CHAPTER III
Methodology

The previous chapter on review of literature revealed that a good number of studies were conducted to understand the NGOs and their role in development. The researcher also explored the key aspects associated with disadvantaged children and right to education. It is found that there are a few gaps pertaining to the role of NGOs in educational care of disadvantaged children. The present study is expected to bridge that gap. The study has adopted a methodology which is a mixture of quantitative and qualitative approaches and the same is discussed in detail in this chapter. The chapter incorporates an account of the research design, sources of data, construction of tools, sampling, process of data collection and nature of analysis along with limitations of the present study.

Rationale of the Study:

In India, government has introduced many programmes like National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Kasturba Balika Vidhyalaya, Mid-Day Meal (MDM), District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) and so on to ensure education to all the children irrespective of their caste, creed, sex, place of birth or any other basis. In addition, international organizations like UNICEF, Save the Children, Action Aid and others are putting their efforts to ensure the same. But, in spite of various international and national efforts, a large number of children are out of school. Progress has been achieved but with a slow pace. The causative factor like child marriage, child labour, poor family economy, poor educational status of parents are found to be common across the communities and country, as revealed in government reports and relevant study documents. This particular situation paved the way for NGOs to intervene in the educational care of disadvantaged children.
In fact, NGOs traditionally played a supplementary role for the government programmes, but the post globalization era has witnessed an ever widening scope for NGOs to intervene.

Again, the review of available literature pertaining to education for disadvantaged children shows, studies were conducted to understand the plight of disadvantaged children like children with special need, children of economically challenged families and the like. The studies were also conducted to assess the situation after the 86th Constitutional Amendment of 2002 and Right to Education Act, 2009. But very few studies were found to understand the nature and type of NGOs’ contribution in educational care of disadvantaged children. As per the review, majority of the studies focused on the scope and importance of NGOs, differences that can be brought by the NGOs, the best practices adopted by the NGOs, etc. The reviewed literature failed to highlight the factors that contributed towards involvement of NGOs in education sector and also the kind of approaches or programmes they (NGOs) adopted to combat the present educational deprivation. Considering these gaps, this study is intended to explore NGOs’ contribution for education of disadvantaged children.

The State of West Bengal was chosen for couple of reasons. Firstly, during colonial rule, active participation of social reformers and Christian missionaries in addressing social evils/issues gave major impetus to the growth of voluntary organizations/NGOs in West Bengal. Secondly after independence, movements like Naxalite movement and Tebhaga movement followed by prolonged Left rule in the state influenced the voluntary association/NGOs of the state. Considering this enriched and revolutionary history of NGOs, the state of West Bengal was selected for the present study. The review of available literature indicated that in the state of West Bengal no studies were conducted to
understand the contribution of NGOs in the educational care of disadvantaged children while a good number of NGO were working for the same. Further, involvement of international donor organization like Action Aid, Save the Children, Terre Des Hommes, Hope Foundation and the like made the topic more desirable to study in order to explore their approach in ensuring education to all the children.

**Objectives of the study:**

(1) To know about the factors that influenced the involvement of NGOs in educational care of disadvantaged children;

(2) To understand the approaches adopted and programmes implemented by NGOs in catering the educational need of the disadvantaged children;

(3) To gain an insight into the factors that are affecting the on-going activities of NGOs in educational care of disadvantaged children; and

(4) To understand the perception of beneficiaries along with the local community towards the services provided by the NGOs.

**Research Design**

In 2002, Right to Education was included into chapter III of Indian Constitution to give it a status of fundamental right under article 21(A), through 86th Constitutional Amendment. Further, Right to Education (RTE) Act was enacted on 4th August’2009 and came into force on 1st April’2010. It can be assumed that after the commencement of the act there might be shift in mode of operation for NGOs working for educational care of disadvantaged children. During the review of previous studies, it was found that fewer studies were conducted to understand the situation of disadvantaged children, role of
NGOs, educational status of children but a few studies were found to deal with role of NGOs in educational attainment of the disadvantaged children, after the commencement of RTE. Hence, it was found necessary to explore the factors that have contributed towards the involvement of NGOs in educational care of disadvantaged children, their (NGOs) approaches and programmes, existence of special components, if any, to address the issue of gender gap in educational attainment, factors influencing the functioning of NGOs and the perception of beneficiaries towards the services rendered by the NGOs. Considering the aspects covered in the present study tools like Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and case studies were used. The particular tools were used to obtain the information that may be subjective to the community and the NGOs involved there in but might help to understand diversified issues associated with education of disadvantaged children. Thus, the present study has used exploratory research design.

