CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION: RIGHT TO THE EMANCIPATORY EDUCATION:
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6.1 Households and Schooling of Children: High Social Motivation

Household is the important critical locus for decision making as regards the sending of children to school. Children's participation in school education therefore, is the natural outcome of household's decision making which is also often influenced by the households in one's neighbourhoods that stands particularly true in the state of Manipur where most parents take it for granted that schooling is elemental of every child's upbringing. Every parent has high aspirations of enriching their children's life through education. Apparently, the study has also shown that there is no marked gender bias in the decision of sending children to school. It further reveals an important value of social norm that the passion of educating every new born child is commonly shared among parents. Parents have the spirit; they send children to school by hook or by crook. Therefore, factors such as household poverty, busy in economic engagement, poor infrastructure facility, lack of commutation facility etc. do not play major constraining factors in sending children to school. Children equally respond to school participation despite their engagement in household chores such as sibling care, cooking, fetching water, firewood, attending to cattle rearing etc. The observation suggests that aspiration for children's schooling in the state of Manipur has deep social roots as it is observed in the present findings of the study.

As observed in the field interaction with parents, even the poorest households are clear about education goals, its vision and hence are able to make judgements about the relevance and quality of schooling. These parents are convinced that the unresponsive, failed education system in the state has pushed them truly hard in a dilemma with shock, frustration and sense of helplessness that today's education has failed to provide the kind of education they are aspiring for. These parents have a unique sense of valuing education. As against the popular belief, for these parents equating education with employment opportunities and economic returns is only half truth, rather education and its meaning cannot be measured in terms of any quantifiable value. In that, education is not only means to an end but an end in itself. Such parental vision of education was uniformly shared across all economic strata of parents, men and women.
6.2 Government School Doomed to Fail

Almost all parents have abandoned the state run schools in hordes since these schools have fallen short well below their expectations and have lost faith in their credibility to cradle a child. In fact for all these parents, government schools in the state are death; there is no an iota of being alive in it. The same adult feeling has been filtered into the hearts and minds of young children themselves that these children start treating their fellow friends in government schools with fatalistic attitude. According to the present finding, 80 percent households send their children to private schools of different standards as against the 15 percent parents sending children to government school. The overwhelming parental choice of private school over the government school is due to the availability of what is termed as whole package such as good feel factor of the school atmosphere, discipline and morality, good habits formation, school uniforms, emphasis on English language learning, commitment of teachers, timely examination system, home work assignment, performance, accountability of management over school affairs in private schools. The increasing phenomenon of the parental liberty of school choice has further empowered private schools while virtually leaving government schools completely impoverished to be experienced only by impoverished children whose parents are either survivors or intermittent income earners, most of who are daily wagers with the constant fear that the future prospect of their children is most likely to disappear in the void.

The potential danger is when politicians, bureaucrats and government teachers have shifted their allegiance to private schools by completely ignoring the crucial issue of making government school accountable to the marginalised children that it is morally outrageous to learn the process of smothering of school resources among different layers of school authority ranging from the chief minister himself while on the other hand, the poor parents, unable to join the rat race of sending their children to private school, helplessly leave their presumed failure to the vagaries of their own fate. The incidence of household poverty relegates education of poor children as a personal and familial priority; let alone state government fulfills its educational responsibility.

Emerging from both the parental accounts and the observation of the present sample government school, non implementation of major schemes such as scholarship facility for girls, free uniform facility, chaotic implementation of schemes, absence of inspection system,
lack of transparency, corruption among officials and Ministers in recruitment of teachers, teachers' inertia and feminisation of teaching profession are sited as some of the silent features that continue to plague the functioning of government schools. For example, in the present study of the government sample school, it is shown that even the distribution of midday meal facility is in complete contrast to the prescribed norm while children were found to be underfed, undernourished and suffering from anaemic. Similar case of malpractice exists in the purchase of stationery items and siphoning of school development funds and resources in the hands of state officials are apparent from the narration of teachers who are visibly upset about the departmental failure and state apathy in school management. The teachers in the sample school complained that they were forced to sign of receiving wrong amount of money on paper when though they were actually paid less. The height of state apathy is apparently reflected by the extent of impoverishment of the sample school under study. That the walls of the school building are systematically broken; there are holes in the roof of the school building, classrooms are dark and dingy; benches and desks are shaky; toilet and latrine facilities are pathetically maintained in the absence of water; there is no separate toilet facility for boys and girls. It is outrageous that tiny children fetch drinking water from neighbouring village in the absence of such basic facility in the sample school. This further demonstrates how poverty of public school persistently fail children in poverty by experiencing a pattern of persistent deprivation in the quality of teaching-learning, limited range and depth of learning opportunities. This strongly suggests reasons why children who even after having completed basic education could not attain much of functional literacy as observed among the children of sample school during the researcher's interaction. In fact, the deterioration of teaching-learning standards in the sample school has gone far beyond to be explained. When accountability in such provisioning of school fails, children of poor households are the hardest hit by stripping of reasonable limited school facilities that are there for their social mobility. This also defeats the hopes and dreams of parents and eventually children themselves who regard schooling as perhaps the only key of earning better income and status which is particularly crucial, for social mobility may mean difference between lifelong entrapment in poverty and descent living. Given this observation, the dampening teaching-learning environment of the sample government school could have sapped the morale of both the teachers and the students had it not been the sincerity and dedication of few teachers to their profession and the welfare of students.
Most teachers interviewed and interacted in the sample are above board in sharing the ground realities of their experience with state government officials who have abandoned their bit of share of responsibilities in school improvement. While the researcher tried to invade into some of the government management of funds, the teachers came down heavily on the corrupt state of Manipur. They were honest, fearless and condemned the state for forcing education department to be the dirtiest zone. In the sample school, it is the teachers who, through their collective efforts maintain school infrastructure and basic conveniences such as benches, desks, latrine, toilets, electricity, and medical facilities for children etc. It is also noticed that teachers in the sample school possess high sense of humility and show great empathy to the fabric of social life of poverty of their own students. Thus teachers' contribution in non academic areas as observed in the sample government school is also indicative where education and sense of social justice condense when state accountability fails. In fact, the survival of the sample school as one of the rarest functioning government schools in the area is no doubt a pride of the local community. It can however be argued that the commitment and dedication of few teachers of the school has stood in good stead in the continuation of the present school.

