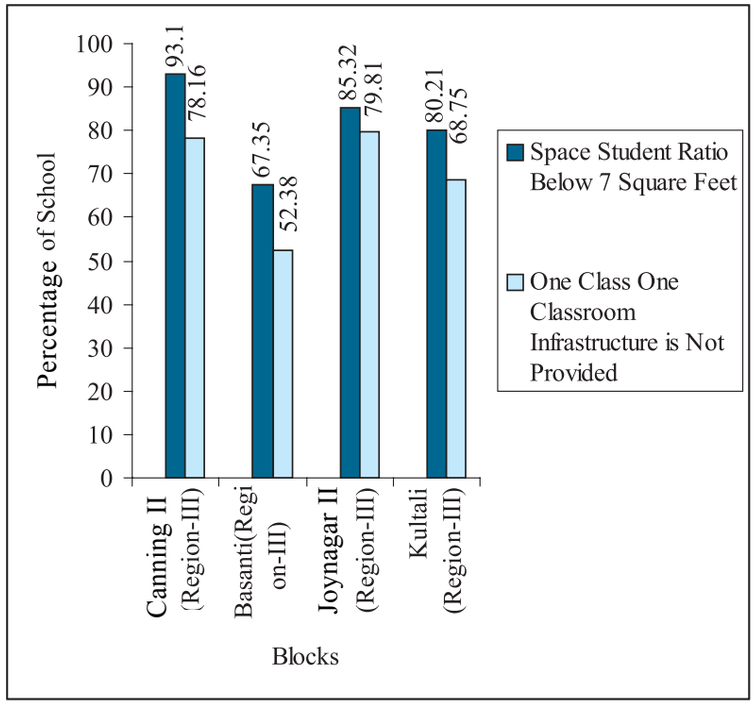
IV. As in the formal institutions, mid-day meals are provided to the students studying in these institutions. MSKs are meant for providing non formal education to students studying in classes V to VIII.

ICDS centers, SSKs and MSKs in South 24 parganas serve the needs of the backward regions. For all these forms of centres, number of institutions established in Region–I is least and highest in Region–III. Number of centers established in 4 educationally backward blocks of South 24 parganas i.e. Canning–II, Basanti, Joynagar–II and Kultali is also impressive. In every region, number of ICDS centers is much higher than number of SSKs and MSKs established. This indicates, as like the formal institutions, there is need to extend the network of non-formal institutions at a higher level of study.

5.5 Education: Quality, Performance, Attainment

Quality is a major challenge in education. Not many students master the curriculum and a few reach the expected level of competency. Under resource based education system, poor quality instructions are the major causes of poor quality education. Insufficient and improper physical infrastructure often hampers quality of teaching. It has been already discussed that the minimum required space of 7 square feet per student is not available in many primary schools in South 24 Parganas. This implies overcrowding within a classroom. This affects quality of instruction adversely. Another indicator, which shows shortage of space and probably affects quality of teaching more adversely, is the number of schools where the number of rooms is less than number of classes.

Figure 5.17: Space Shortage in Primary Schools of Educationally Backward Blocks



CH5

This means either students of different classes are taught jointly or some classes are taken in open space. An alarming proportion of primary schools in the district of South 24 Parganas across all the regions are wanting physical infrastructure in the form of classrooms required. Whereas around 60 percent of primary schools in both Region-I and Region-III lack minimum necessary classroom facility, the proportion rises above 75 percent in Region-II.

The number of schools, where the number of classrooms is less than the number of classes, in Region-I and Region-III has increased during 2001-2007. This indicates that while attention is given to increase the number of schools, basic physical infrastructural facility is not provided. It may be the fact that newborn schools lack such facilities. It may also be noted, for many of those schools, mere construction of a room does not suffice accommodation of all different classes separately and thus such constructions do not meet the one class one room requirement.

Another factor that affects quality of education is the lack of teaching staff in an institution. The average student teacher ratio in primary schools of the district (above 70 percent in 2001-2002) is poorer than the state average (53 in 2002). Considerable improvement in student teacher ratio has been observed during 2001-2007. To be more specific, student teacher ratio at the primary level improved in every block and municipality during the period. A remarkable increase in student teacher ratio has been observed in Bhangar-I and Kultali. But shortage of teachers is still a major problem in primary institutions of South 24 Parganas. One indicator of shortage of teachers is the number of schools where number of teachers is not greater than number of classes. The indicator identifies the schools where number of teachers is either equal to or less than the number of classes. The first case implies that teachers have to take classes consecutively and continuously, which may affect their productivity and hamper quality of teaching. The second possibility is more critical as it means either a class is not taken or more than one classes are clubbed together to be taken jointly. Such severe shortage of teachers generally means students miss classes regularly and the scheduled syllabus does not get completed in the stipulated time. The problem of shortage of teachers is not so severe in secondary or higher secondary schools. Upper middle, secondary and higher secondary institutions have to run a maximum of 8 classes from V to XII. The average number of teachers per secondary