**Types of Data Required**

To conduct this exploratory study the following types of data were required:

(i) For the first objective, i.e. for exploring the factors that have contributed towards the involvement of NGOs in educational care of disadvantaged children both primary and secondary data were required. Primary data were collected from NGOs, teachers of nearest government or government aided Lower Primary Schools through interview schedule, and basic information collected from participants of FGDs. In addition, to understand the quality of learning of the children who are attending schools were tested by using *Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) tool*, developed by Pratham Education Foundation. The secondary data were collected from government reports and documents published by different international and national NGOs of repute.
In order to fulfil the second objective, i.e. approaches and programmes adopted by the NGOs, both primary and secondary data were required. Primary data were collected from 80 NGOs from four selected districts which were further substantiated through case studies. Secondary data were collected from reports of different agencies of United Nations and leading international and national donor/ funding operating in India like Child Rights and You (CRY), Action Aid and Save the Children.

To carry out the third objective, i.e. the factors influencing the functioning of NGOs, primary data were collected through case studies from the selected NGOs. The focus was given on finance, staff, cooperation of local leaders and government officials, community participation and existing power dynamics at different level.

For the fourth objective of the study data were collected through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with parents and guardians of the children who were catered by the NGOs for their educational attainment. The participants of the FGDs were selected from the localities where selected NGOs were operating.

Sources of Data
Considering the objectives of the study, researcher collected data from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources for data collection includes interview with NGO personnel (preferably secretary or programme director or programme manager), INGOs, school teachers and FGDs with community people.

The secondary sources of data collections includes state report card, district report card, analytical reports from District Information Education System (DISE). Further, reports of different agencies of United Nations, Census of India, Planning Commission, Ministry Human Resource and Development (MHRD), NGO’s study reports and annual reports,
books and newspaper were also sought, as a secondary data, for the purpose of the present study.

**Techniques and Tools**

There were one unstructured observation technique and six tools used in the present study. During the visit of NGOs and schools, unstructured observation helped the researcher to identify the areas that might form a part of the study. These inputs of the observation were verified again when interviewed the key respondents like NGO workers, school teachers and beneficiaries/parents.

Coming to tools, at the first instance, an *interview schedule* was administered among the purposively selected NGOs from four selected districts working in the field of education at the state and national level. It carried 17 questions, which covered areas like years of their existence, years of working in the education field, kind of children and services provided by the NGOs. Majorly, founding secretary or programme director or programme manager was the respondents.

In order to have in-depth case study of eight NGOs, one *information proforma* and another *interview schedule* were used. *Information proforma* for getting basic information about the NGOs included 11 questions and interview schedule for programme related information included 47 questions. Both proforma and the interview schedule were filled up with the help of founding secretary or programme director or programme manager or programme coordinator of the respective NGO.

*Interview schedule for school teacher* was required for the study to understand issues confronted by the teachers of lower primary schools, to understand the need of NGOs intervention in the field of education. Further, it was also expected that interview of
school teacher would reveal some of the facts relating to the neighbour community and could be discussed or highlighted during FGDs.

Donor organizations were also a part of the present study. *Interview schedule* was administered with five leading donor organizations of which four were international and one was national organization. The purpose of including donor organization into the present study was to understand the flow of funds with respect to different districts, districts covered by the donor organization for the education of disadvantaged children, approaches adopted by them and constrains faced by the donor organizations in their operation.

In order to understand the perception of community people towards educating children, education of girl child, services rendered by NGOs and the function of local schools *FGDs* were conducted. The majority of the participants were female.