Going beyond the findings of the state apathy as reportedly found in the sample school, it is also noticed that state education department is in big shambles as experienced by the researcher during her journey of field investigation. The researcher, on 21st January, 2008 came across huge mass protest and rallies organised by the Association for Primary Teachers against the irregularities of state education department in conducting free and fair interview of selected candidates for the recruitment of primary teachers. Fear of shrinking opportunities and high alarming unemployment problem in the state have gripped the minds of these youths. Further communication with these young aspirants revealed that in case the state government fails to respond to their demand by observing sit-in-protest, their further action is to observe indefinite strikes and economic blockade. Observing band is the most alarming weapon for the state government since the concerned Minister is certain to enter into dialogue with the leader of the Organisation. Within another week's time, one such incident witnessed is the huge rally, consisting of men and women organised by All Manipur Aided Teachers Association demanding release of salary for Aided School teachers. The Association during the rally exposed the insensitivity of state government in education issues. The widespread failure of government schools in the state is thus beyond reparation to the extent that these are
occasionally highlighted in local yatras, *(Shumnag Leelas)* in a grotesque form, condemning the state in a satirical manner by the local actors with huge number of audience being drawn to their performance. Such form of social reflection on the pathological existing social conditions of today’s Manipuri society brings both pain and absurd laughter to its audience, the people.

6.3 Hard Choices for Households

Notwithstanding the above observations, it is not that parents who send their children to private school are all happy and satisfied; they more or less have hard choices. While the failure of government schools has virtually pushed children to desert government schools, the situation has caused overcrowding of children in private schools. Majority parents being aware of the development are in fact worried about their children’s inability to comprehend what is taught in the class. This has necessitated the parents to hire private tutors that have become a norm which is particularly true mostly for children attending private schools.

Considering these facts, private schools too fall short of parental expectations in terms of scholastic achievements and learning abilities of children. It is indeed important to know the fact that in private schools too, children do not learn much as expected. Another common concern is that private schools and hiring of private tutors are concerned with examinations and performance of students only at the neglect of other value systems to be instilled in children. The whole business of private system therefore orients to competition and examination by cramming the tender heads of young children so that they pass the relevant examinations and if possible make rankings through which the reputation of the school can be elevated, which again serves a selling point of the particular school. This however, on the other hand has proved to be extremely terrifying and horrendous experience for both children and parents. Furthermore, conscientious parents are equally aware that private schools are able to make good impression in terms of provision of infrastructure facilities, discipline, morality, clean habit formations, school uniforms etc without necessary meaning attached in terms of quality education as such. Another important concern is that the pedagogic teaching is largely ill equipped to socialise children to make education relevant to the larger social context of their own lives. That, too much on rote memorisation, teaching system and its styles emphasised on examination process with unnecessary regimental rules over the behaviour of children have frustrate the parents equally. Parents also blame the unqualified,
untrained private school teachers who by their being capable of uttering few words of English or possession of Mathematics knowledge join private schools randomly for earning few bugs a month. The observation is particularly true in case of Bethel school under study. Yet, as observed in the present study, parents are convinced that some amount of teaching learning takes place in private schools. And moreover, not that all of these participating parents in private schools are rich, rather, poor parents also make enormous sacrifices just to send their children to private schools due to their high motivation and aspiration of educating their children. Even sometimes, highly motivated parents despite their poverty, send children to private school due to their children’s demand and insistence. As revealed in the present study, even young tender children influence to household’s decision making of school choice for them.