Table 5.16: Spatial Distribution of Primary School Level Infrastructure:The Quality Aspects

Region	Block/ Municipality (M)	Number of Schools		Number of Schools Where Number of Teachers is Not Greater than Number of Classes		Student Teacher Ratio		Number of Schools Where Number of Rooms is Less than Number of Classes	
		2006-07	2001-02	2006-07	2001-02	2006-07	2001-02	2006-07	2001-02
Region-I: North West (Kolkata Surroundings)	Thakurpukur Maheshtala	54	49	12	10	39.60	62	30	27
	Budge Budge - I	45	36	8	3	44	62.48	37	30
	Budge Budge- II	92	87	15	7	48.20	62.3	79	77
	Bishnupur - I	109	107	22	17	44.50	68.14	83	83
	Bishnupur - II	106	101	18	22	39.30	56.37	63	54
	Maheshtala (M)	92	90	27	24	53.10	61.51	37	47
	Budge Budge (M)	21	21	8	4	50.50	51.79	7	10
	Pujali (M)	13	11	2	2	52.90	70.68	10	8
	Sonarpur	82	68	6	14	33.20	56.31	52	39
	Rajpur Sonarpur (M)	77	68	7	20	37.70	51.81	24	18
	Region Total	691	638	125	123	42.55	59.88	422	393
	Percentage of Region Total in ( )			(18.09)				(61.07)	
Region-II: North East and Mid West	Baruipur	164	152	8	12	49.70	79.04	130	121
	Baruipur (M)	17	17	3	2	44.80	51.86	10	12
	Bhangar - I	98	95	41	13	63.30	110.8	40	76
	Bhangar - II	93	90	17	18	59.60	96.41	66	59
	Falta	148	145	23	6	40.50	59.09	126	137
	Diamond Harbour- I	81	76	14	6	47.80	77.88	65	68
	Diamond Harbour- II	118	115	14	18	40.10	65.53	99	92
	Diamond Harbour(M)	17	16	3	2	33	41.05	12	13
	Magrahat - I	111	108	25	13	66.50	85.31	78	90
	Magrahat - II	134	134	17	12	53.70	79.72	101	110
	Kulpi	206	203	31	38	45.70	65.34	181	165
	Mandirbazar	131	128	28	8	50.90	65.32	95	123
	Region Total	1318	1279	224	148	50.94	76.05	1003	1066
	Percentage of Region Total in ( )			(16.99)				(76.10)	
Region-III: South (Sunderbans)	Canning - I	114	112	11	35	50.90	84.03	91	52
	Canning - II	87	84	14	30	76.50	104.8	68	31
	Basanti	147	144	37	36	55.30	83.36	77	93
	Gosaba	155	150	23	39	41.40	52.55	79	81
	Joynagar - I	107	105	36	19	66.70	90.88	55	69
	Joynagar - II	109	101	28	6	78.50	106.6	87	96
	Joynagar Mazilpur (M)	17	18	8	9	48.60	61.05	2	2
	Mathurapur - I	123	122	19	21	60.50	77.71	109	93
	Mathurapur - II	125	125	28	43	46.90	61.77	94	66
	Kultali	96	91	43	32	64.30	111.4	66	73
	Patharpratima	203	199	78	89	42.40	67.57	100	95
	Kakdwip	143	137	35	39	45.70	72.32	96	103
	Namkhana	98	96	12	30	33.20	61.61	33	43
	Sagar	123	123	54	66	47.60	84.99	43	58
	Region Total	1647	1607	426	494	52.23	77.80	1000	955
	Percentage of Region Total in ( )			(25.87)				(60.72)	
District Total		3656	3524	775	765	49.70	73.54	2425	2414
Percentage of District Total in ( )				(21.19)				(66.33)	

Source: Office of the District Project Officer, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan

CH5

and higher secondary school in every block and municipality of South 24 Parganas, except Mathurapur-I, is above 8. But as schools often have to absorb huge number of students in each class and have to run separate sections in each class, the shortage of teachers acquires another dimension. Introduction of para teachers in the educational system has supported the under-resourced system by increasing average number of teachers per school and lowering the student teacher ratio. Whereas around 10 percent of total teachers are para teachers in primary schools, the proportion is around 20 percent in upper primary schools. A good percentage of teachers in secondary and higher secondary schools are trained. Trained teachers are specially equipped and that improves the teaching learning process.