Prior to data collection tools were tested with an INGO Hope Foundation, Ireland, and its sister organization/ implementing partner organization Hope Kolkata Foundation and Md. Bazar Backward Class Development Society (MDBBCDS). After testing the tools some modification were done in the interview schedule and interview schedule with parents was replaced by FGD. During pre-test it was found that parents of children, who were being served by the NGOs, are not opening up during the interview, specifically in rural areas, while they were much vocal when they were asked in group. Thus, it was assumed that FGD could be the appropriate tool for gathering information from the parents because submissive respondents becomes active in presence of other parents who were vocal in nature.
About the Field

The state of West Bengal can be divided into three divisions i.e. Presidency division, Burdwan division and Jalpaiguri division. The Presidency division and Burdwan division constitute the South of Bengal while Jalpaiguri division is known as North Bengal. Table 3.1 contains the name of districts under each division.

The present study was conducted in four districts of South Bengal of which two were developed districts and two were backward districts. The districts were selected on the basis of Human Development index, Literacy Rate, SC/ST population and number of Educationally Backward Blocks. The districts like Kolkata and Howrah were considered as developed district while the Puruliya and Birbhum were included in the study as backward districts. A brief detail about the geographical location and population of the selected district is given below:

The city of Kolkata comes under the Presidency division of West Bengal. Kolkata Municipal Corporation area is surrounded by river Hugli in the North-West, South 24 Parganas district in the south and South-West, Salt Lake City in the east and North 24 Parganas district in the north. Kolkata is situated at the longitude of 88º30' East - 22º33’ North (Kolkata Municipal Corporation). According to census of 2011, the total population of Kolkata is 4,496,694 of which male and female were 2,356,766 and 2,139,928 respectively. The population growth rate of Kolkata witnessed a negative trend in 2011 as it was -1.67 while it was recorded as 3.93 during the census of 2001 (Census Kolkata, 2011).

Howrah is covered under Presidency Division and occupies ninth position in the State in respect of its size with an area of 1467 sq.km. The district lies between 22º12’ 30” and 22º46’ 55” north latitude and 88º22’ 10” and 87º50’ 45” east longitude. It is located on
the west bank of the Hoogli River, it is a twin city of Kolkata. It is West Bengal's second largest city in terms of both area and population (Howrah District). As per census of 2011, Howrah had population of 4,850,029 of which male and female were 2,500,819 and 2,349,210 respectively. The percentage of population growth in Howrah district was 13.50 comparing 14.57 during census of 2001 with population density of 3,306 per Sq. Km (Census Howrah, 2011).

The district of Birbhum lies between $23^0 32'30"$ to $24^0 35'$ North latitude and $87^0 5'25"$ to $88^0 1'40"$ East longitude. It is bounded by Santhal Parganas of Bihar State in the West and North. Murshidabad district in the East & North East and Burdwan district in the South (Birbhum District). In 2011, Birbhum had population of 3,502,404 of which male and female were 1,790,920 and 1,711,484 respectively. The district had a population growth rate of 16.15 percent during the census of 2011 while it counted 17.99 percent in 2001. The population density of the district is 771 per sq. Km (Census Birbhum, 2011).

Puruliya came into being as a district of West Bengal in 1956. It lies between $22^0 43´$ and $23^0 42´$ North latitude and between $85^0 49´$ and $86^0 54´$ East longitude (Purulia Zilla Parishad, 2008). According to census of 2011, Puruliya had population of 2,930,115 of which male and female were 1,496,996 and 1,433,119 respectively. The population growth rate of the district was 15.52% with population density of 468 people per sq. Kilometre (Census Puruliya, 2011).

The city of Kolkata has a long history. Previously, it was believed that Job Charnok founded the city in 1690 but the Calcutta High Court in its verdict in 2003 opined that the City of Joy does not have a birthday. The city developed gradually from the rural settlements such as Sutanuti, Govindapur and Kalikata (Indiatoday, 2003). The district of
Puruliya came into existence in 1833, at then it was called Manbhumi, when the East India Company divided the Jungle Mahal into several districts. The present district of Puruliya, as a part of West Bengal) evolved in 1956 after a prolonged struggle of the masses which was initiated by Banga Bhanga of 1905 (The Official Website of Purulia District). The city of Howrah, known for the famous Howrah Railway Terminus (1854) and Howrah Bridge (1942-43), has a history of 500 years. It is an industrial hub and second largest city after Kolkata (Official Website of Howrah District). The district of Birbhum is a famous tourist destination and produced two Nobel laureates namely Shri Rabindra Nath Tagore and Dr. Amartya Sen. It has long history that could be traced back in 5th Century B. C. and rule by Mauryan Emperors, Gupta Empire in India, Harsha's Empire, Pala dynasty and Sena dynasty. The district has rich cultural and spiritual heritage (Official Website of the Birbhum District). Thus, all the four districts selected for the purpose of present study have a long enriched history.

