CHAPTER I
Introduction

Education is considered as key for the development of any nation. It is a powerful instrument to address the issues like social and economic inequality, discrimination on the basis of gender, caste, creed and sex. Education performs number of functions towards building a potential human capital such as development of natural ability, character building, development of a personality, preparation for adult life, control and sublimation of basic instinct, creation of useful citizen, development of a sense of community, protection and increase of culture and civilization, encouragement of social welfare, national development, use of leisure, increasing consciousness of other cultures, improving emotional unity and developing an international feeling (Sharma, 2007). In other words, education install and nurture basic human values and hugely contributes towards peaceful co-existence in-spite of diversity which is breeding ground of healthy economic growth and sound life style. The economic growth and education are hugely correlated as education enhances knowledge and human ability to induce innovation and to perform difficult task which in turn contributes to economy (Ott, 2012). Further, the country like Singapore exemplifies the importance of education in nation building. The country has increased her expenditure on education by 130 times in 2008 to combat couple of challenges like lack of natural resources and poor educational indicators (only 14.5% of the total population enrolled in primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions) (Quah, 2010). However, education was used as a tool to compete with other state, to produce bureaucrats and soldier and the concept of economic development was associated with enhancing national or imperial wealth and it was after the World War II that the idea of equality in development and education was realised (Chabbott, 2003).
Education develops the cognitive faculties in an individual which in turn develops him/her into a rational being. Educated individuals are expected to be aware of their surrounding and to take greater responsibilities for his/ her betterment and society at large. In that way education is also an important element of sustainable development. The role of education in economic development has been noted by the researchers (Sodhi, 1985; Singh, 1974). Apart from economic development, it also contributes to the realization of true essence of democracy by the masses while its contribution to social benefits is also immense. It is believed that educated parents would send their child to school and would pass necessary information to next generation. It would be appropriate here to quote a Chinese proverb which says:

“If you are thinking a year ahead, plant a seed.

If you are thinking a decade ahead, plant a tree.

If you are thinking a century ahead, educate the people.”

Thus, from above it can be said that education is an important key to sustainable development as it contributes to many spheres ranging from socio-economic to political sphere.

Further, when education is viewed as key for sustainable development, children are thought to be the potential carrier/ agent of sustainable development, simply, because children of today are the future of tomorrow. Initial years of human life are the formative years not only because we develop attitude and values but also for the fact that the experience gained in childhood would have an everlasting impact on our later life. Accordingly, helping children to learn about the environment and the factors leading to its degradation would help them to grow as an environment friendly individual while teaching them about social values and ethics would turn them into a responsible citizen. Further, education in formal setting helps the children to inculcate a habit of discipline.
Education in school setting provides children with a platform, where they could interact with their fellow mates which is characterized by mutual exchange of feelings, emotion, fear and happiness and thus forming the base for an individual to develop into a social being. Bruns, Mingat and Rakotomalala (2003) have observed that primary education has a very strong role to play in reducing poverty and unequal economic growth while addressing illiteracy as a major predictor of poverty and unequal access to educational opportunity (Bruns, Mingat, & Rakotomalala, 2003).

Education, thus, holds a key position in development process along with basic elementary education of children. It could be said that the education at primary level is more crucial as the early experience of the individual is a potential aspect to influence his or her future course of action. Further, the education at secondary and tertiary built upon the foundation laid down at the primary level.

**International Initiative for Universal Elementary Education**

The document that addressed education as right could be traced back in ‘Basic Rights of the German People’ of 1849 where seven provisions were dedicated to restrict the involvement of the church and made the state responsible for free education to poor (Hodgson, 2012). Later in 1917, after the Bolshevik Revolution the government of USSR started educational centre to educate illiterate people by the literate and by 1936 through the article 121 of the Constitution of USSR education made free, compulsory and secular for individual between the age group of 7 to 15 years (Nawaz & Tanveer, 1975). However, these were the action taken by the countries prior to the initiatives at the international level.

The treaty between the Principal Allied, Associated Powers and Poland of 1919 may be regarded as first international initiative to hold education as a right. The treaty did not
mean to protect the educational right, rather it was a treaty to protect the interest of the minorities or defeated Polish national. The article 8 of the treaty allowed the polish nationals to establish, maintain, manage and control the schools at their own expenses using their own language and practice their own religion (Hodgson, 2012; Beiter, 2006).