Provision of two other infrastructural facilities has become indispensable in secondary and higher secondary schools. One of them, the library facility, is provided in almost all secondary and higher secondary schools. The impressive performance is seen in all regions of the district. Library facility in schools in backward areas is more important as students who cannot buy books generally rely on books borrowed from the library. Only 3 percent of secondary and higher secondary schools in the Sunderban region does not have a library. The district has made enormous progress in providing library infrastructure in secondary and higher secondary schools. Now time has come when more effort to improve the quality of the library by increasing number of books and engaging trained librarians should be undertaken. Provision of computers in secondary and higher secondary schools has also become necessary in recent times. There is no denying the fact that students need to be computer literate in their school days. Computer knowledge improves skill that has far reaching positive effects in the employment market. The provision of computer facility in schools virtually has not started in the district. The benefit that has been received is reaped by Region-I. Whereas 35 percent of secondary and higher secondary schools in Region-I are provided with computer facility, only 12 percent of schools in Sunderban have the computer facility.

Performance of students in schools is influenced by quality of teaching. A student completing the course in the stipulated number of years is a sign of proper learning of the curriculum. A student entering a primary school in class I is expected to complete primary schooling in 4 years. Similarly a student entering in class V should pass class VIII level in 4 years. The

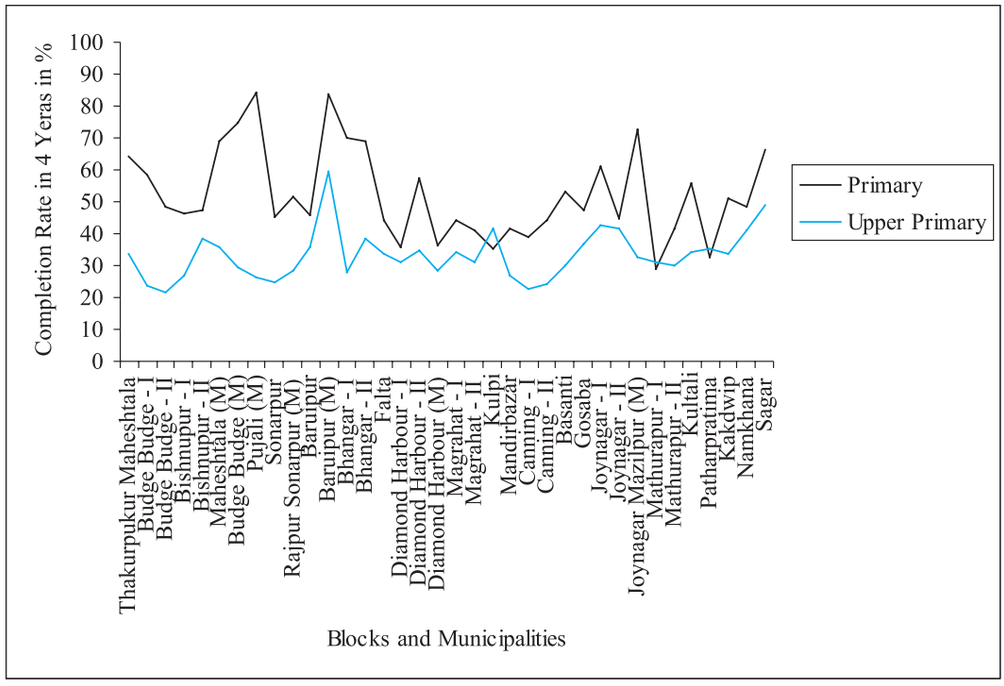
Table 5.17: Spatial Distribution of Secondary and Higher Secondary School Level Infrastructure: The Quality Aspects