However, the city of Howrah and Kolkata is far ahead of the districts of Birbhum and Puruliya. According to the West Bengal Human Development Report 2004, the city of joy topped the HDI ranking followed by Howrah in the second position. The district of Birbhum and Puruliya occupied 14th and 17th position in HDI ranking (Govt. of west Bengal, 2004). With regard to Per Capita Income (PCI), the district of Howrah occupied 7th position while Puruliya and Birbhum stood at 15th and 16th position, respectively. The list did not include the name of Kolkata (Planning Commission, 2010). From the above facts it can be said that the city of Kolkata and Howrah are far ahead of Birbhum and Puruliya. The section on ‘Sampling’ would further highlight the aspects for which these four districts are selected under the present study.
Table 3.1
Division wise List of Districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presidency Division</th>
<th>Burdawan Division</th>
<th>Jalpaiguri Division</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Howrah</td>
<td>Bankura</td>
<td>Alipurduar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolkata</td>
<td>Burdawan</td>
<td>Cooch Behar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murshidabad</td>
<td>Bibrhum</td>
<td>Darjeeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadia</td>
<td>East Midnapur (Purba Medinipur)</td>
<td>Jalpaiguri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North 24 Parganas(Uttar 24 Parganas)</td>
<td>Hoogly</td>
<td>Maldah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South 24 Parganas (Dakshin 24 Parganas)</td>
<td>Purulia</td>
<td>North Dinajpur (Uttar Dinajpur)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midnapur (Paschim Medinipur)</td>
<td>South Dinajpur (Dakhin Dinajpur)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The official portal of West Bengal State Government (Banglar Mukh, 2009)

Process of Data Collection
There are six phases of data collection. In the first phase secondary data were collected relating to literacy rate, Human Development Index, number of Educationally Backward Blocks, role of NGOs in development and in educational attainment of disadvantaged children. To gain the preliminary insight on NGOs working in West Bengal and NGOs working in the field of Education specifically in the context of disadvantaged children initial contact was made with Action Aid India (AAI). In addition, census report of 2011 and 2001, UNDP development reports, website of leading donor and implementing organization were also consulted.
In the second phase, a comprehensive list of NGOs operating in West Bengal was prepared with the help of leading donor organizations like Child Rights and You (CRY), Save the Children, Action Aid, Terre des Hommes (TDH), Germany, and Hope Foundation, Ireland. Further, a list of 4799 NGOs, operating in West Bengal, was extracted from a website namely “NGO Partnership System”. The said website is a free facility offered by the Planning Commission in association with National Informatics Centre to bring about greater partnership between government & voluntary sector and foster better transparency, efficiency and accountability (NGO Partnership System).

In the third phase, the list of NGOs was filtered on the basis of district and themes they were working on. Considering the huge number of NGOs it was decided that 20 NGOs from each district would be selected purposively to generate an overview of present situation. In addition, consultations were also made with previously mentioned donor agencies to select these 20 NGOs from each district, i.e. 80 NGOs from four (4) selected districts.

In the fourth phase, selected NGOs were contacted over phone or visited and appointments were sought with the secretary or the programme director and accordingly official letters for the same were served. Later, contacted NGOs were visited and interviewed. Considering the geographical locations of the selected districts each district was covered at a time.

In the fifth stage, researcher carefully selected the NGOs for case study from the previously visited 80 NGOs. During the selection of NGOs for case study an effort was made to select NGOs that are implementing partner of leading donor organizations like CRY, AAI, TDH, Hope Foundation and save the children and operating in the districts.
that are selected for the purpose of the study. In addition, an effort was also made to select the NGOs with diverse target population.

In the sixth phase, case studies were conducted. For the purpose of case study, there were four categories of respondents’ viz. Secretary or Programme Director, Programme manager or programme coordinator of the selected NGOs, school teachers of the nearest government or government aided schools where NGOs were operating and FGDs with the parents of children who are being served by these NGOs. In addition, a test was also conducted to know the learning level of children attending fourth standard in government or government aided school.