Further, advancement was made through the Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1924 by League of Nations. Although the declaration did speak directly on child’s right to education, it addressed the aspect of right to education indirectly through three out of five points. The first point mentions that children need to be provided with required means for their material and spiritual development. Secondly, the declaration addresses the difficult situations like hunger, sickness, backwardness, delinquency, children without parents and destitutions where children should be given adequate support and protection. Finally, the third point of the declaration holds a view that children should be protected against exploitation while making the competent to earn a livelihood (Hodgson, 2012; United Nations).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948 is the first international document to consider education as a basic right of human being. The article 26 (1) mentions that “Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.” Thus, UDHR not only consider education as a basic human right but also made provision for free and compulsory education till the elementary level (UDHR; Beiter, 2006).

In 1952, European Convention on Human Rights: Protocol I holds that ‘No person shall be denied the right to education.’ The article 1 of UNESCO Convention Against
Discrimination in Education of 1960 addressed the factors directly that thought to pose challenge for universalization of education. It is worthy to mention here that it is the only convention that not only deals with education but also adequately considered all the aspects associated with observance of education as right (Power, 2015; UNESCO, 2014). The right to education can also be found in article 5 (e) (v) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination, 1965 (Beiter, 2006, Saul, Kinley, & Mowbray, 2014). Further, the article 13 (1) International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966 also paid adequate attention towards free and compulsory primary education in article 13 (1) (Bueren, 1998; Tomasevski, 2003).

In between, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 1979, addressed the issue of gender inequality in the field of education and proclaimed for the equality in access to school, qualified teachers, required equipments, reduction in female drop-out rate and support girls who left the school prematurely (UNESCO, 2007).

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, was a major breakthrough in the context of child rights. The convention gave equal importance to all the aspect that are associated with sound development of a child including education. The convention, like previous convention and covenants, also declared free and compulsory education without any discrimination is the basic right of a child through article 28. The convention, however, was not restricted to primary education only but went to touch the themes like higher education, vocational training and gave emphasis on international cooperation in matters pertaining to education (Beiter, 2006; UNESCO, 2007).

Further, Jomtien declaration of 1990, Dakar declaration of 2000 and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of 2000 gave additional impetus towards the achievement of
education for all. The Jomtien declaration set the goal to achieve basic education for all by 2000 while ten years later Dakar declaration and MDGs set goal to ensure education to all by 2015. Gender disparity in education was also addressed and the target was set to achieve gender equality in education by 2015 (UNESCO, 2000; Jagannath, 2001).

At international level, thus numbers of initiatives were taken to ensure education for all since the end of World War I. The basis of modern approach found in the 21st century was laid down by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In the context of right to free and compulsory education, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, popularly known as UNCRC, proves to be a major landmark while declarations like Jomtien declaration, Dakar declaration and MDGs gave required momentum to make education accessible to all children.

**National Initiative for Universal Elementary Education**

The first compulsory primary education was started in 1892 by Maharaja Sayaji Rao Gaekwad in nine villages of Amroli district of Baroda. Later, considering the success of compulsory education, it was extended to 52 villages in that area by 1893 and subsequently, the state of Boroda introduced the first law on compulsory education in 1906. The law covered boys between the age group of 7 to 12 years and girls between 7 to 10 years (Jayapalan, 2001; Aggarwal, 2002; Joshi, 2013). Again, some historian believes that introduction of compulsory education in England in 1870 fuelled Indian demand for mass education through the educated Indians (Vijayalekshmy, 1993). However, it was Gurudev Rabindra Nath Tagore who first used the word *RIGHT*, in his letter to *International League for the Rational Education of Children*, in the context of elementary education (Joshi, 2013; Saraf, 2009).
The period from 1902 to 1918 has witnessed the repeated efforts of great leaders like Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola, Shri Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Shri Dadaboy, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Shri Vithalbhai J. Patel and which resulted into the first law on compulsory education in India called Bombay Primary Education Act of 1918 also known as Patel Act of 1918. This piece of law proved instrumental as it evoked attempts on other provinces to enact similar law (Jayapalan, 2001; Aggarwal, 2002; Kochhar, 2005; Lakshmi & Rao, 2004).