Region	Block/ Municipality(M)	Number of Schools	Number of Schools Not Having Library Facility	Number of Schools Not Having Computer Facility	Average Number of Teachers per School	Percent of Trained Teachers
Region-I: North West (Kolkata Surroundings)	Thakurpukur-Maheshtala	15	1	12	10.87	66.26
	Budge Budge - I	13	0	8	12.23	60.38
	Budge Budge - II	22	1	20	11.27	77.02
	Bishnupur - I	18	3	12	8.44	80.92
	Bishnupur - II	23	0	19	11.87	70.33
	Maheshtala (M)	37	0	22	11.24	75.96
	Budge Budge (M)	9	1	6	9.78	63.64
	Pujali (M)	4	0	3	9.25	78.38
	Sonarpur	12	0	7	13.25	68.55
	Rajpur Sonarpur (M)	36	2	15	12.78	71.52
	Region Total	189	8	124	11.40	71.88
	Percentage of Region Total in ( )		(4.23)	(65.61)		
Region-II: North East and Mid West	Baruipur	30	0	19	11.77	67.71
	Baruipur (M)	4	0	1	19.75	75.95
	Bhangar - I	17	0	14	11.35	60.1
	Bhangar - II	13	0	10	10.31	53.73
	Falta	34	3	26	10.26	77.36
	Diamond Harbour - I	18	1	18	10.44	62.77
	Diamond Harbour - II	25	0	19	9.32	75.54
	Diamond Harbour (M)	7	0	3	10.71	88
	Magrahat - I	27	1	23	11.04	68.79
	Magrahat - II	23	1	17	10.74	75.3
	Kulpi	35	4	28	8.94	69.65
	Mandirbazar	29	6	25	8.55	77.42
	Region Total	262	16	203	10.34	70.77
	Percentage of Region Total in ( )		(6.11)	(77.48)		
Region-III: South (Sunderbans)	Canning - I	15	2	11	12.07	81.22
	Canning - II	10	0	10	8.2	71.95
	Basanti	22	0	22	8.91	77.55
	Gosaba	40	1	39	8.28	78.55
	Joynagar - I	23	0	21	10.17	65.81
	Joynagar - II	19	0	19	8.58	68.1
	Joynagar Mazilpur (M)	7	0	4	9	79.37
	Mathurapur - I	26	3	21	7.31	71.58
	Mathurapur - II	31	3	26	10.39	71.12
	Kultali	15	1	14	10.27	68.18
	Patharpratima	41	0	38	8.8	65.65
	Kakdwip	39	0	30	9.03	76.14
	Namkhana	22	0	18	8.64	74.74
	Sagar	31	0	27	9.42	73.97
	Region Total	341	10	300	9.12	72.84
	Percentage of Region Total in ( )		(2.93)	(87.98)		
	District Total	792	34	627	10.07	71.88
Percentage of District Total in ( )			(4.29)	(79.17)		

Source: Office of the District Project officer, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (2006-07)

CH5

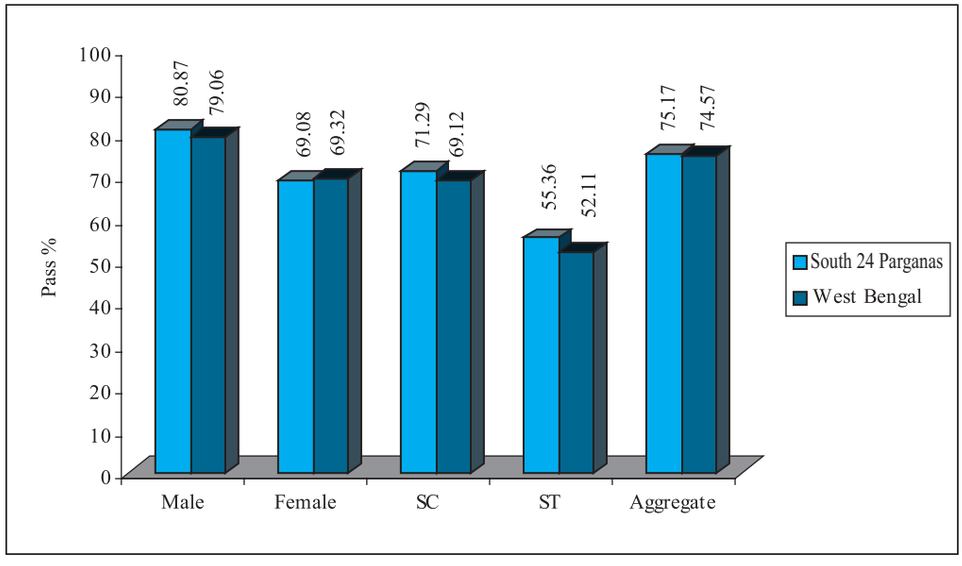
Figure 5.18: Performance of Students in Primary and Upper Primary Schools



cohort study, results of which were shown earlier (Tble 5.6), shows that schools in municipal areas have a higher proportion of students completing the course in stipulated number of years than in block areas. Rajpur Sonarpur municipality is a notable exception. Both Rajpur Sonarpur municipality and its adjacent block of Sonarpur, though situated in the outskirts of Kolkata, are poor performers with

CH5

Figure 5.19: Performance of Students in Madhyamik Examination (2007): The State and the District



respect to the said indicator. Sagar and Namkhana, two blocks of the Sunderbans that performs well in literacy, have a relatively good performance in terms of students completing their school in primary and upper primary level in the stipulated number of years. The performance of students deteriorates at the upper primary level. There is no block in the district where 50 percent of enrolled students completed upper primary level in 4 years (Figure 5.18).