**Sampling**

The present study has followed the method of multi-stage sampling. At the first stage districts were selected on the basis of list of Educationally Backward Blocks (EBB), West Bengal Human Development Report 2004 and census of 2001. In the next stage, NGOs were selected purposively in consultation with donor agencies from a comprehensive list of 4799 NGOs. In the following stages, NGOs (for the purpose of case study), schools, school teacher, parents and children (for testing their learning level) were selected on basis of criteria detailed out in the ensuing paragraphs.

**Selection of Districts**

For the purpose of present study, four districts were selected of which two were developed while rest two belonged to the category of underdeveloped districts. The reasons for choosing two developed and two underdeveloped districts were to explore the distribution, functioning and funding of NGOs in a comparative manner. For selection of developed and underdeveloped districts West Bengal Human Development Report 2004
and literacy rate mentioned in census of 1991, 2001 and 2011 and number of educationally backward blocks in the districts were considered.

Table 3.2 depicts that districts of Purba Madinipur, Howrah, Hoogli, North 24 Parganas and Bardhaman are devoid of educationally backward blocks and can be considered as developed district. The list does not mention the name of Kolkata as it comes under Kolkata Municipal Corporation and thus there is no block in it. However, Kolkata belongs to category of districts with high literacy rate; same would be mentioned in ensuing paragraphs. Accordingly, these five districts could be considered for selection under the heading of developed districts.

Table 3.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of the District*</th>
<th>Total no. of Blocks</th>
<th>No. of Educationally Backward Blocks</th>
<th>% of Educationally Backward Blocks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Bankura</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Bardhaman</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Birbhum</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>26.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Haora</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Hugli</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>Murshidabad</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>42.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>Nadia</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>5.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>North 24 Parganas</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td>Paschim Medinipur</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>6.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Purba Medinipur</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Puruliya</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>South 24 Parganas</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>13.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from official website of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Mission, Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD).

*Districts of Presidency and Bardawan divisions are only included in the list as they together constitute districts of South Bengal.

On the other hand, if five bottom districts were to be considered for the category of backward districts, the district of Puruliya becomes an obvious choice for the researcher
that to be selected for the study, as all the twenty blocks of the district were labelled as educationally backward blocks. Further, the districts of Bankura, Murshidabad, Birbhum and South 24 Parganas (in descending order with respect to the percentage of EBB) provide options for researcher to choose.

In order to select the four districts i.e. two developed and two underdeveloped, from Burdawan and Presidency division researcher relied on the West Bengal Human Development Report 2004. From above, ten districts were shortlisted of which five in the category of developed district viz. Kolkata, Howrah, Hoogli, Bhardhaman and Purba Medinipur while backward districts include Murshidabad, Birbhum, Puruliya, Bankura and South 24 Pargana.

Table 3.3
District wise Human Development Indices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of the District</th>
<th>Health Index</th>
<th>Income Index</th>
<th>Education Index</th>
<th>HDI</th>
<th>HDI Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Kolkata</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Howrah</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Hoogli</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Bardhaman</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Medinipur*</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>Birbhum</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>Murshidabad</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>Puruliya</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td>Bankura</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>South 24 Pargana</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: West Bengal Human Development Report, 2004

*Table mentions only about Medinipur
From table 3.3, researcher selected three districts namely Kolkata and Howrah as developed district and Puruliya as underdeveloped district. For the selection of fourth district under the category of underdeveloped district researcher narrowed down further as the HDI difference between Murshidabad and Birbhum is 0.01. As the present study is focusing the education of disadvantaged children, researcher thought to consider the literacy rate among Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribe in those two districts (Government of West Bengal, 2004).

According to census of 2001, the district of Birbhum contributes 4.82% and 4.62% of Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) population respectively to the total population of SC and ST in the state of West Bengal while the district of Murshidabad shares 3.81% and 1.72% of SC and ST population, respectively (Economic Review, 2012). The West Bengal Human Development Report, 2004, suggests that the literacy rate of ST male is 25.95% while female literacy is 10.60% in the district of Murshidabad. On the other hand, literacy rate ST male in Birbhum is 23.63% and female literacy rate is 5.63%. Again, the literacy rate of SC male in Murshidabad is 40.51% and female literacy rate is 24.42% comparing to 38.47% and 16.13% respectively in the context of Birbhum district (Govt. of West Bengal, 2004). Thus, it can be concluded that the district of Birbhum comparing to the district of Murshidabad is lagging far behind when literacy rate of SC and ST are counted. Accordingly, the fourth district for the purpose of present study is the district of Birbhum.