During the period 1929 to 1944, the efforts to make provision for free and compulsory primary education took an organised shape. This phase observed formation of different committees and commissions and followed by a series of recommendations through their reports. The Hartog Committee Report of 1929 gave stress on compulsory primary education with minimum duration of four years. The Abbot and Wood Report (1936-37) advocated for trained teachers at the primary level and additional attention to education of girls. The Wardha Scheme of Education, which is commonly known as Zakir Hussain Committee Report (1937) recommended for seven years free and compulsory education to every Indian child. Finally the Sargent Report of 1944, the report is also known as Post War Educational Developmental Scheme and report by Central Advisory Board of Education, somewhat echoed the Zakir Hussain Report and suggested universal, free and compulsory education for children between the age of 6 to 14 years (Sing & Nath, 2007; Aggarwal, 2009; Lakshmi & Rao, 2004).

The prior efforts before India’s independence were reflected in the Constitution of India along with initiatives in post independence era. The article 45 of Directive Principles of State Policy mentioned about free and compulsory primary education to the children of 6-14 years age group. The Education Commission of 1964 under the chairmanship of D. S.
Kothari addressed the issue of inequality in educational opportunities and strongly recommended for free and compulsory education up to the age of 14 years. The recommendations of Kothari Commission were further reaffirmed by the National Policy of Education, 1968 (Shankar & Shah, 2012; Walsh, 2011; Saraf, 2009). In later phase, the programmes like Operation Blackboard, District Primary Education Programme, recommendation of Acharya Rammurti Committee in 1990 and National Policy on Education (revised) 1992 along with Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Mid- Day Meal Scheme (MDMS) gave much needed impetus to universalization of elementary education. It is worthy to mention here that all these efforts finally contributed to 86th Constitutional Amendment, 2002, and Free and Compulsory Elementary Education was considered as fundamental right under article 21 (A) of the Indian Constitution. However, the landmark of 86th Constitutional Amendment is also connected to the international initiative because as nation India ratified the UNCRC in 1992 and was legally bound to fulfil the rights of the children (Palusci, 2014). Finally, Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, came into existence, ensuring free and compulsory education to each and every child.

Having sum up the initiatives took place in India to make free and compulsory elementary education, it could be said that the effort was initiated much before and went through different phases which includes policy dilution, in case of National Policy of Education 1986.

**Out of School Children: Global Scenario**

In-spite of several remarkable international and national efforts, there are a considerable number of children out of school. According to Global Monitoring Report 2008, globally there were 72 million of out of school children in 2005 comparing to massive figure of 96 million in 1999. The report further observed that the figure of out of school children fell
drastically in South and West Asia and Sub Saharan Africa. The report also expressed concern for countries like Nigeria, India and Pakistan which constitutes 27% of the world’s out of school children (UNESCO, 2007).

The *Global Monitoring Report* 2013-14, indicated a reduction as it mentions that 57 million of the children are still out of school in 2011 and half of these children are from conflict affected countries and are expected to fall into the category of never enrolled. The report also expresses concern about the fact that data relating to the number of out of school children for 57 countries are yet to be made public while the data in public domain focuses only on the countries with publishable figures and which could be misleading for global policy debate as these could be far away from achieving universal primary education. The identified fourteen countries such as Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, China, Cote d’ Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Somalia, Sudan and United Republic of Tanzania have more than one million out of school children. Further, figures indicate that around 43% of out of school children may not visit the school of which girls constitutes 15 million while boys counts 10 millions (UNESCO,2014). According to a report published by UIS and UNICEF there is a need to assess the situational variation of each of the countries because the requirement of the countries are different and accordingly no only one plan can be made to address the issue across the countries. The report further highlighted the existing difference between countries like Pakistan and Nigeria where the probability of enrolment of out of school children is very less comparing to India and Indonesia where completion of primary education is a major challenge because most of the children have started attending schools. Again, the children who are starting late are also at greater risk to dropout from the school education by virtue of their over age as anticipated in case of countries like Bolivia, Cambodia and Ethiopia (UIS & UNICEF, 2015).
The Global Monitoring Report, 2014, has also highlighted the issue of quality education imparted to the school attending children which is again connected to the family economy. The report mentions that children from rich families have a better possibility to attain minimum level of learning, as found in the context of Africa. It further, highlighted that 61% grade II students in Iraq failed to answer the subtraction question while in Maharasra, an Indian state, only 44% of the rural children in grade V can do two digit subtractions (UNESCO, 2014).