Table 5.18: Block-wise Percentage Distribution of Households by Education Status of the Most Educated Person of Households in Blocks

	Block	Percentage of Households where the Most Educated Person							Rank
		is Illiterate	has Studied in Primary to Class V Level	has Studied in Class VI to X Level	has Studied Below XI Level	has Studied in Class XI to Graduate Level / Professional Diploma Level	has Studied Above Graduation to Postgraduate Degree/ Professional Degree Level	has Studied Above X Level	
Region-I: North West (Kolkata Surroundings)	Thakurpukur Maheshtala	3.62	20.71	45.60	69.92	23.98	6.10	30.08	1
	Budge Budge-I	7.07	24.42	44.71	76.20	21.37	2.42	23.80	3
	Budge Budge-II	13.85	30.64	34.83	79.33	16.47	4.20	20.67	9
	Bishnupur-I	6.73	30.58	44.66	81.96	15.27	2.77	18.04	12
	Bishnupur-II	5.50	26.13	45.36	76.98	19.31	3.71	23.02	4
	Sonarpur	9.53	27.88	40.95	78.36	18.00	3.64	21.64	5
Region-II: North East and Mid West	Baruipur	9.62	30.89	35.28	75.79	18.50	5.71	24.21	2
	Bhangar-I	15.40	36.32	32.02	83.75	11.68	4.57	16.25	18
	Bhangar-II	7.12	33.32	43.83	84.27	12.94	2.79	15.73	22
	Falta	7.79	29.16	42.09	79.05	18.10	2.85	20.95	6
	Diamond Harbour -I	7.39	28.63	45.74	81.76	15.05	3.19	18.24	11
	Diamond Harbour -II	9.28	29.91	40.10	79.30	17.63	3.08	20.70	7
	Magrahat -I	6.41	35.11	43.28	84.80	12.88	2.32	15.20	25
	Magrahat -II	6.42	34.75	42.23	83.40	14.00	2.59	16.60	15
	Kulpi	13.52	34.85	35.64	84.01	13.34	2.64	15.99	19
	Mandirbazar	9.54	33.84	38.33	81.72	15.07	3.21	18.28	10
Region-III: South (Sunderbans)	Canning -I	8.92	39.39	34.99	83.31	13.75	2.94	16.69	14
	Canning -II	16.11	48.92	27.06	92.09	6.96	0.94	7.91	29
	Basanti	19.93	45.48	24.71	90.12	7.02	2.86	9.88	27
	Gosaba	8.19	31.76	39.35	79.29	16.75	3.95	20.70	7
	Joynagar-I	12.92	37.44	33.12	83.48	13.45	3.07	16.52	16
	Joynagar -II	11.18	43.06	32.04	86.29	11.07	2.65	13.71	26
	Mathurapur-I	9.34	36.17	36.85	82.36	14.54	3.09	17.64	13
	Mathurapur-II	8.85	38.20	37.32	84.37	12.66	2.97	15.63	24
	Kultali	11.68	43.29	36.01	90.98	7.70	1.32	9.02	28
	Patharpratima	8.45	36.20	39.08	83.74	11.48	4.79	16.26	17
	Kakdeep	6.93	35.35	41.89	84.18	13.09	2.73	15.82	21
	Namkhana	5.59	32.84	45.87	84.30	13.32	2.39	15.70	23
	Sagar	3.62	31.95	48.46	84.02	13.27	2.70	15.98	20

Source: Rural Household Survey (2004-05)
Ranks are calculated for a list of 29 blocks of the district of South 24 Parganas. The highest is ranked 1

The performance of South 24 Parganas at the next higher level is impressive. The result of the Madhyamik examination of 2007 reveals that the percentage of successful candidates in South 24 Parganas was higher than the pass percentage achieved by the whole state. Performance of examinees of the backward groups was also better than that achieved in the state as a whole.

Performance at a higher level is expected to be influenced by the provision and accessibility to the infrastructure, level of development, economic condition of households, etc. The Rural Household Survey 2005 classified households in terms of education level attained by the highest educated person of a household in each block. The proportion of households in which the most educated person has studied above class X level can be estimated for each block. The results show (Table 5.18) that blocks in Region-I have generally achieved more in this aspect. This may be due to the fact that people in this region have better access to higher education infrastructure and it becomes easier for them to access facilities available in the district of Kolkata. A strong rank correlation coefficient of 0.72 between the incidence of poverty and proportion of households in which the most educated person has studied above class X level establishes that attainment on education in relatively prosperous blocks are better than that in income poor blocks. A number of households probably cannot continue higher studies due to relatively constraints in poverty stricken blocks. It is most unfortunate that higher level education infrastructure is almost non-existent in many remote blocks of South 24 Parganas.

Educational attainment has some positive effect on society. Educational attainment by one individual encourages others to get educated. The societal attitude towards education in an educated area is more conducive for spread of education than in an educationally backward area. This can be seen from higher enrolment and lower dropout rate in an educationally advanced area. Educational attainment is important as it controls the rate of drop out at the elementary level. The rank correlation coefficient between blockwise proportion of households in which the most educated person has studied above X level and the corresponding rate of drop out at the primary stage is 0.45. The same coefficient at the upper primary stage is 0.46. Educational attainment thus has a positive impact on controlling drop out rate.

CH5

CH5

5.6 Special Programmes on Education

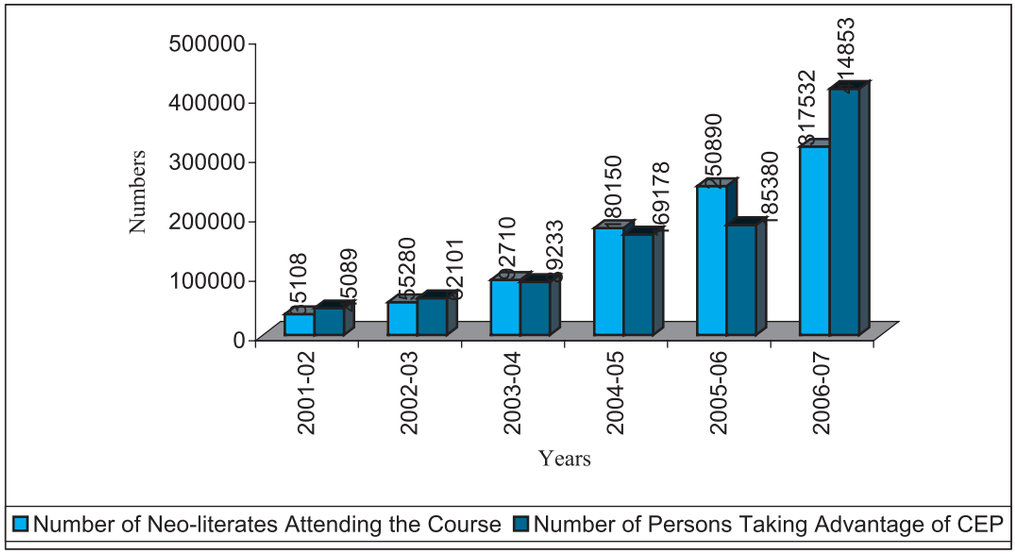
Education is in the concurrent list in the Constitution of India. Both the Central and the State governments finance several programmes on education. The district administration makes sincere efforts to implement these programmes so that the fruit reach the educationally backward. The total literacy campaign (TLC) was launched in the district in the month of February, 1992. The target population at the time of beginning of the programme was around 10 lakhs. The TLC programme was successful to make more than 80 percent of the 9-14 age group children and around 73 percent of 15-50 age group population, literate. The importance of post literacy programme (PLC) to fulfill the needs of literate population, so that the neoliterates do not lose their literacy status, started with fanfare in the district. The evaluation of PLC learners revealed that more than 85 percent of learners scored more than 70 percent in the evaluation. The continuing education programme (CEP) was launched in the district in 1999 after the completion of the PLC programme. The basic objective of the programme was to upgrade literacy skills of the neo-literates so that they can be involved in income generating opportunities. CEP provides learners an opportunity of lifelong learning according to their need and choice, development of human resource through self learning, thinking skills, etc. CEP was specially designed to ensure participation of people from all sections of the society and converge the programme with other development programmes. The successful running of CEP in the district was observed from increase in number of beneficiaries in recent years (Figure 5.20).

Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a

Literacy as a Tool of Empowerment: Continuing Education Center (CEC) Based Self Help Groups

Income generation programme (IGP) is one of the programme under continuing education programme. One feature of IGP is formation of CEC based self help groups (SHG) by the Preraks. In 24 Parganas(S) total 72 numbers of such SHGs have been formed till now and some of these groups have undergone skill development training imparted by Jana Sikshan Sangsthan, Narendrapur. The Prerak of Simla CEC in Khorda Gram Panchayat under Diamond Harbour-II Block has formed one such SHG named 'Sandhani'. Sayeeda Rajina Khatun, the Prerak of the CEC is acting as secretary of the SHG. The SHG has undergone training on ornamental pisciculture organised by Zilla Saksharata Samity, 24 Parganas(S). At present the members of SHG have taken loan from bank and started a business of supplying ornamental fish in different shops which has increased their income and fulfilled their dream of being self reliant.

Figure 5.20: Changes in Number of Beneficiaries in Continuing Education Programme (CEP)



programme to universalise elementary education, ensure students complete their study and offer quality education. SSA was launched in the district after successful completion of District Primary Education Programme(DPEP). The targeted time frame was fixed to universalise elementary schooling and retention by 2010. The main objectives of SSA are to promote social justice through basic education, bridge gender and social category gaps and to ensure quality education for quality of life. The programme stressesd on sustainable partnership among Central, State and Local governments. A major thrust is given on community partnership by involving panchayat raj institutions, school management committees, village and ward education committees and parent teacher associations. The novelty of SSA is that such a structured and component wise programme to improve education scenario was not implemented earlier.

Another major programme on education that has received attention in recent years is the mid-day meal programme. The basic objective of the programme is to offer incentive to the primary school going children to join and attend school. It has been widely seen that mid-day meal programme has resulted in increase in enrolment and attendance in primary schools. At an early stage of the programme, children were given edibles and generally a particular day in a month was chosen for the distribution. Now cooked food is distributed in all primary schools of the district. It has been now decided that mid-day meal programme will run up to class VIII in educationally backward blocks of Canning-II, Joynagar-II, Kultali and Basanti. The responsibility of cooking has been

CH5

entrusted to a self help group of the village. The official grant earmarked for the mid-day meal scheme is 100 grams of rice per head per day and Rs. 2.50 per head per day. The schools are given the said amount according to their enrolment and for a maximum of 20 days in a month subject to a maximum of 222 days in a year. Barring some minor problems, the programme of mid day meal is running smoothly in the district and an amount of around 15 crores has been spent during April 07-October 07. It is observed that the sections of the society who were almost never keen on schooling are now turning up.

In spite of undertaking various activities for girls education, it has not been possible to make any major breakthrough in areas dominated by SC, ST, OBC, and, minority communities. In some of the areas, migratory population or the practice of child labour have posed major problems. The most important factor that has impact on retention and quality assurance for girls is the societal attitude towards the necessity of educating the girl child, specially at the upper primary level. Hence, the National Programme for Education of Girls at the Elementary Level (NPEGEL) has been designed for undertaking more intensive gender interventions in these pockets. This is in addition to the ongoing process of SSA. It has been seen that a girl child friendly environment in schools helps the cause of girls' education. NPEGEL promotes developing adequate gender sensitive infrastructure, mobilisation of women groups and female panchayat members to sensitise educational issues of the girl child, convergence of formal and non-formal institutions to facilitate girls' education and to concentrate on educational issues of girl child.

The Government of India has approved a new scheme called Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) for setting up residential schools with boarding facilities at elementary level. The infrastructure will be built in remote areas belonging

Table 5.19: Amount of Expenditure and Number of Beneficiaries in Different Programmes on Education

Project	2006-07		2005-06	
	Amount of Expenditure in Rs.	Number of Beneficiaries	Amount of Expenditure in Rs.	Number of Beneficiaries
SSA	648228310	1199560	466271257	1123171
NPEGEL	10710469	72016	5458326	-
KGBV	3225000	116	3750000	-

Source: Office of the District Project Officer, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan

predominantly to the SC, ST, OBC, and minorities. The scheme will be coordinated with the existing schemes of Department of Elementary Education and Literacy e.g. SSA, NPEGEL, etc. Schools at Howramari in Canning-II, Janapriyanagar Janapriya in Basanti, Jamtala Bhawan Chandra in Kultali and Nolgoradham Baikuntha Vidyapith in Joynagar-I have been already covered by this program. The efficient running of these government programmes can be seen from increase in number of beneficiaries in recent years.

5.7 Problems and Prospects : The Path Ahead

The attainment of the district on education is encouraging. But there is no scope of complacency and much is yet to be done. This is time to consolidate and to make sincere effort to improve upon those aspects that were not properly attended. The achievement of the district in reducing illiteracy, specially when decadal growth in literacy is considered, is impressive. The same holds true when decadal growth in female literacy and reduction in gender gap in literacy are considered. But literacy in some backward pockets and for some underprivileged social group is miserable. Thus there is need of geographical, social group-based targeting of literacy policies. The initial goal should be to plan in such a manner so that there will not be any educationally backward block in the district in near future. Gender friendly non-formal institutions and literacy centers should be established to reduce gender gap in literacy.

The performance in school enrolment clearly gives a sign that the district in near future will achieve the target of universal enrolment. But the real problem is the rate of dropout. Dropout rate at every stage of education is alarmingly high. Female enrolment falls drastically when the age of marriage is approached. Thus there is need to provide some incentive to retain girl students. The system of mid-day meal has well known positive impact on retention. The programme should be extended to the upper primary level at least for girl students in all blocks and municipalities of the district. Introduction of financial grant can be effective to retain girls at a higher level of education.

The involvement of the community can be effective in reducing dropout or to take the dropped out students back to the classroom. A retention drive with community and parents of dropped out children is sure to be effective. Apart from management and monitoring of schools,

CH5

Score Sheet

Achievements	Areas of Concern
• Impressive decadal increase in female and aggregate literacy rate.	• Aggregate literacy rate is not impressive when compared to other districts of West Bengal. Literacy rate among ST's is miserable.
• Most of the blocks and municipalities registered an impressive growth in literacy during 1991-2001. Performance in blocks is slowly catching up with that of municipalities.	• A significant rural urban gap in literacy still exists.
• Whereas there were 16 blocks having a gender gap in literacy above 30 percent in 1991, there is no block in that catrgory in 2001.	• Canning-I, Canning-II, Basanti and Joynagar-II are the four blocks where female literacy rate is less than 50 percent.
• Almost universal enrolment for the 5-8 age group children. Every block and municipality has an enrolment ratio above 85 percent for 9-14 age group children. Enrolment of backward group children is also satisfying.	• Huge dropout of students at primary and upper primary stage. Canning-II has a dropout rate above 50 percent at the upper primary level.
• Impressive girls' enrolment at the primary and upper primary level. Enrolment of girls coming from backward groups also worth mention.	• Female enrolment falls at the higher levels of education. It falls drastically when the age of marriage is approached.
• Widespread primary school infrastructure across all regions. Moderate progress in provision of basic amenities like drinking water and sanitation in primary schools.	• Shortage of space is the most crucial infrastructural bottleneck in primary schools. Proportion of schools where number of classrooms is less than number of classes is alarmingly high. Lack of teachers, manifested by number of schools where number of teachers is not greater than number of classes, is also a matter of concern.
• Moderate proliferation of secondary and higher secondary, and, college and professional level institutions.	• The burden of a college institution in terms of average population served and average area served is too high.
• Commendable achievement in establishing ICDS and SSK centers.	• Relatively inaccessible higher level non formal educational institutions.
• Increase in number of beneficiaries in government educational programmes.	• Lack of co-ordination of educational programmes with programmes of other departments.

the members of the local government should be held responsible and involved in the task. Involvement of women teachers, women guardians, self help groups and ensuring earnest effort from them is necessary to control dropout of girl children. This is time that the graveness of the problem is acknowledged and necessary attention is paid and policies taken to check the rate of drop out.

Provision of educational infrastructure at the primary level is more satisfactory when compared to educational institutions at a higher level. Student teacher ratio, number of students per school increases substantially in secondary and higher secondary schools when compared to a primary school. Inaccessibility to college level infrastructure in the district is a well known obstacle to higher education. Thus, along with consolidation of achievement at the primary level, proliferation of higher level institutions should be sincerely targeted. The quality aspects of education by improving physical infrastructure and full time teaching personnel should get attention.

Non-formal institutions are often thought as second grade institutions lacking adequate infrastructure and even an independent physical infrastructure in some cases. Provision of additional infrastructural facilities for non formal institutions should also receive attention. As non formal institutions intend to support education of girl child, female teachers in large numbers should get employment in those institutions.

Government programmes on education aims at improvement of educational scenario of the district. The successful running of adult education centers has resulted in eradication of adult illiteracy to a large extent. These programmes cannot sustain if such programmes are not linked with employment generation opportunities. Continuing Education Centers provide such employment opportunities. But there is need to converge the literacy programmes with other developmental programmes. Training to establish fishery, livestock rearing can provide additional employment opportunity for learners. The mid day meal programme, for more successful operation, should involve the mothers in monitoring. Contributions of parents, local government are necessary to improve quality of food and to offer students the facility when a school runs more than 222 days in a year.

It is observed that achievement on education does not concentrate in any particular region of the district. Though blocks and municipalities of Region-I, as situated around Kolkata, are more favourably placed than Region-II and Region-III, performance of some blocks

and municipalities of Region-II and Region-III on literacy and enrolment matches performance attained in some parts of Region-I. But the rural urban gap in every region is still huge and steps to bridge the gap is necessary. The regional difference in provision of infrastructure at higher level of education is clearly observed. This has impacts on educational attainment. The region of Sunderban has not yet equalized with other regions when higher level education is considered. Hence fund flow for educational development of Sunderban should continue.

Lack of basic education is a denial of fundamental right. Decisive actions at the grass root level under the umbrella of district administration are sure to improve the scenario.

CH5