**Selection of NGOs**

As mentioned previously, at the very beginning a comprehensive list of NGOs was prepared from a government of India’s official website i.e. NGO partnership. In addition, names of NGOs were sought from the leading donor organizations operating in West
Bengal viz. CRY, AAI, TDH, Save the Children and Hope Foundation, Ireland. Finally, a list of 4799 NGOs was prepared. A total of 80 NGOs from four districts, 20 NGOs from each district were purposively selected from the final list. The NGOs were selected on the basis of criteria like a) area of operation, preferably in the selected districts, b) minimum three or more years of experience in the field of educational care of disadvantaged children, c) the organization should be registered under Societies Registration Act, 1860, West Bengal Societies Registration Act, 1961, section 25 of the Companies Act 1956, and the Indian Trusts Act 1882, d) they (NGOs) should not be running formal schools and e) if any kind of fees incurred by the NGOs from the benefactors should not exceed Rs. 25/ per month.

**Selection for Case Study**

For the purpose of case study, eight NGOs were selected from list of 80 NGOs, covering four selected districts. The NGOs for the case study were selected on the basis of uniqueness pertaining to their targeted population, approach and their expertise in the field of educational care of disadvantaged children. The NGOs selected for the case study were Right Track (RT), Centre for Environmental and Socio Economic Regeneration (CESR), Pratham Education Foundation, Vikramshila Education Resource Society (VERS), Sanlaap, Tiljala SHED, Santiniketan Ratanpalli Vivekananda Adibasi Kalyan Samity (SEVAKS), and Lake Gardens Women and Children Development Centre (LGWCDC). Right Track is a well known organization working for the children of minority residing in the slums of Kolkata while the target population of CESR is children of *Santhal, Munda* and *Adivasi* residing in the remote area of one of the backward district of West Bengal i.e. Puruliya. Pratham Education Foundation and VERS are the organizations that focus only on education and joyful learning experience of the children.
VERS is known for their expertise in developing module for teachers’ training and currently running number of centres in different parts of the state while Pratham Education Foundation is known for the ASER as well as for developing innovative Teaching and Learning Materials (TLM). Sanlaap, registered in 1989, is working with the brothel based female sex workers and to combat human trafficking. The NGOs is working to stop the second generation prostitution and are engaged in educational care children of the sex workers. Tiljala SHED is working on number of issues pertaining to women and children while education and rehabilitation of children engaged in paid work is one of their major area of intervention. SEVAKS is operating in the district of Birbhum and focusing on the educational care children with special need. LGWCDC is a Kolkata based organization working for the children of brick kiln industry as well children residing in the slums Tikia para, Howrah.

**Selection of Schools and School Teacher**

Under the present study government or government aided schools are also included. The schools were selected depending up on their proximity to the areas where NGOs were operating. Further, school teachers, preferably head teacher of the school and an assistant teacher, were interviewed with a semi-structured interview schedule. Total 43 schools were visited and 59 teachers were interviewed in four selected districts.

**Selection of Children for Test**

Under the present study, learning level of the students of fourth standard was tested. For the purpose the government or government aided schools were selected in order to understand the quality of education imparted to those schools. The testing of children was confined to fourth standard across the four selected districts. The researcher opted for the students of fourth standard because it was expected to give comprehensive understanding
about their learning after three years of schooling. Further, during selection of students an effort was made include 50% girls in to that sample population. The tests were conducted with ASER tool developed by Pratham Education Foundation. Total 360 students from 36 schools were tested of which 137 were girls. Thus, equal proportion of boys and girls was not maintained as the number of girl students were less or negligible in many of the schools.

**Selection of Participants for FGD**

The FGDs were conducted to understand the kind of perception held by the parents and guardians of children who were served by the NGOs for more than three years. Accordingly, FGDs took place in the locations where the NGOs were operating for more than three years. There were eight to twelve participants in each FGD. Total 14 FGDs were conducted in 9 locations.