6.4 Civil Society at Work
What emerges from the present study indicates that there is strong civil society involvement and contribution in education sector in the state of Manipur. These sectors include religious organisations such as the Christian Organisations, local communities and private individuals. The sincerity, dedication and commitment of these private organisations and individuals towards successful educational contribution in the state are a fatal attraction for parents and the community at large. Don Bosco School stands out as one such ideal school in the state. The school under the control and management of Salesian Catholic Fathers is rated as one of the most successful schools in the state, not only in terms of examination results of children but also in rendering youth focus programmes since the teachings of Don Bosco emphasises on the preparation of youth as the most incalculable value through education.

The school besides being commodious, provides good physical infrastructure facility, the walls are neatly painted with interesting pictures hung. Classrooms are well ventilated and large enough to accommodate sixty to seventy students. The school has various physical facilities that are also efficiently utilised. Basic requirements of teaching learning - material aids such as globes, charts, maps, demonstrative materials, science kits, mathematic kits, and audio visual aids are not only available but regularly utilized in the classroom teaching as and when required. There is book bank and various journals in one library hall. Desks, benches tables and chairs are painted to sustain its longevity.
Every corner of the school provides motivation and learning environment for children. These are sufficiently highlighted from the findings of the present study. Interesting pictures and writings about discipline, practical moral science is noticed on boards hanging on the walls of almost every corner of the stair case of the school building. These writings and pictures are highlighted in bright colour to capture the attention of students. The displays are oriented to disciplining and sensitising students about habits of cleanliness, punctuality, discipline, important announcements and important news on events of the school. The school demonstrates how limited available school resources when judiciously utilised can make learning environment empowering for children. The richness of the school environment could be further enhanced by the active engagement of the dedicated teachers who have taken up teaching profession as a serious vocation. Their spirit of nobility, jest for life, flexibility of mind, farsightedness and dedication to children’s welfare was apparently noticed among teachers in their unique ways of teaching methods used inside and outside classroom, assignment undertaking during normal holidays, working for days and hours at a stretch, solely for the sake of the welfare of their students.

In fact one can argue that the methods of teaching learning and overall pedagogy adopted by these teachers are child centred approach and quite empowering for children. While examining the pedagogy adopted by the teachers, the method was found to be truly joyful in learning and pleasures that sustains children’s curiosity and inquisitiveness. The method encourages both the teachers and the taught to be creatively engaged. Such methods could be seen in the art of teaching for all types of disciplines—be it History, Geography, Literature and so on. These teachers know what works best for children. The teachers try their best to engage children emotionally, cognitively and physically in learning through observation and demonstrative methods of teaching. Children of Don Bosco School are regularly taken to the field and to the objects of their study. The method, in another sense, tries to nurture and extract the uniqueness in each child. For example, when children were taken to the site of Dzuko valley in Senapati district, some might enjoy the beautiful sight of the mountain, some might enjoy studying the beautiful flowers grown there, while some might try to know the mystery of the Creator while watching the vastness of the beautiful layers of the blue mountain peak disappearing in the vastness of the blue cloud in the sky. There is no room for rote memory in such process of learning.
Apart these, Salesian Fathers, particularly, Father M.C. George has taken extra miles to make learning extremely relevant and useful by relating it to the immediate environment of these children. This was noticed when he makes lesson plans and preparation for practical moral science and peace education by documenting the life stories of those youths trapped by illicit trafficking of drugs and arms published in local newspapers in the state of Manipur. This awakens the conscience of innocent children, prevents them from entrapment by the current pathological social order and trains them to grow as responsible adults. It is hard to believe that children when given such opportunity of learning would result in gaining superficial knowledge. Pursuing the education agenda of this kind can be truly exciting, enriching and empowering for children.

6.5 All Round Dependence

What emerges from the present study regarding the successful performance of Don Bosco School is the synergy among various resources of school dimensions- the physical setting, the Head teacher, the teachers and the Salesian Fathers who manage and control school affairs. In a way, the truly remarkable and inspiring teachers of the sample school in their commitment to their responsibility for children can be attributed to the autonomy and accountability of school organisational structure directed by Salesian Fathers. The Salesian Fathers can realise their vision as they are relatively free from the myriad of bureaucratic and political interference that perpetually beset government schools. This way, they successfully accomplish their goals with minimum interference and misuse of school resources. By adopting its own internal mechanisms with inward focus, the school establishes their own goals and consensus and can accomplish its vision. Maximum energy of the teachers was fully directed to the welfare of children. That, not even a single teacher was found involved in activity related outside school such as assignment for survey, election duty, census collection or any other assignment given by government department as rampantly prevalent among government school teachers, except curriculum preparation as and when the state education department required their participation. Secondly, unlike, the various layers of administration governing government schools, often than not, the major task of responsibility is carried out by the school Head teacher often in consultation with Fathers who are readily available in school premise. Head master, apart playing a watchdog role is also an instructional leader. All the teachers of Don Bosco are also privileged to attend suitable teachers’ training programme and other educational related activities such as workshops,
seminars occasionally arranged by the Fathers. As revealed by these teachers, the training they received was quite useful not only in class room teaching for particular discipline, but also psychological dealing with students of different personality traits. Discipline, moral and good habit formation remain core issues of teaching and non negotiable as a matter of principle of Catholic education value system. Thriving and promotion of these values remain a basic foundation of the school, which are well accepted by parent community as well. There are pressures from parents of raising high quality standards along with traditional value systems within the school and teachers have responded to this demand. Parents come forward to cooperate in thriving to achieve the same goal by at least concentrating on their children's effort to achieve cognitive learning and disciplining of their lives which parents consider as supreme for a society passing through intense political turmoil with its greatest impact on youths.

The success story of Don Bosco School demonstrates an excellent illustration wherein the organic relationship between physical and human dimension of school resources when mutually articulate and consistent, can indeed harness maximum propensity of growth in children.

In case of Bethel, the school is not as developed, modern and commodious as Don Bosco School. Yet, its modest facilities such as school premise, teaching-learning facilities, classrooms, basic conveniences are effectively utilised and maintained. Teachers, though majority of them are untrained, with average qualifications are made more accountable to their performance and even if they use simple conventional methods of teaching in classroom, they closely monitor the students not only in their academic performance but also overall good habit formation of the students. Norms of obedience and discipline are strictly followed and non negotiable. These hosts of factors attract parents and guardians of low middle class who can afford average fees. Hence the school is better able to maintain good teacher-pupil ratio. The teachers and the parent community being the locals and from the same ethnic community, the rapport between parents and teachers is more open, constructive and can meet each other frequently to discuss about children. As observed in the present study, parents of private school children are able create some kind of impact on school management and teachers, for example, few parents demanded of building more latrine facility and even shift the latrine to suitable place, which the school secretary had to listen.
The school secretary who is also the principal of the school has made every possible strides to make the school in the good books of parents by turning the modest school infrastructure facility into lively and stimulating environment of learning for children. The commitment, sincerity and its management with limited resources are reflected in producing students scoring good ranks during examination every year. The successful examination result appears to be the testimony of commanding confidence and faith of parents by the school. Besides honouring the school as one of the best performers in terms of examination results by state government in 2006, the school has been recognised as the best performance school of the year 2007 by All Manipur Private School Association. This has further elevated the status of the school and able to command overwhelming support from the local parents.

6.6 Civil Society: Its Possibilities and Limitations

No doubt, both Don Bosco and Bethel schools were committed to providing education to illiterate village children of destitute families. In the initial stage, the purpose of establishing both the schools was similar in purpose and in spirit with the aim of providing educational facility to the unreached, neglected marginalised village children who are deprived of education. Steadily, there was expansion of both the schools in varying degrees. In the course of its journey, both schools became flourished due to the overwhelming demand of parents most of who are well to do ones, that is particularly true of Don Bosco School. As the schools became successful in its performance, there was steady process of exclusion of the marginalised children as observed in the present study. That today, both the schools have become exclusively meant for the children of affluent and middle class parents, leaving no room for the marginalised, neglected village illiterate children of poor families.

The biggest challenge confronting both the schools is that expenditure and resources utilised in running and maintaining the school are generated from student community in the form of fees and funds collected from time to time. Therefore, participation in both the schools does not merely depend on merit alone but also on the income and capacity of participating households. For example, if one simply compares the fee structures, it is extremely high in case of Don Bosco School, while it is relatively less in case of Bethel school, yet quite high when compared with the fee structure in government school. That, a student studying in Don Bosco School spends 24 times bigger the amount paid by a student studying in government
school while it is almost thirteen times bigger as in case of Bethel school. The expenditure is calculated absolutely in terms of only fee structure and hence it could be much higher when one calculates the cumulative expenditure such as expenditure for stationery items, uniform, transport charges, fee for private tutor etc. Sending children to private school for the parents of children in government school could be in their wildest dream as narrated by the teachers of the sample government school that parents, still search for schools where fees are still lower than the amount charged in their school.

Yet, both the schools have made huge contribution to the role of educating children in a sustained manner. Their endeavour in a way demonstrates promoting accountable, good governance in education sector through tremendous self motivation and dedication. Both the institutions enjoy a great deal of freedom in school management with focussed goal. These institutions also contribute to the state in curriculum and syllabus making by working directly with state education departments as and when required. As also seen in the chapter, many years are needed for both the institutions to build a good reputation. Their sustained contribution has won the appreciation of not only the state but also parents whose children are privileged to be educated in such schools. However, not all parents and children can access to educational services provided by both the schools. Therefore the poor and the marginalised children, without the means and the capacities are often excluded. And being an essentially middle class entity, the mindset of these institutions is also influenced by market forces such as introduction of new computer courses by charging additional fees, expansion of internet facility and ultimate increase in fee structure. Managers of private schools, being well aware of the middle class mindset, can be cunning to the extent that they may not even wish the government schools to improve so that the vulnerable parents can ultimately fall back on their services and parental acceptance is what legitimises their existence and expansion.

Notwithstanding these limitations, on the other hand, civil society institutions by virtue of their relative independence in its ideology and philosophy can perhaps be in solidarity with the poor as well. The options are well within their hands though limited. This finding can be observed in the present research study as the case of Bosco Mangaal illustrates. Father M.C George, Director of Don Bosco School established Bosco Mangaal, an NGO to extend literacy campaign for the unreached marginalised children of destitute families in the villages
of Manipur by identifying of needy villages for opening of literacy centres through micro planning and school mapping with the help of villagers. Apart involving the villagers, the use of most innovative, interesting and pragmatic methods of teaching- learning such as study of concrete objects that children can easily identify with and the joyful learning for children including songs, citing of rhymes, dance, body movements etc. have been proved to be extremely successful for motivating children to learn. Teaching- learning in all the literacy centres has been made child centred activity based and quite flexible. The method motivates and interest children to the extent that children look forward to go to classes which are held on open spaces where only reed mates are spread for their sitting arrangement. Their jest and interest for learning was reflected in their way of interaction with the researcher that children at literacy centres were amazingly enthusiastic, readily smiling, reciprocate and quite articulate. This much enthusiasm was found missing among children of government school.

Today Bosco Mangaal has become extremely successful and popular among many poor households of all communities such as Christians, Muslims, Hindus etc. Bosco Mangaal has played a crucial role in enabling children of destitute families to pick up literacy skills while some of them have become educated. By the time the research about Bosco Mangaal was conducted in the year 2009, there were as many as 2,344 children who got enrolled in regular schools while some of them were found to be successfully doing well by coping up in regular schools, even outperforming those children already enrolled in regular schools. Through the network of Catholic missionary schools in the state, some of them are thus successfully admitted to Catholic schools for further their education.

6.7 Schooling of Children in the Line of Crossfire and Violence
One common persistent observation that has emerged in the present research study is the perennial destruction of normal life and schooling of children due to occasional and sporadic violence caused by ethnic clash, economic blockades, bloody killings, disappearance of individuals (suspected to be insurgents), students, illegal detention and counter insurgency movement by armed forces, for example, Operation Summer Storm carried out by Indian Armies as sited in Chapter 1 of the present study. These violent incidents critically sabotage school education in variety of ways. School teachers, parents and children unanimously agree on the frequent disruption of school education by occasional and sporadic violence. During violent times, school children are forced to join protest march. As for instance, during the
most infamous ceasefire incident in the year 2001, children were forced to join protest march against ceasefire extension in the state of Manipur. During the incident, school textbooks and reading materials were burnt and destroyed, forced innocent and tender children to be a part of societal crisis management. When violence occurs, schools remain closed, forcing children and teachers to experience an educational emergency in which the operation of schools is temporarily shut. As found in the present study, educational emergency is cited as the most frequent phenomena in the state.

True, educational emergency destabilises regular school activity and is damaging for all children, but most damaging for children of poor households in unique ways. Firstly, when school is perhaps the only hope for the child to pick up certain skills of learning, school closure crashes this hope. Secondly, since the child is temporary withheld from learning taking place, it becomes difficult for the child to pick up afresh when he/she joins school after a time gap and making it a rather difficult and challenging task for teachers. Parents unanimously grieve about the fact that occasional stoppage of school functioning encourages private tuition system to flourish at a fast speed which only children of rich families can afford. Occasional violence in public space regularly uproots everyday economic engagement of parents. For example, during violence and conflict, operation of the institution of keithels (markets) which is the mainstay of everyday livelihoods stops. During such periods, not only that hunger creeps in but also destroys household engagement in economic activity that partly supports the education of their children. During such emergencies the hardest hit is born by poor households for they are unable of marketing their home based products. Economic blockades often give rise to shooting up of prices in essential commodities and poor households are again hit the hardest. As observed in the present study, conflicts, instability and political violence in the state take their toll on education and pose one of the greatest challenges to the goal of educational right for children.

6.8 Right to Education: A Continuing Journey

Given the above experience, it can be rightly argued that educational right of children is to be understood in the political economy of a people. It is straddled between civil and political rights on the one hand and economic and social rights on the other. The rights agenda to education is therefore rooted in the successful implementation of each of these complementary rights in as much as educational right is an associational right that can be
achieved through positive state action. This further suggests that there is no place for poverty, hunger, disease, conflict and violence in a society striving to achieve educational right for children. Secondly, the state, unlike civil society sector, cannot pursue the ‘hands off’ policy in its efforts in ensuring educational right for every children, including the poorest of the poor and children living in isolated villages. Rather, the state must sincerely strive hard to remove any kind of obstacle that come in the way of exercising educational right by children. Removing these obstacles is a journey of institutional reforms on a multi pronged strategy by suitably harnessing the local resources- both human and material. Further, this has convinced us that market, charitable or private organisations alone are not sufficient in ensuring educational right for children.

6.9 Planning for Educational Right of Children: State Government Initiatives
As observed from the foregoing discussion, education for all children as a matter of right is still a far cry to achieve in the state of Manipur. The complete failure of government schools bears testimony to this observation. The suggestions and commentaries, the researcher puts forward are based mostly on the empirical findings of the present study. Planning for educational right of children is a political, institutional and social process. The enormous education task force for developing sound education system and providing sufficient resources lies with the state and make education system fully functioning by ensuring quality education for government school children. This is possible by being accountable that must start from the top political masters by turning around the system in which the effort would be wholeheartedly welcomed by the people who are yearning for change of a better Manipur.

6.10 Accountability
Accountability is not a flowery word or a conceptual term that should simply exist in one’s lips or must remain written in a piece of paper kept in government policies and files. It is simply one’s way of carrying out one’s duties religiously in a sustained manner by respecting the oath of the Indian Constitution that every minister and government officials swear. By virtue of being elected as the true representative of his own people, State Minister, in return must be accountable to its people by restraining from pursuing self interested socially harmful short term goals such as corruption as practised in myriad forms- recruitment of teachers and shunting of teachers from one place to another on personal whims and fancies. To stop this, the state must turn around the system to free teachers from the clutches of
political patronage and rent seeking by transferring teachers to hills in particular as a form of punishment. Rather, such transfers must take place as normal postings to facilitate cross cultural understanding between hills and valley population or else it leads to fragmenting the society.

Second, parents profusely complained against callousness of government school teachers, engaging in many irregularities and pastimes activity during school hours. Such callousness was not at all noticeable upto late 1970s and early 1980s in the state run schools simply because the inspection system monitored by the Minister himself was effectively functioning. Inspection system matters for a variety of reasons. Inspection system is directly accountable to teachers who are most visibly identified with the schools they serve. Through effective inspection system, a teacher’s teaching responsibility is called for examination in the form of testing classroom teaching, how the teacher is teaching, learner’s achievement level, attendance rate for children etc. Monitoring through inspection system also extends beyond inspecting teachers and students’ level of understanding alone. The inspector while inspecting gathers a fair knowledge of any major handicaps the school faces, for example, the present sample government school where the wall of the school building is systematically broken, operation of the school without basic conveniences, preparing mid day meal in classroom rather than in a kitchen. An inspector by registering all these handicaps of a school can put forward the matter to his higher authorities for removing such handicaps. Apart these, teachers are better linked to the education policy makers and education managers at the top through inspectors who put forward the problems and issues of teachers. This way, the chasm between higher authorities and school teachers and level of misunderstanding between the two can be greatly minimised. In short through effective inspection system, education policy makers, planners and managers can be accountable to teachers and school children indirectly. However, this is found completely missing in the present day government schools in the state of Manipur. The major problem of downfall of inspection system again lies in corruption of either top bureaucrat or state Education Minister himself. As narrated by the government teachers, inspection system declined in the state due to failure of payment of travelling allowances and other related facilities to inspecting officers. These education officers are not expected to be the best of the best Samaritans but who normally come to office to perform their assigned duties. In this case, Minister must turn around the system to
revive the inspection system by stopping of smothering of allowances and facilities meant for inspecting officers to their own private pockets.

Third, as narrated by government school teachers, the school facilities and the schemes are implemented on piecemeal basis in an erratic manner and teachers fund are reduced by almost half of what they receive on hand though the accurate amount is written on paper on which teachers sign. This has visibly shocked the conscience of the teaching community. Nobody knows who in the hierarchy has siphoned the remaining amount. Teachers can raise their voice against such irregularities provided they are safeguarded. But in the absence of any such measure they remain silent. It also bears the testimony that resources under SSA are systematically smothered because teachers fund expenditure is a part of SSA. In addition, under SSA, there is scheme of free distribution of school bags and uniform facility for students in which the facilities were reportedly found missing in the present sample government school. Resources meant for these facilities have been in wraps. Further, the state government has gone off the limits when it asked the private schools to sign on the forged expenditure paper under SSA programme. The case was narrated to the researcher by the principal of Bethel school, as he lamented in vain, since the school did not receive any amount of money from the state education department. This clearly indicates that resources to be parted to private schools like Bethel under SSA have gone into pockets of private individual government officials or the Minister himself.

Forth, let us talk of teacher training orientation programme. Despite all its good intentions, a mechanical uniformly prepared training course for teachers has not done much to train teachers in the right spirit since such methods fail to take stock of the nuances of a teacher’s needs and problems as a teacher. A simple example will lend support to this argument. As per the provisions of teachers’ training under SSA, a teacher must be trained 20 days in service course each year, 60 days refresher course for untrained teachers already employed as teachers and 30 days orientation course for freshly trained recruits @ Rs.70/per day. Despite such prescribed norms, not a single teacher of the sample government school was provided refresher course under SSA. The course content of training was not only patchy but also irrelevant as teacher themselves complained. For example, it is absolutely pointless to train a teacher of class VI or VII making him/her recite rhythms in which the skills can be utilised for teaching nursery and K.G. students as it was found in case of an experience of a teacher of
the sample government school. Therefore, unfortunately, teachers who are genuinely desirous of learning something new through teacher’s training are morally discouraged since even the resource persons are ill equipped.

The problem can be overcome by providing suitable resources for training teachers by taking stock of the existing socio-economic political climate of the region and problems and issues teachers face at their own school. Almost a decade has been already passed when SSA was first initiated, in the year 2000, to realise the dream of educational right for all children in the country. SSA was pursued in different states of the country as a follow up vision of achieving Education For all Children as per the Dakar framework of action. Despite all its good intentions, not much visible quality output has been achieved in education field, rather it is noticed that children left government schools in hordes. The situation has created a kind of psycho fear among teachers whether they would continue remaining as teachers in empty schools. This is despite the fact that there are dedicated, well qualified teachers who are committed to the welfare of children. Therefore the state must correct its own blunder not only to encourage dedicated teachers but also to generally arouse faith in the teaching community who are directly accountable to children. Assigning duties of election, census and household survey to the teachers must be done away with since their engagement in non teaching activity may hamper regular teaching-learning process for children. Instead, state must empower teacher community by giving due honour to the job of a teacher as one of the most challenging tasks as generations after generations are moulded in the hands of a teacher.

Putting the system in place, as it stands today, may not require even additional resources since the achievement of the goal much depends upon the will, the extent of clear vision and follow up mission such as judicious utilisation of school resources which so far have never been implemented on the ground by the state government. Making the system reasonably accountable to government school children would win the confidence of all children and parents who abandoned government schools to join private schools despite their economic constraints. Once again, going back on the right track, the state has to restrain itself from engaging in socially harmful practices of corruption and make education a free zone as much as possible. There is no doubt that the elected representatives through the weapon of their good service can successfully command the good will of their own people who balloted them
to power for the same purpose, not by means of bullet and money power as it happens during every election.

6.11 Synergy between State and Society

Going by the social fabric of the Manipuri society, there is every possibility that strong state action on improving school situation can be reinforced by the accountability of civic bodies to the efforts of the state. This is due to the existence of a favourable socio-cultural milieu of the society which has not experienced violence and atrocities based on casteism, communalism, ethnic cleansing, highly stratified class hierarchy, impinging patriarchy, as rampantly existent in majority societies of the country. In the state, neither the state nor the civil society faces challenges of constraints of social mores and norms while bringing children including girls to schools. The state must fully seize this favourable socio-cultural milieu as an opportunity while pursuing the goal of educational right for children by removing all possible obstacles faced by its people. There is also immense possibility that strong solidarity can be aroused between teachers, parents and the community at large for a common goal of making government schools accountable to children, particularly in a society like Manipur where there is same ethnic identity and where sense of belonging to each other is strong. Further, as it appears on the ground reality today, achieving these targets may not be a difficult task in a society where there is high social motivation for the education of children as a matter of social norm. The social fabric is conducive for creating a sound foundation of bringing about educational reforms by preparing the youths to take on a healthy vibrant society.

6.12 Creating an Enabling Environment

While pursuing the above goals, state must provide sufficient space and every possible opportunity for various civil society organisations to actively partner and involve in education activities on a large scale across the state to complement the state’s endeavourer. This is possible by breaking the historical mistrust between state and civil society by finding common methods of mutual collaboration. As seen in the present study, the role of NGOs and other civil society agencies except religious organisations and few private individuals in education is practically negligible since other NGOs and civic bodies are drawn to containing insurgency and counter insurgency related violence, illicit trafficking of drugs and HIV/AIDS related deaths among youths, thus diverting their powerful energies from concentrating on
what matters most to their own children, youths and the community. It further suggest that educational services of civil society need not necessarily be confined to private individual run schools or religious organisations, but extend to other civil society sectors such as media including print, electronic, radio and organisations such as local youth clubs, student organisations, Self Help Groups and even Ima Meira Paibis (Mother Torch Bearers) which can make not only ‘education aware’ but also ‘education rights aware’.

Civil society involvement can be further strengthened by active parental participation through village education committee which can play an active role in linking parents to teachers. As seen among private schools, the open and constructive dialogue between parents and teachers can ensure certain amount of accountability to children. The same can be followed in government schools as well. However, the startling economic condition of the parents is that there is disproportionately large number of daily wagers and casual work force. Therefore, the strategy of involving parents requires providing sustainable income to economically poor households so that households are sufficiently empowered to be a part in the schooling of their children. State is accountable to see that poor parents are no more depressed due to their poverty. To partly overcome these constraints, the state will have to have the will to implement free quality schooling of all children under age on the one hand so that some of the obstacles caused by financial constraints of poor parents can be reduced while simultaneously linking sustainable income incentives to households sending children to school. Government, by providing viable financial assistance can initially kick start off by establishing micro credit cooperative and Self Help Groups for the purpose to generate income for households. Another crucial issue is the intensity of exclusion experienced by the marginalised tribal communities in educational participation. They travail long distance to reach a functioning government school such as the sample school without any public transport facility. Therefore, while addressing the issue of the critical problem of access, equity and quality for all children including the tribes, state is morally binding that such constraints do not pose any obstacle for these children. Equal facilities in total quality management of schools should be provided to all including rural areas and hills or else the infringement on the rights of poor children for education will continue. This also suggests that government is not serious enough on implementing ashram schools for tribal children since these children, on their own manage to reach a partially functional government school by travailing isolated roadways on cycle for a distance of 7 Kilometres every day.
As repeatedly observed in the present study, conflict, instability and political violence have taken a high toll on education in myriad ways. School children and the teaching community has been often facing educational emergency due to occasional conflict and violence of all kinds in the region. The state and civil society must create continuing learning opportunities for children in a secured and peaceful environment during and post conflict period so that children continue to learn. Making education a free zone will facilitate the process as well by preventing school children from engaging in any kind of protest march in times of societal crisis.

Addressing the crucial issue of educational right for children cannot be treated in isolation. Striving for educational right is conceived not only as a vision, but a movement and a framework for actions to be rigorously pursued. Existing facilities as provided in NEP 1986, PoA,1992,EFA,2000,including,NonFormalEducationprogrammes, Mobile school/Residential school facility, ECCE and ICDS facilities, Adult Education programmes, Total Literacy drive, adequate representation of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe teachers must be implemented in full measure. This must be addressed urgently by taking specific local experience, needs and target groups. Revamping of functioning of DIET and DEOs must be ensured while DIET must be established in backward districts.

The state, while simultaneously revamping the above schemes, projects and educational institutions, must make education system organically linked with the immediate community and society of children. For example, take the case of growing Leihao, the joy perfume as explained by the English teacher in the government sample school. Leihao is a conspicuous plant, yet every household can afford to grow it and hence generate income in a much easier way. The concept of planting and growing leihao as explained by the teacher was amazingly beautiful that every child became engrossed in the classroom because at that moment the child’s classroom experience was not boring as a teacher reads out some boring chapters from a book. Likewise, in Don Bosco School, every child are made to creatively engage by letting children study the natural beauty such as hills, flowers, historical sites etc. by directly relating children to these objects; these sites are a part of their own living and history. Even classroom teaching was full of demonstrative methods. Each way of learning can be made uniquely interesting for children. The method trains children to learn certain objects beyond fixed
imaginations, hence broadening their understanding of the world they constantly interact. A meaningful and joyous learning is also a way of learning by doing. This is amply illustrated in the learning methods by children in Bosco Mangaal. Children were given objects such as stones, leaves, pots and flowers. By identifying these objects in concrete forms, they learnt the various dimensions and facets of these objects. Secondly, not only this form of teaching-learning infuses jest and life in them, a number of recreation activities like singing, prayers, dance and body rhythms fascinate children to look forward for the next day class. Most importantly, teachers themselves treat the children with love; affection and tender. This in turn empowers children to morally become binding to the teachers they often interact. These are some of the reasons why Bosco Mangaal has become uniquely successful despite mounting constraints like limited resources, poor sitting arrangement of children and poor home background of children.

State must ensure that the capacity of the government to revamp education system is not eroded by budgetary constraints as spending on military and police forces crowds out social spending as the case of Manipur indicates. Furthermore, government must ensure that involvement of civil society sectors is not hampered by illegal taxation and extortion by the insurgents. This is frequently experienced both by Don Bosco, Bethel school, and teachers as well. It is the responsibility of the state to liberate education from these clutches. When the state has failed to contain such practices, it is indicative of lawlessness. Lawlessness enhances corruption between those who benefit and makes it easier for informal and illicit networks to develop that reinforces corruption. For example, it is easy for the state to conveniently blame insurgents for non implementation of certain schemes and facilities while actually diverting the school resources to their private households by keeping the masses in dark. The strategy negates every effort of EFA programme.

Therefore, by reposing faith in its people, state can counter any unwanted element including extortion by insurgents that come in the way of implementing EFA programme. This is possible only if state falls back on its people. The possibility of generating a dialogue with its own people based on faith and love is feasible only if state restraints itself from engaging accumulation of free floating public resources and barbaric acts of misusing heavily armed state commandos, police and paramilitary forces against their own people while shielding their criminal acts from these very people who balloted them to power. Winning faith,
confidence and love from the people is the only strategy to bring societal reforms by nurturing its own people who are the strongest weapon for the state of bringing about societal reforms without which any effort of educational reforms cannot take its roots. But, as a matter of fact, as things stand today, as the state is comfortably settled in a sacred zone, with a huge chasm, away from the toiling masses; it continues with baffling refusal to come up with reforms. One is often puzzled, wishing for a miracle to cure the disease of non performance.