

Chapter-1

Introduction

1 Samagra Shiksha: A Comprehensive Approach to School Education

Education drives social, economic, and political change, while fostering equity. The Government of India (GoI) continually strives to enhance access to quality education at all levels. In view of this, various interventions have been launched by the Government from time to time. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act) mandated free elementary education for children in the age group of six to 14 years. It allowed governments to set implementation rules, which led to the framing of the West Bengal RTE Rules in 2012. Also, the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) was launched in 2009 by GoI to enhance access to secondary education and improve its quality.

While Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), that was introduced in 2001 by GOI, focused on universalising elementary education (Grades I–VIII) and served as the implementation vehicle for the RTE Act, RMSA covered secondary education (Grades IX–X and XI–XII for certain components). In addition, the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Restructuring and Reorganisation of Teacher Education (CSSTE) aimed to build the capacity of educators across the country.

The Union Budget 2018–19 proposed the merger of SSA, RMSA and CSSTE into a single, Centrally Sponsored Scheme. This led to the launch (April 2018) of Samagra Shiksha, a unified program covering pre-school to senior secondary education. The overarching aim of this initiative was to ensure inclusive, equitable, and quality education while improving learning outcomes across all levels.

1.1 Vision and Scope

Samagra Shiksha integrates school education from pre-primary to higher secondary levels, while supporting Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 4) related to the provision of Quality Education. The Scheme ensures holistic learning by integrating various stages of school education under one umbrella and shares funding between the Central and State Governments in a 60:40 ratio.

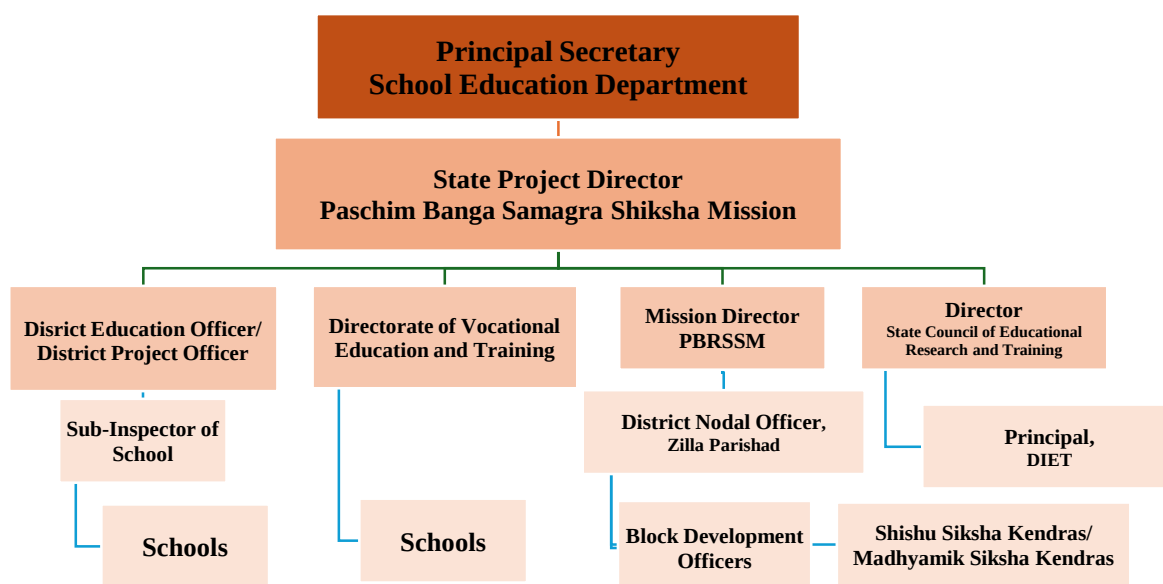
The major objectives of the Samagra Shiksha Scheme *inter alia* include the following:

- Providing quality education and improving student learning outcomes.
- Bridging social and gender gaps in school education.
- Promoting equity and inclusion at all levels.
- Ensuring minimum standards in school infrastructure and services.
- Vocationalising school education to enhance employability.
- Supporting States in the effective implementation of the RTE Act, 2009.
- Strengthening teacher education institutions such as State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), State Institute of Education (SIE) and District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) to improve the quality of teacher training.

1.2 Organisational set up of Samagra Shiksha in the State of West Bengal

Paschim Banga Samagra Shiksha Mission (PBSSM) is the State Implementing Society (SIS) for implementation of ‘Samagra Shiksha’ in West Bengal. The State Project Director (SPD) under the Principal Secretary of the School Education Department (SED) is the head of PBSSM and is assisted by three Deputy SPDs. Besides, Paschim Banga Rajya Shishu Shiksha Mission (PBRSSM), SCERT and Directorate of Vocational Education and Training (DVET), were also working in alliance with SPD in respect of implementation of the Scheme. At the district level, the District Education Officer (DEO)/ District Project Officer (DPO) with support of the Sub-Inspector of Schools (SI) at the circle level, manages activities with respect of schools other than Shishu Shiksha Kendras (SSKs)/Madhyamik Shiksha Kendras (MSKs)¹. In respect of SSKs and MSKs, the District Nodal officer (DNO) with support from Block Development Officers (BDOs) manages activities. Similarly, the District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) manage training of in-service teachers at the district level. The above structural details are described in the following organogram (**Chart 1.1**).

Chart 1.1: Organisational set up of Samagra Shiksha



1.3 School Data Collection and Monitoring

The Ministry of Education, GoI developed the Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE) a comprehensive database on schools and their resources for planning and resource allocation. The database also covered details of infrastructure, teachers, enrolment and exams in schools. At the State

¹ For achieving universalisation of Primary (Class-1 to IV) as well as Upper Primary education (Class-V to VIII) and provide scope to a large number of children of remote areas, the Panchayat & Rural Development Department (P&RD) GoWB established Shishu Shiksha Kendra (SSK) (1997) and Madhyamik Shiksha Kendra (MSK) (2001) mostly in backward areas of the State.

level, the West Bengal's Banglar Shiksha Portal² (BSP), launched in 2019, enables real-time school related data entry to improve efficiency, accuracy and access to information across the education system.

1.4 Overview of schools in West Bengal

1.4.1 Different types of schools in West Bengal

The various types of schools that are functioning in West Bengal are as follows:

- **Government schools:** State Government schools are fully managed and funded by the State, with staff recruited through the West Bengal Public Service Commission (WBPS). Employees are recognised as Government employees and West Bengal Service Rules (WBSR), 1971 are applicable to them.
- **Government Aided schools and Government-sponsored schools:** Government Aided and Government-sponsored schools³ in West Bengal are managed by their Managing Committees, with staff recruited by the West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC). These schools are funded from State grants. The West Bengal Board of School Education (Conduct and Discipline of Teachers and Non-Teaching Staff) Regulations, 2004 are applicable to the employees of such aided schools, however, they are not Government employees.
- **Private schools:** These schools are owned, managed and controlled by private organisations or individuals.

UDISE data for the year 2023-24 showed that of the total number of schools in the State, a predominant number (89 per cent) were managed by the Government as shown in the **Table 1.1** below:

Table 1.1: Total Schools in the State as on 31 March 2024

Particulars	Number of schools				
	Primary	Upper Primary	Secondary	Higher Secondary	Total
Total no. of schools in West Bengal	74,454	8,632	3,240	7,539	93,865
Schools under Govt. management ⁴ categories (per cent)	66,803 (90)	6,962 (81)	2,747 (85)	6,861 (91)	83,373 (89)

Source: UDISE 2023-24

² The West Bengal Banglar Shiksha portal (BSP) is a web-based platform launched by the SED, GoWB to manage and provide real-time data on State-run and aided schools. The data is fed at the school level and the database can be updated throughout the year, whereas UDISE plus database is an educational management information system under the Department of School Education & Literacy (DoSE&L), Ministry of Education under the GoI. All States /UTs except Tamil Nadu and West Bengal are directly feeding data into UDISE plus portal. BSP provides bulk data to UDISE plus portal of DoSE&L.

³ The aided schools are managed under 'Management of Recognised Non-government Institutions (Aided and Unaided) Rules, 1963 and Sponsored schools are managed by 'Rules for management of sponsored Institutions (Secondary), 1972. Both the categories of schools are similar in all respect differing mainly in its composition of School Management Committee (SMC) with SMC in Sponsored schools having greater representation of Government

⁴ Schools under Government management categories include Schools under Department of School Education, Government Aided, Government sponsored, Local Body, Madrasa aided (recognised), Madrasa Shiksha Kendra, Mass Education, Minority Affairs Department, Social Welfare Department, Shishu Shiksha Kendras (SSKs) and Madhyamik Shiksha Kendra (MSKs), Tribal Welfare Department and other schools managed by State Government

1.4.2 Enrolment status in various types of schools

A total of 1,75,54,192 number of students were enrolled in various types of schools across the State (as of 31 March 2024) as detailed in **Table 1.2** below.

Table 1.2: Enrolment status across West Bengal

Total enrolments in West Bengal	1,75,54,192
Enrolment in Schools under Government management categories (<i>per cent</i>)	1,63,09,307 (93)

Source: UDISE 2023-24; status as of 31 March 2024

Above figures indicate that Government-run schools in West Bengal make up 89 *per cent* of total schools and enrol 93 *per cent* of students. Therefore, ensuring the smooth operation of 'Samagra Shiksha' across these Government schools is vital for students and for improving the quality of education delivered.

1.5 Audit objectives

A Performance Audit of the Scheme was conducted with the following audit objectives:

- To assess whether the Scheme was planned and implemented effectively to ensure free, equitable and quality education for all,
- the fund flow for Samagra Shiksha was adequate, and funds were utilised in an economic and efficient manner and
- to assess whether the Scheme was monitored in an effective manner

1.6 Audit Criteria

Audit findings were benchmarked against criteria derived from the following documents:

- The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE) 2009;
- National Education Policy (NEP) 2020;
- Framework for Implementation of Samagra Shiksha Mission (SSIF) 2022;
- West Bengal Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (WBRTE) Rules, 2012;
- Various orders, notifications, circulars, instructions issued by GoI and the State Government;
- Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWPB) approved by the Ministry of Education;
- Financial Management and Procurement Manual, 2018 of the Samagra Shiksha scheme (FMP);
- Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE) and
- General Financial Rules.

1.7 Scope and Methodology of Audit

The Performance Audit (PA) on Samagra Shiksha, covering the Financial Years (FYs) 2019–20 to 2023–24, was conducted between July 2024 and March 2025. During the PA, records at the State, District and Block levels were examined to assess education quality and administrative efficiency.

At the State level, the audit exercise involved examination of records/ database of the SED, PBSSM, PBRSSM, West Bengal Board of Primary Education (WBBPE), West Bengal Board of Secondary Education (WBBSE), West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education (WBCHSE), DVET and SCERT.

At the district level, six districts⁵ were selected using stratified random sampling method and records of the DEOs/DPOs (Samagra Siksha Mission), District Nodal Officer of Shishu Shiksha Kendra (SSK) and Madhyamik Shiksha Kendra (MSK) Cell, District Inspector of Schools (Secondary) and the District Primary School Council (DPSC) were test-checked.

At the block level, audit extended to Cluster Level Resource Centers (CLRCs) and Block Development Offices (BDOs). Under each of the 18 blocks⁶ sampled and selected randomly, records of four randomly chosen schools were also examined. Further, student assessment tests of randomly selected students of Classes III, V, VIII and X were conducted in test-checked schools. Audit used test booklets of the State Achievement Survey 2022⁷ to evaluate educational standards of the students. Apart from examination of records, Audit also conducted Joint Physical Inspection (JPI) and obtained photographs, wherever required.

An Entry Conference was held on 26th June 2024 with the Principal Secretary, School Education Department, wherein audit objectives, coverage and methodology were explained. Exit conference was held on 10th September 2025 with the Principal Secretary of the Department to discuss the audit findings. Replies of SED received in July and August 2025, have been suitably incorporated in the Report.

1.8 Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the cooperation extended by the School Education Department, Government of West Bengal, in conducting this Performance Audit.

1.9 Structure of the Report

The findings of the PA covering a period from FYs 2019-20 to 2023-24 have been organised and discussed in the following chapters:

Chapter- 1: Introduction

Chapter- 2: Planning and Financial Management

Chapter- 3: Access to Education

Chapter- 4: Inclusive Education

Chapter- 5: Teacher and Teachers' Training

Chapter- 6: Infrastructure and Entitlement of Students

Chapter- 7: Learning Outcomes and Vocational Education

Chapter- 8: Monitoring and Evaluation

⁵ Bankura, Purulia, Dakshin Dinajpur, Uttar Dinajpur, Paschim Medinipur, and Murshidabad

⁶ three blocks each from six selected district

⁷ The State Achievement Survey (SAS) is a State level assessment conducted by SED, GoWB, to obtain information about the learning achievement of students of selected schools in class appropriate subjects i.e, Language, Mathematics, EVS, Science and Social studies, similar in line with National Achievement Survey.