**Analysis of Data**

Under the present study both qualitative and quantitative analyses were done. For the first objective the data were discussed in both qualitative and quantitative manner. In order to understand the situation of education system and scope for NGOs to work on issue like education, District Report Cards and State report Cards were considered. The quantitative analysis of these secondary data helped to understand the facets like a) rate of enrolment of children at different standards, b) rate of drop-out at different standards, c) rate of enrolment among girls, d) rate of enrolment among SC and STs, e) percentage of teachers from different backward communities, f) percentage of female teachers, g) status of professionally trained teachers, and h) teacher student ratio.

Again, the interview schedules that are being filled up with the teachers of respective schools were discussed quantitatively as well as qualitatively to focus on aspects such as
a) the kind cooperation they are receiving from members of local self government, b) kind of infra-structure they have inside the school campus, c) challenges faced by the teachers in running the school smoothly, d) attitude of parents and students towards education, and e) drop-out rate and reason for drop-out.

Thirdly, the test conducted to understand the learning level of the children were expected to help in exploring whether functioning of NGOs on the issue like education can be validated or not.

Finally, the content analysis of FGDs, conducted with the community people and paradigmatic case study of NGOs were also expected to contribute towards the exploration of factors that paved the way for NGOs to work on education as an issue.

The second objective of the present study was discussed qualitatively in the form of case studies. The in-depth interview with the eight NGOs, from four selected districts, and five international donor agencies would highlight the following aspects:

- Types of disadvantaged children served by the NGOs;
- The kind of approaches adopted by the NGOs;
- Aspects that are differentiating each of these approaches;
- Different programmes initiated by the NGOs; and
- Their (NGOs) achievements in dealing with issue.

The third objective of the study was fulfilled through both qualitative and quantitative study. The quantitative analysis of the responses received from the 80 NGOs from selected districts helped to identify the factors that were influencing their (NGOs) functioning which were substantiated with the help of case studies.
The last objective of the study was achieved through narrative description of responses gathered through the FGDs with the parents and guardians of the children served by the NGOs.

**Operational Definitions**

**NGO**

United Nations Rule of Law (UNROL) defined NGO as, “A non-governmental organization (NGO, also often referred to as "civil society organization" or CSO) is a not-for-profit group, principally independent from government, which is organized on a local, national or international level to address issues in support of the public good. Task-oriented and made up of people with a common interest, NGOs perform a variety of services and humanitarian functions, bring public concerns to governments, monitor policy and programme implementation, and encourage participation of civil society stakeholders at the community level. Some are organized around specific issues, such as human rights”.

The definition highlighted characteristics of NGOs. It focused on areas like non-profit making motive, free from government system, locally based and connected with the local people that seek to achieve participation of stakeholders, highlights public concern and monitor the government policy and implementation.

Bhose (2003), also highlighted some of the characteristics of NGOs, such as voluntary commitment of a few person, registered under act like Societies Act, Trust Act and some under Trade Union Act, flexibility in intervention, response to the immediate need of the community, non-profit making motive, serves poor people, motivated staff with less
salary, involvement of people in different phase of programme implementation (Bhose, 2003).

Under the present study, considering the above characteristics of NGOs mentioned by UNROL and Bhose, the term NGO would mean any voluntary organization working as non-profit organization registered under Societies Registration Act of 1860 or the West Bengal Societies Registration Act of 1961 or Indian Trusts Act of 1882 or section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956, engaged in the educational care of disadvantaged children. However, the term NGO would not include any organization registered under Societies Registration Act 1860 or any other enactment mentioned above and providing formal education to the children and receiving fees of Rs 25/- or more per month.

**Disadvantaged Children**

According to Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary disadvantage means something that causes problem and tend to stop from succeeding and making progress. Bruke (2007), defines disadvantage as a “factor that permeate the experience of many people who, perhaps not through choice, are vulnerable or stigmatised, or are in other way incapacitated in their dealings with the situations and experiences of everyday life”. From above, it can be concluded that disadvantage means any situation that may be social or economic or cultural or political or all together that restricts the accessibility of an individual or group or community and makes them susceptible to different or difficult situation. Under the present study, the term “Disadvantage Children” would mean any individual between the age of 6 to 14 years who are unable to get quality education because of social or cultural or economic or political or geographical or administrative factors.
Education
Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary defined education as a process of teaching, training and learning, especially in schools or colleges, to improve knowledge and develop skills. Under the present study, the term education refers to learning of children at elementary and middle school level.

