INTRODUCTION:

Primary education constitutes a very important part of the entire structure of education. It is at this stage that the child starts going to a formal institution and formal education starts. The education which he receives there provides the foundation of his physical, mental, emotional, intellectual, social and the progressive development of his personality.*1 The child gets his first lesson in discipline; co-operative spirit and group feeling are developed during this period. At this stage the daily routine undergoes a basic change. After entering the primary school the child experiences for the first time that he has become a member of a bigger family. The classes I to IV usually cover the corresponding age of 6 to 10. At this period the children have to acquire some elementary knowledge from the primary schools.

As the primary education is the foundation of any formal education, its problems are the most important. Since children are to be imparted in the period to take up future irresponsibility of life, they automatically face certain problems at this stage. The problems of primary education may be various kind such as problems of organization and administration, problems of curriculum, problems of examination, problems of teaching and so on.

The old system of primary education was prevailing throughout the country prior to the expansion and consolidation of the British rule. However the long period of bondage gave a rude shock to the old system and by the eighteenth century, it had lost much of its glory and utility. After the battle of Plassey (1757), the East India Company started its campaign of expanding its empire and from that time a new chapter started in the history of Indian Education.

The modern education system was started in India by the Christian Missionaries. They build up primary, secondary and higher educational institutions. In the Charter Act of 1813, a clause was annexed to the effect “that a sum of not less than one lakh of rupees in each year shall be set apart and applied to the revival and improvement of literatures and the encouragement of the learned natives of India and for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India”.*1 The officials of the East-India company ignored the primary education and spent more money on secondary and higher education. Consequently, the primary education could not make any progress. The Wood’s Despatch of 1854 suggested that the number of primary schools should be increased. According to

recommendations of Indian Education Commission of 1882, the Management of primary education was transferred to the local institutions. Lord Curzon, the Governor General of India, admitted that primary education was so far ignored and disregarded by the government. He wrote “I am one of those who think government has not fulfilled its duty in this respect”. Lord Curzon did praiseworthy works in the field of increasing the number of primary schools and in raising their teaching standards.

Gopal Krishna Gokhale too represented a Resolution in the Imperial Legislative Assembly in regard to primary education free and compulsory throughout India. He submitted a bill in 1911 but his bill was strongly opposed in the Imperial Legislative Assembly on March 19th, 1912. Being inspired by the efforts of Gokhale, another great leader, Vithal Bhai Patel presented a bill in the Provincial Legislative Assembly of Bombay in 1918. This bill was later called Bombay Primary Act. The first Act, which was accepted the principle of compulsory primary education by the government of a Province. Consequently, by the year 1930 almost all the provinces passed the Acts in regard to compulsory primary education.

The first stage in the struggle for universal education was the theoretical acceptance of the principle of compulsory education by enacting a law for the purpose was thus mostly over by 1930 and almost completely closed in 1950 when Article 45 of the constitution declared “the state should endeavor to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of the constitutions, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years”. The universalisation of elementary education in India means making education available to all age group of 6 years to 14 years of age or classes I to VIII and also free of cost which was also recommended by the Education Commission 1964-66 regarding the age group


All children of the age of 6 to 14 years mere tries to include in the pre-primary education programme that is non-formal education programme for those children who were deprived from school in 1979-80, National Programme of Education in 1986, Operation Black Board in 1992, District Primary Education Programme, Bihar Education Programme. As the government fail to get a fruitful result from those mentioned plans, programmes and schemes, the government recently started a new scheme. With active anticipation of the masses, the government by the year
2010 planned to provide education to all with the help of this scheme. The scheme was known as Sarba Siksha Abhiyan (SSA). The five year plans also have launched the various programmes for the development of primary education for the country.