In South Asia, according to household survey a total of 27 million children between the ages 5 to 13 years, in countries like Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, are out of school of which 17 million children are at the age group of 5-10 years while children at the age group of 11-13 years constitutes 9.9 million. Further, India is the major contributor to this large number of out of school children by virtue of its large school age population. However, among the South Asian countries Pakistan counted highest rate for school exclusion for pre-school aged children followed by Bangladesh with 34% while India scored 12.4% and similar trend were noticed for the school exclusion of primary school aged children (UNICEF & UIS, 2014).

**Out of School Children: Indian Scenario**

Coming to India, the census report of 2011 reveals that literacy rate of the country has reached the figure of 74.04% with male literacy rate counting 82.14% and female literacy rate of 65.46%. The gender gap in literacy rate has also narrowed down to 16.68% comparing to 21.59% during the census of 2001. The state like Kerala, Lakshadweep and Mizoram topped the chart with maximum literacy rate over 90% while states like Bihar, Arunachal Pradesh and Rajasthan scored lowest with literacy rate below 68% (Census, 2012). The Net Enrolment Rate (NER) in the country has also gone high to 88% comparing to 84.5% in 2005-06. Further, NER was found to be higher for girls with
89.26% comparing to 87.2% for boys (MHRD, 2014). According to the Annual Status of Education Report (Rural), 2014, India is close to achieving universal enrolment for the age group of six to 14 years as the percentage of children enrolled at school reached the figure 96%.

Although the literacy rate of the country has reached the figure of 74.04%, still the country holds the record for highest population of illiterate adults with a figure of 287 million contribution 37% to the global total, as revealed by the Global Monitoring Report-2013-14 (UNESCO, 2014). According to a UNESCO report, India has 1.4 million school aged out of school children in 2011 (TOI, 2014). Further, Census 2011 reveals that there is 4.3 million of child labour in the country, between the age group of six to 14 years. The Annual Status Education Report, 2014, mentions that 3.3% of the school aged children are still out of school and in states like Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh girls are found to be more disadvantaged as the figure for out of school girls reaches 12.1% and 9.2% respectively (ASER, 2015). Thus, in a way it could be said that a considerable number of children are still out of school and there is huge ambiguity so far the magnitude of these children are concerned.

The quality of education imparted to school attending children is another major area which deserves an immediate attention and cure. As mentioned previously, the Global Monitoring Report- 2014 has highlighted this issue in the context of countries like Africa, Iraq, India and other developing and underdeveloped nations. ASER, 2014, in a way confirmed the the concerns expressed by the Global Motoring Report and found that only half of pupil at Grade V can read the text of Grade II fluently while around 75% of Grade VIII could read the same. In case of basic arithmetic only 26.1% of Grade V students could do division (ASER, 2015).
The concept of quality education is again hugely related to the aspects like pupil/teacher ratio, trained teachers, female teachers, quality of learning materials and government’s response to fulfill the prerequisite of quality education. According to the GMR, 2014, 148 countries need more teachers at the lower secondary schools by 2015 while 29 countries will not be able fill this gap by 2030. Further, there are 93 countries which need additional primary teachers by 2015 of which only 37 countries would be able to achieve the target while for 29 countries the same target may get fulfilled by 2030.

**Out of School Children: Scenario in West Bengal**

According to the ‘National Sample Survey of Estimation of Out of School Children in the Age 6-13 in India’ (2014) in the state of West Bengal 3.39 lakhs of children are out of school i.e. 2.45% with 25.64% of never enrolled along with 53.92% of drop-out rate. The category of enrolled but never attended constitutes 20.44% of children while percentage of children with special need but out of school counts 21.33%. The report further reveals that 40.31% of father and 48.34% of mothers of the children aged 6-13 years are not literate (SSA, 2014). The magnitude of child labour in the state of West Bengal has gone down from 8.5 lakhs in 2001 to 2.3 lakhs in 2011 census.

Census, 2011, depicted that the literacy rate for the state of West Bengal has reached the percentage of 77.1 with male literacy rate 82.7% and female literacy rate of 71.2%. The State Report Cards- 2013-14 reveals that the rate of retention at the primary level is 60.77% comparing to 74.96% in 2012-13. The report further found high drop-out rate in Grade-I (12.38%), Grade- IV (7.66%), Grade- V (5.05%) and Grade- VIII (8.05%). The percentage of professionally trained teacher was found to be another major concern for the state of West Bengal as only 57.3% of the regular teachers are professionally trained while the figure is 20% for contractual teachers. Further, only 25.1% teachers in the private sector are professionally trained (DISE, 2013-14).
According to the official website of Sarva Shiksha Mission, the state of West Bengal has 24.3% of Educationally Backward Blocks (EBB) while in districts like Puruliya (100%), Uttar Dinajpur (88.8%) and Maldah (86.6%) majority of the blocks fall into the category of EBB. The common feature among these three districts is the inhabitation of large concentration of disadvantaged social groups like Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes, Muslims and other minority groups.

Thus, in spite of sincere efforts made by the national and international agencies to achieve the universal elementary education for all, a considerable number of school aged children are still out of schools. The disparities among different communities and geographical areas, socio-economic and cultural diversities by and large have restricted the coverage of all school aged children under the initiatives taken by the government as well as international agencies like UNICEF and UNESCO and which paved the way for NGOs to intervene/ take up the challenge to reach the hard to reach children.

**Scope for NGOs**

Internationally, the entry of NGOs in the field of education may be traced back in 1799 when Church Missionary Society opened up schools and orphanages to serve children affected by the natural calamities. Prior to the commencement of Second World War the NGOs were involved in giving services to the communities adversely affected by the natural and manmade disasters. But the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) by United Nations widened the scope for NGOs’ intervention with a legal framework.

In India, the concept of voluntarism was not new. The country has witnessed the efforts of individuals like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Rabindranath Tagore who spoke about women rights and focused on issues like Sati, Widow Remarriage, and women education along with establishment of institutions like Brahmo
Samaj, Parthona Samaj, and Ramakrishna Mission. However, the organized service delivery system meant for the disadvantaged and deprived population, was initially started by the Christian Missionaries. Primarily, there focus was on health and later education was added on to it.

In the post independence period, the Five Years Plans mention the importance and role of NGOs in India’s development. During the Seventh Five Year plan envisioned a more active role for NGOs as primary actors in the efforts towards self-reliant communities and organizations like Council for the Advancement of People’s Action and Rural Technology (CAPART) came into existence which witnessed representation of people and NGOs, engaged in rural development, in its governing and general body. In addition, Eighth Five Year Plan gave emphasis on involvement of NGOs along with Nagarapalika and Panchayat Raj in the development process. Now, NGOs are viewed as a third sector which is supplementing and complimenting the governmental initiatives.

In the context of education, it was the Eighth Five Year Plan that urged for massive involvement of NGOs in programmes like Early National Literacy Mission, Childhood Education, Rural Functional Literacy Programme and Jan Shikshan Nilayams. Further, the Ninth Five Year Plan document appreciated the functioning of NGOs in running Non Formal Education centres and encouraged the enhancement of NGOs for the same. The Tenth Five Year Plan addressed the importance of NGOs in seeking community participation through Village Education Committee (VEC)/ School Management Committee (SMC) and in mitigating educational disparity between male and female, urban and rural areas and schedule caste and schedule tribe. Subsequently, the Eleventh Five Year Plan highlighted the need/ role of NGOs in improving the learning level of children from socially disadvantaged groups as well as minority communities while the Twelfth Five Year Plan stressed upon the importance of NGOs in implementation of Mid-
Day Meal Scheme (MDMS) and Right to Education Act, 2009, with special reference to children with special need (CWSN).

Apart from government recognition to importance of NGOs in development sector there were other factors that influence the involvement of NGOs in educational care, such as:

Firstly, India is a large country and as the population is huge, it may practically be difficult for the government to take care of all the activities, and the country definitely needs the support of the NGO in India to take care of the rest (Mathew and Verghese, 2011). Further, cultural and regional diversity is another aspect that tiled way for NGOs in India. Because considering the extent of diversity that exists in India it difficult to frame a uniform programme and expecting that it would meet the need of fellow citizens.

Secondly, it is the cost effectiveness which promoted NGOs as a most preferred alternative in the development sector. The NGOs are non-profit making organization and the chances of internal corruption and fraud are less. This aspect helps NGOs to perform activities in much lesser price comparing to that of government initiated activities.

Finally, NGOs across country do not work on set and uniform procedure rather they modify their activities in consonance with the community need, expectation and prevailing value system. Accordingly, NGOs initiatives are readily accepted by the community comparing to that of government initiatives, which follows a uniform method of service delivery. Further, the cost-effectiveness, flexibility in their operation, community participation, in-depth understanding of local issues and target oriented intervention gave added advantage to the NGOs.
NGOs in Educational Care of Disadvantaged Children

NGOs play a pivotal role in ensuring education to disadvantaged children. Disadvantaged situation of children is subjected to different reasons such as economic, socio-cultural, mental and physical limitation, geographical location and so on. Children from economically challenged families usually depend upon the government or municipality run schools for their educational attainment. But quality of education imparted in those schools is doubtful. There are number of studies that have established the failure of government run schools in imparting quality education. The services provided by the NGOs are widely varied. NGOs’ intervention in the educational care of disadvantaged children can be identified in three levels such as micro, mezzo and macro. Accordingly, their (NGOs) intervention is characterised by different activities such as direct services to the disadvantaged children, mobilising community participation to develop ownership towards government run schools and influences the minds of scholars and policy makers to induce positive changes to fight the current challenges.

In this context, the case of Pratham Education Foundation may be highlighted. The organization conducts Annual Status Education Report (ASER) survey every year, across the country to develop an understanding about the quality of education imparted in the government run schools and other allied aspects like infrastructure, grants, pupil teacher ration and so on. ASER is widely shared and turned out to be an effective tool in generating public opinion and also influences the policy makers. Again, there are NGOs like Right Track, Path Welfare Society, Pratichi Trust, Tiljala SHED and many more who are working in their own way to ensure quality education to each of the disadvantaged children. Thus, involvement of NGOs in educational care of disadvantaged children is subjected to variation.
Nanda (2008) has classified three categories of NGOs engaged in the educational care of disadvantaged children. The classification is made on the basis of their (NGOs) objectives and programmes. The first category includes NGOs that hold education at the centre of their operation and all other activities move around it. Second category, NGOs with several objectives but consider education as one of the major component of their operation. The third category NGOs is those which treat education as one of the several activities but not at the focal point. Further, depending upon the varied objectives of the NGOs Nawani (2000) has identified different components with which NGOs are involved in the educational care of disadvantaged children. The identified components are Non-Formal Education (NFE), literacy, re-designing curriculum and evolving teaching learning aids, empowering community through education, spreading awareness pertaining to importance of education and enrolment.

Similar features can also be noticed in the state of West Bengal. There are good number of NGOs working for the educational care of disadvantaged children and receiving financial assistance from both public and private sector. International developmental organizations like Save the Children, Action Aid, Terre Des Hommes, Hope Foundation (Ireland), and many more are also extending their financial and technical assistance to Indian NGOs to reach the hard to reach children. On the other hand, Indian NGOs are also subscribing the ideologies and philosophies from West based donor organizations and international bodies like United Nations.

But, after the commencement of RTE, 2009 and 86th Constitutional Amendment the functioning of NGOs for the educational care of disadvantaged children come under the scanner. Education as fundamental right makes the state accountable and responsible to ensure that nobody is denied of their basic right to education. However, as mentioned
previously, good numbers of NGOs are working for the education of disadvantaged children. Now question arises on the legitimacy of NGOs functioning in educational care of disadvantaged children.

**Present Study**
The present study is an effort to understand the factors that have influenced the involvement of NGOs in the educational care of disadvantaged children, even after two major landmark events like 86th Constitutional Amendment of 2002 and commencement of Right to Education Act, 2009. The study further, went on to explore the approaches and programmes run by the NGOs while assessing the challenges encountered by them (NGOs). Finally, it throws light on the perception of beneficiaries towards the services rendered by the NGOs for the educational attainment of their children.

The study was conducted with 80 NGOs, 20 NGOs per district, in four selected districts of South Bengal of which two are developed and rest two are under-developed. The major emphasis was given on the case studies of prominent NGOs like Right Track (RT), Vikramshila Education Resource Society (VERS), Pratham Education Foundation, Tiljala Society for Human and Educational Development (SHED), Santiniketan Ratanpalli Vivekananda Adibasi Kalyan Samity (SEVAKS), Sanlaap, Centre for Environmental and Socio Economic Regeneration (CESR), Lake Gardens Women and Children Development Centre (LGWCDC) and Mandra Lions Club. Quantitative data were also collected from the 80 NGOs to get an overview of the NGOs engaged in educational care of disadvantaged children.
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