Schools
According to Merriam-Webster dictionary school is “an organization that provides instructions: as an institution for teaching children”. The gazette of India, published by Ministry of Law and Justice on 27th August'15 defined school as “any recognised place or institution imparting elementary education and includes-

a) a school established, owned or controlled by the appropriate Government or a local authority;

b) an aided school receiving aid or grant to meet whole or part of its expenses from the appropriate Government or the local authority;

c) a school belonging to specified category; and

d) an unaided school not receiving any kind of aid or grants to meet its expenses from the appropriate Government or the local authority.” (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2009)

Thus, school may be defined as a recognised institution for imparting education to children with or without aid from the Government or a local authority. For the purpose of present study, the school would mean an institution established, owned or controlled by the Government or local authority and imparting elementary education to the children.

Perception
Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary refers the word ‘perception’ as a way of noticing things, especially with sense or as an idea, a belief or an image that we have as a result of
how we see or understand. Russell (2008), defined perception as an actual experience where sensation forms the theoretical core of actual experience. Under the present study, the word perception would mean the ways by which beneficiaries views the functioning of NGOs.

**Programme**
According to Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, programme is a plan of things that will be done or included in the development. For the purpose of present study programme means to any activities carried out and supported with project proposal, specified staff and allocation of budget.

**Expected Contribution of Present Study**
At the outset, the present study is expected to give an overview of the situation of elementary education in the state of West Bengal after the commencement of Right to Education Act, 2009. In addition, the study would also highlight the scope of NGOs to intervene, while focusing on the limitations encountered by the government and government aided schools. Secondly, the given study would contribute in developing an understanding about different approaches adopted by the NGOs and their suitability in the present context, while focusing on the aspects that are differentiating each of these approaches. Thirdly, the sustainability of the changes brought by the NGOs and the factors influencing their functioning would also get addressed in this study which paves way for further studies to indentify the ways and means for tackling the present issues. Finally, the perception of the beneficiaries towards the services rendered by the NGOs would contribute in understanding the relevance of the services and the dependency of the targeted population over the same. This aspect of the study may warrant some action
research to fix the immediate issues and may result in further customization of the services of NGOs.

**Ethical Issues**

During the course of present study numbers of ethical issues were handled in order to uphold the objectivity of the study and to acknowledge the inherent right of self-determination of the respondents and participants of FGDs. A detail account of the same is given below:

a) Biasness on the part of the researcher is a major hindrance towards any research work and which affects the objectivity of the study. To minimise the biasness special care was taken during the selection of districts. The districts were selected on the basis of established indicators like literacy rate, Human Development Index (HDI) and numbers of Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs).

b) The learning level of the students of class IV were tested with ASER testing tool. To use the tool prior permission and technical support were sought from the Pratham Education Foundation in order to avoid mishandling of the tool.

c) Interview with key respondents from INGOs and NGOs, school teachers was the most critical part of the study. Therefore, prior consent of the respondents from the mentioned institutions was sought through visit to organization or over phone.

d) FGDs with the parents or guardian of the children were a major aspect of the study. To conduct the FGDs prior information about the content and purpose of the FGDs were communicated to the participants in order to ensure voluntary participation.
e) The identifiable characteristics of the respondents and key informants were kept secret and used only for academic purpose.

**Limitations of the Study**

a) This study is limited to the four districts of the state of West Bengal and focuses on the factors that have paved way for NGOs to work on issues pertaining to education. Accordingly, the facts that have evolved through this study may not be applicable to other districts of West Bengal.

b) For the purpose of the present study, the NGOs are selected purposively and have focused only on NGOs that are working for the educational attainment of disadvantaged children. Therefore, the findings of the present study would be confined to the NGOs that are engaged with disadvantaged children for their education and accordingly the NGOs working on other developmental activities are not considered.

c) The major focus of this study is on the issues associated only with the elementary education of the disadvantaged children. Thus, the challenges encountered by the population in the intermediate and higher secondary level may not get reflected in this study.

d) Finally, the present study is primarily focusing on the NGOs to understand the need and their role in educating disadvantaged children and thus, the study may not include all the categories of disadvantaged children in appropriate proportion in to the sample size.
References:


