CHAPTER 1

SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION:
EXPLORING THE DYNAMICS OF STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY
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The right to education and its transformation into reality calls for accountability to agreed upon duties of the state and strong civil society willingness to intervene in situation of violation of rights to enable people to participate in education issues. The rights approach, however, places major responsibility on the state, requiring it to do everything possible to ensure children’s basic entitlement to education. Despite these arguments, massive educational deprivation among children remains a crucial issue in regions where stubborn social norms such as casteism, patriarchy, fundamentalism, conflict and violence, to mention a few are rampant. Equally significant is the exclusivist strategy of state policy through the control over curriculum choices, content of school text books, pedagogy, ideologically driven policies and reforms, misallocation and appropriation of budgetary allocations, non implementation of education incentives and facilities and transmission losses in the federal-state-local level linkages etc. These ground realities are a major stumbling block in making educational right for children a realistic goal. Yet these causal factors of multiple state failures need not completely militate against the efforts to achieve the same goal when there is involvement of strong civil society movement at the grassroots by playing key instruments for boosting the state. The possibilities and challenges of meaningful engagement of civil society in education are also largely shaped by the existing socio-politico and cultural context in which various forms of civil society sectors are invited to participate. As against this background, the present chapter explores the interface between state and civil society in education issues in ensuring access, equity and quality education; and the nature of civil society’s engagement in education; the space and the opportunities provided by the state. In the light of this observation, the chapter examines schooling and its role in society, curricular control, pedagogy and provisioning of schools by locating these issues in the context of various debates centering on state and civil society.

1.1 Theoretical Perspectives

Much of the current educational debates have increasingly become important within the sociological discourse in as much as education remains an inseparable entity from the operation of the wider social structure and its articulation. The major theoretical debates within which education as a social institution is examined are the structural-functional
approach and the conflict model. Both the models treat education as an institution, embedded within the larger social structure. The main proposition of the functionalist is to begin with a logical analysis of the concept 'society' as a whole and the mechanisms that operate to maintain its continuity. The functionalists suggest that society as a social system is made up of different institutions such as religion, law, and culture and education system. Each of these systems requires a minimal degree of integration between the parts. Functionalists argue that this integration is based on value consensus. It is the value consensus, which integrates the various parts of society. What is therefore particularly distinctive about the functionalists approach is its emphasis on equilibrium based on homeostatic model of a self regulating and sustaining process.

Following the above proposition, Durkheim's analysis of education seeks to understand education as a social fact that is both causal and functional in nature. And to understand education as a social fact from the point of causal relationship is to examine the way in which education serves to the needs of social organism. Educational changes, according to him are a reflection of more basic changes in social structure and a particular form of education is demanded to suit the need of these changes. Durkheim further argues that education can be fit into a particular society and that education in this context is a means to an end, and the end being determined by society, for example, education is above all a social means to a social end- the means by which a society guarantees its own survival. In this, the teacher as a member of the adult family, as a major player of the society's agent is a critical link in cultural transmission through education. Implicit in this, what is observed is that the specific features of educational structures and their cultural contents have a strong functional relationship with the needs of society defined by the members of society itself which is concerned for society's cultural integration. Thus for each society, education acts as the means by which it secures, in children the essential conditions of its own existence. To quote Durkheim's definition on education,

'Education is the influence exercised by adult generations on those that are not yet ready for social life. Its object is to arouse and to develop in the child a certain number of physical, intellectual, and moral states that are demanded of him by both the political society as a whole and the special milieu for which he is specifically destined' (1957:28).
Therefore for Durkheim, it is through the role of education that an egoistic unprepared child can legitimately be transformed into a social being in his own society. Further Durkheim argues if the society is to continue, it also requires some specialisation, for the division of labour is necessary to maintain society. Education fulfils society’s needs in these respects. For Durkheim, by creating the new generation for society in this process, education does the function of laying down the conditions for society to perpetuate itself, in which the process itself is a *sui generis*. Durkheim further argues that society can survive only if there exists among its members a sufficient degree of homogeneity, education perpetuates and reinforces this homogeneity by fixing in the child from the beginning the essential similarities which collective life demand. Thus, his main point of contention is that members are subjected to the school regime, for schools transmit both general values providing the necessary homogeneity for social survival and the specific skills demanded by the society. Durkheim’s writings essentially reflect the ‘social determinism of education’. And that society perpetuates itself through education that plays a vital role in the life of individuals to the extent human beings are no longer social beings without it. Therefore Durkheim’s stress on the functional importance of education for society underlies deeper meaning wherein education is not a matter of allowing an individual to develop in accordance with his nature, disclosing whatever hidden capacities lie there only waiting to be revealed. Education creates a new being (Durkheim Emile:1961). Thus for Durkheim, education has three essential roles: maintain social role, division of labour and to prevent its members from facing societal crisis such as anomie and pathological social situations.

Talcott Parsons too, by referring to the American society has examined the positive roles of education in society. He argues that schools instil two major values in a child - the value of achievement and the value of equality of opportunity. Every society, in Parsons’ view has such a common culture performing important functions in society as a whole. To Parsons, individuals are born with ascriptive statuses and it is primarily due to education begins a process of differentiation by acquired roles. In this manner children enter school relatively homogeneous in terms of their ascriptive status including age. He further argues that schools constitutes in practice a ‘contest’ or competition where the contestants find themselves in equal opportunity. Later on through the process of differential performance, children start acquiring status by means of grades and qualifications that constitutes fundamental criteria for the assignment of future statuses and new roles in society. The child becomes oriented to achieve roles and the process is sanctioned by academic success and the fulfilment of
educational obligations. And when differentiation in status develops, it results to a sense of shared values of community and solidarity that serves to integrate the system. Secondly, Parsons argues, industrial societies require high achievement orientations among individuals, which necessitate differential reward for differential achievement, a principle, which has been established in schools. Thus, Parsons argues that the education system is an important mechanism for the selection of individuals for the future role in society and the society's value consensus is transmitted through generations. In this way, education helps to maintain society as a well co-coordinated whole. Not only that when individuals are selected according to the rules of the game, it provides differentiation corresponding to distinct types of success, directing them toward cognitive technical roles or toward moral or humanistic ones.

As the functionalists suggest, the conflict model argues that education cannot be understood independently of the society of which is a part. However, the main point of departure is that conflict model looks upon education as a system that helps to 'reproduce' or maintain the capitalist economic system. Rather than being an agent of social change, promoting greater social equality and integration, education according to the conflict theorists reinforces the existing unequal social and economic order. Bowls and Gintis, while referring to the American education system, argues that education helps to maintain the existing social order, first by legitimising the class structure that one's economic success depends on the possession of education/skills and second, by preparing young people for their place in the world of class dominated and alienated work by instilling a set of ideas and beliefs appropriate to a capitalist economy. Structural Marxist, Louis Althuser analyses about education and its function along the lines of Bowls and Gintis. Like Bowls and Gintis, Althuser asserts that education performs the role of reproduction and thus, reinforces the capitalists relations of production i.e., relations of exploitation. But his main point of departure from the arguments of Bowls and Gintis is that for him, education is an integral part of the capitalist society’s state, having two apparatuses—the Repressive State Apparatus and the Ideological State Apparatus¹. For Althuser, Repressive State Apparatus alone is incapable to maintain its dominance in society and therefore uses Ideological State Apparatus. In this, education system is a part of state apparatus and is more powerful than

¹ Repressive State Apparatus is identified with the state and its various elements and Ideological State Apparatus are the religious, the legal, the education system, the family, the political, trade unions, the media, art, culture etc.
even the political in disseminating the ruling ideology among its members. Althusser does not
deny the role of other agencies in indoctrinating the ruling ideology, for example, the press
by cramming every citizen with daily doses of nationalism, chauvinism, liberalism and so
forth (Blackage and Hunt: 1985), yet, the impact of education on children, being in the most
formative period of their lives is extremely powerful. He maintains that schools are the active
agencies of preparing a class of wage labourers and capitalists by fostering modesty,
resignation and submissiveness while instilling cynicism, contempt, arrogance, self
importance for the future capitalists and managers. Schooling is thus channelled to meet the
requirements of a repressive and exploitative capitalist society.

Pierre Bourdieu while highlighting the cultural reproduction of the dominant class by
schooling systems argues that education performs the role of eliminating the members of the
lower strata. Bourdieu further argues that the dominant position of the upper class is justified
by their educational success and the underprivileged position of the lower class by their
educational failure. This is evident in a number of studies conducted, for example, Coleman's
study of inequality in education in USA found that higher status students achieve better
results than those underprivileged and there are unequal educational facilities for the
minorities. This argument is substantiated when Bernstein’s observation of various linguistic
codes used in schools indicates differential impact on the performance of children coming
from different background. He argues that children familiar with elaborated code, that
essentially belongs to the middle class, perform better in schools since there is no
fundamental difference from the language used in schools while children of low strata using
restricted code\(^2\) experience difficulty in learning in schools and thereby, the failure of the
later in school performance. Bourdieu argues that the structural constraints to educational
opportunity of the underprivileged are conditioned by virtue of their membership to the lower
strata of the society. In this, education and its system continue to remain under the control of
the privileged and places education as a powerful tool for legitimising the dominant value
system of the privileged dominant class. Thus, education as an entity of social structure is

\(^2\) Restricted code is the language containing many unstated assumptions, which speakers expect to
know. It is a speech form that is tied to the cultural setting of lower class and more suitable for
communication about practical experience than for discussing more of abstract ideas. In contrast, the
meanings of elaborated code can be individualised to suit the needs of particular situations and are
less bound to particular context and hence the child from such background can easily generalise and
express ideas. Elaborated code essentially belongs to the culture of the middle class (Anthony
Giddens, p.426).
relegated to an effect, a dependent variable conditioned by the prevalent socio-economic power structure and other various powerful groups in society. Therefore, in the actual operation of the system, education system works both, in form and content with a decisive bias heavily in favour of the dominant strata of society. In the process, schools become alienating experience for the socially, culturally and economically disadvantaged groups.

1.2 Education as an Arena of Celebration of the Dominant Class Ideology: An Antithesis to the Rights Agenda of Education

The above observation has specific reference to the concerns of bringing the traditionally excluded social groups including the scheduled castes, the scheduled tribes, the poor and the girl child into the fold of formal schooling system. The disproportionately low level participation in education of these social groups\(^3\) also indicates that unequal access to education has much more evidence of strong caste, class, tribe and gender elements. It is also seen that among girls, girls from economically and educationally backward communities have distinct disadvantage position. This is severe among scheduled caste community because besides being a girl, she also shares the social disability of her community in the form of untouchability (Mishra: 2000). Systematic exclusion of these social groups from equal opportunities to participate in basic education reinforces diverse kinds of deprivation by inhibiting the limited options that are there for their social mobility. Expansion of basic education is therefore an essential requirement of more rapid elimination of gross inequalities in as much as the strongest impact of education has on the economy, governance and other host of factors including social stratification (Apple: 1982). Hence, the deprivation of education to the young generation of these social groups is more dangerous than the deprivation of food and other basic social securities (Joseph: 2003). Because reduction in exclusion in other social securities cannot be irreversible if not accompanied by the inputs of education.

However, it does not imply that education and its issues are to be addressed as separate entities. Further, it is a product of the larger prevalent socio-cultural formation and, unequal

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\(^3\) The Census of India 2001 indicates the literacy rates for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as low as 54.69 and 47.10 percentages as against that of 64.44 percentage of general population. The corresponding female literacy figures among these social groups are 41.90\%, 34.76\% and 53.67\% respectively. This further reveals that the disadvantaged social groups occupy disadvantaged position in literacy while the female literacy figures reveal that their literacy status is at the bottom of the heap.
participation of different social groups. Therefore, the major hope for improving the access to education for the backward social groups lies with legislatures and state mechanisms, which must be persuaded by the state by restraining serf-interested actions.

While education is an inalienable part of the state apparatus, state remains a continuous arena in which different groups seek to make their vision of education and its role in society. Caste, class and gender considerations are also built up into the structures of practices of the state and provide ample content for conflict inside and outside of education. Thus in the words of Panini, the membership of a caste implies that a person becomes part of a person based social network which controls insider's information about social opportunities (Srinivas:1996). In the process, education becomes a site in which conflicts over differential power relations of contending social groups (by pushing the marginal group at the background) concerning the means and ends of schooling are in play. This is partly the reason why educational policies and reforms in the country are often driven by ideology, political expediency of powerful social groups whose self-interest is fundamentally opposed to educating the disadvantaged social groups. The educational deprivation of these social groups is further reinforced by a power structure of closely-knit economic, political and bureaucratic forces.

Therefore, educational deprivation of these social groups has both political and sociological ramifications. It is a social product that has been socially generated, reinforced, perpetuated and structurally integrated into the larger systems of operation. For instance, fairness in educational participation cannot be attained in the absence of more or less equitable control over and access to public resources, power and decision making process. In addition to these, poverty, hunger, malnutrition and disease along with widespread illiteracy are some of the silent deprivations that need to be addressed urgently that have seldom received adequate attention. Significantly, while equal access to education is one of the most important booms that can be provided in any democratic society, it remains clear that access to education is radically unequal. While considering these huge gaps between the literate and illiterate population, the educated and the uneducated, the consequence is the sharpest and the strongest rift between the culture of the dominant and that of the dominated. Because in the overall process, it is they (the dominant) who immensely benefit from such massive inequality and in return capable of imposing their presumed superior culture to 'others'. Simultaneously, the marginalized groups find themselves excluded from being the members of the larger community and loose all abilities to participate in the governing of their own
lives. Ironically it is the educated who have access to information and knowledge of their rights who are able to assert, as education can empower one and provide various means for more meaningful participation in the wider socio-political economic realms.

Going beyond these considerations, issues of deprivation, prestige and power, hegemonic relations, access to schools (including the type of school) acquires in language, pre packaged curriculum and other forms of pedagogic content. That, today's unrelated poor school curriculum, pedagogical, and education policies are controversial as irrelevant for the historically, socially and neglected social group. In the process, it builds up a massive structuring force to the extent of identifying the 'other' or the 'excluded'. For example the overall failure of schools and school operation to link schooling to the ideology and life experiences of those belonging to the disadvantaged social groups have devastating effects on their lives. The lopsided state sponsored public schools pay little attention to the practical needs of the disadvantaged children and almost none to the cultural needs (Beista and Ega-Kuchne: 2000). As for instance, school and school processes largely ignore the diversity of experiences, traditions, voices, history and social life that students can relate themselves to schools. The curriculum policy appears to treat these differences as 'cultural deficit' that essentially belongs to the subaltern culture and thereby forcing the children to face dead time.

The exclusion of socio-cultural, historical reality in the curriculum and pedagogy content fail to give meaning to their lives amidst humiliation and alienating experience at the hands of

\[\text{4 Deficit culture implies the culture of 'others' while the term 'others' represent those social groups who strain under the weight of various forms of oppression and exploitation (Giroux, McLaren: 1989)}\]

\[\text{5 Death time refers to schools that have no relevance for the lives of students belonging to 'others' (Ibid: 1989)}\]

\[\text{6 Pedagogy refers to the art of teaching. It is also concerned with curricula, learning that take place in classroom. It is also a process through which knowledge is produced through curricula, teaching-learning process in classroom situation. Paule Freire (1972) and others who treat pedagogy critically refers pedagogy to the deliberate attempt to influence how and what knowledge are produced within and among particular sets of social relations through school practice. These writers basically refer to the practice and imposition of hegemonic culture on children from lower strata through the practice of pedagogy in classroom interaction. Given the argument, the curriculum of a school consist of a planned prepackaged academic programmes, co-curricular activities and what a child imbibes from the overall practice and ethos of the school. This is also popularly termed as the hidden curriculum by many critiques on official prepackaged official curricular}\]
their own class mates and teachers most of who belong to the dominant upper strata. The 'unwanted' school experience leads to their overall failure from school participation and withdraw from school while they are the ones who are most in need of schooling. Tribal children for example, are unfamiliar with the illustrations and images used in textbooks and other teaching-learning material aids that heavily represent the mainstream urban culture. The mere representation or the systematic silence of the culture of the weaker communities in school practices is a manifestation of how schools and its processes are dominated by urban middle class culture. Most of the early educational expansion was confined to the upper and middle class urbanites (Y.Singh:1986). Hence, the major flaws of today's overall school practices devoid of secular and democratic forces is largely reflected through under representation and misrepresentation of the culture of the marginalized communities in the formal systems of learning. This signifies the contempt and the neglect of these communities as subaltern, primitive, illiterate and unlettered. The negative portrayal of one's own culture can have tremendous discouragement effect on the schooling of tribal children and other weaker sections.

The official knowledge or the curriculum is thus socially constructed and the medium through which it is communicated to children is also linked to relations of power and dominance that are seen as important tools bearing on the education of the disadvantaged children. Extending to these arguments, Bernstein, Bordieu and others argue that children coming from poor families lack appropriate cultural capital which is a culture of the upper class and hence the justification of their failures in school performance. The less privileged social groups are the obvious ones who are at the receiving end since these children experience school processes without any tangible continuity with their socio-cultural life at home. In the whole context, school's concept of what is to be educated is socially constructed knowledge whereas knowledge is not a static entity, something out there and independent of the knower but a social invention heavily biased in favour of few powerful social groups that are articulated in school curricular and other pedagogical forms. Thus, the forms of knowledge that make up the school curriculum are related to the interest of particular class or professional groups that school curriculum is a product of pressure from certain vested interest groups (Kumar: 1991).

The strategy in turn, acts as powerful forces indoctrinating our value system that easily fall in line with the established pattern of education set up within the frame of reference of these
powerful social groups. Therefore, the more crucial issue is, if education is an important route by which children learn about themselves, their place in society and what life might hold for them in future, what messages are there in textbooks to unexposed and innocent minds is of considerable importance. This raises serious concerns to the understanding of whose meaning and interpretations will prevail in the final outcomes. For example, when tribal children are denied access to their own language in school, its immediate implication is to produce ungraspable distance between home and school for them.

This is also related to the overall educational outcomes including achievements in school performance. As Bernstein argues children from different backgrounds use different linguistic codes the 'restricted code' for the lower class children and the 'elaborated code' for the middle class children, children familiar with elaborated code perform relatively better since there is no fundamental difference from the language used in schools while children using restricted code experience difficulty in learning at schools and thereby, the failure of the later in school performance. The argument is that the acceptance and the appreciation of the language and culture of tribal children by the school is seen to lead a positive identity of self worth and thereby, to effective educational achievement while the denial of their mother tongue in formal systems of schooling is to disconnect them from any tangible continuity from school and school processes. This is seen to be very significant particularly for tribes since language remains an irrefutable distinguishing trait (Mandelbaum: 1972) for many tribal groups and their self-identification. Lack of education in one's own mother tongue can also stall development and achievement in education as articulated above by Bernstein. Empirical studies capture the harsh realities that tribal children currently face in school education in school education. This is reflected in their high rates of attrition such as poor enrolment, low retention rate and high drop out. The policy on mother tongue to be instructed as a medium in the classroom is not given any practical relevance and if followed in few states, it is implemented in an erratic manner.

Another serious observation is the present situation of schooling characterised by the powerful global wave of privatisation that takes away disproportionate large amount of from the limited public budget. These are the education projects that drastically distance itself from the basic fundamentals of education for all (EFA) strategy and are thus an antithesis to EFA target. The agenda of this kind is a negation of the EFA programme; since mass literacy is not possible without formal educational facilities, while even the existing public schooling
system that is characterised by weak infrastructure facilities need to be revamped vigorously. The formal education system needs undertaking of programme through public action by utilising public resources judiciously. In other words, if education for all has to be made achievable, school supply factors must be strengthened without compromise that is indeed elemental.

However, on the contrary, in the face of neo-liberal forces and the Structural Adjustment Programme, reduction in social sectors including education as an important one has already been experienced by the state since state governments incur the bulk of social expenditure with relatively high share of the Adjustment burden. The handiwork of neo-liberalism is to pass the cost of educational services to clients through private enterprises and the consumer being the best judge of his or her own needs and wants. In educational services, the country is witnessing a situation of the schooling system characterised by the powerful global, wave of privatization that not only takes away a disproportionate large amount from the limited public budget but also simultaneously contribute to the impoverishment of government schools. Research studies and survey reports (PROBE, 1998, Bhat, 1995, Sen and Dreze, 1998, Verghese, 1995) show that the proportion of publicly funded schools hardly meets the basic requirements of school facilities, where the majority of children hail from economically backward social groups. Considering these findings, it remains an irrefutable fact that children from impoverished families also encounter an impoverished school environment and pattern of persistent inequality in the quality of poor teaching, limited range and depth of learning opportunities. The existence of impoverished, dysfunctional government schools along with private schools over a period of time is in fact a form of social apartheid (Sen and Dreze, 1998). Secondly, differential access to schools accentuates inequalities in social and economic opportunities, thereby providing a breeding ground for a fractured society. This type of education agenda is in sharp contrast to any effort of educational right for all children.

In the foregoing discourse, cultural exclusion of education as experienced by the disadvantaged community in schooling stands in sharp contrast to the rights agenda of education for all. Silencing and evading the holistic pedagogy and meaningful curricular, child friendly and liberative education with social empathy in the schooling of the disadvantaged children is a major infringement on their rights. On the contrary when education is made a matter of right for these children, education strategy aims to remove all obstacles that come in the way of empowering these social groups, not to talk of exclusion in any form. Cultural exclusion exercised in school education comes from a lack of respect of
the culture and the heritage of these children; a deliberate treatment of these cultures as inferior, primitive or uncivilised though there is nothing as such that a culture can be described or treated inferior or superior, because culture is a culture, it has to be treated in its own entirety. Therefore, rather than removing obstacles through schooling, cultural exclusion of these children prevent them from exercising further opportunities such as social, political and economic opportunities since there are significant returns to education such as economic, social and political to be reaped. Therefore, depriving these children of their right to education is an outright denial of equal opportunity by inhibiting their access to other forms of opportunity. In this profound sense, right to education cannot be equated making children acquire mere skills of literacy such as reading, writing and arithmetic or achieve information or knowledge but empowering them to be individuals who can make maximum use of their innate and acquired capacities, individuals who can critically reflect about themselves and about the world they are in and with, individuals who can transform themselves and the world. In this sense education has the power to liberate the self by not being a mere object and spectator to all forms of social exploitation and oppression usually played out by powerful social forces that destroy and annihilate all those beautiful qualities that are intrinsic to be human. The enormous task of education is therefore not merely to develop individuals to be adjusted to the present circumstantial existence, but also individuals who can be active agents of social change for a better world.

Secondly, it demands for the provision of schools of equitable quality education to which all children must have access. In other words schooling facilities for all children cannot be sharply differentiated from each other in terms of school resources - physical and human dimensions. Strengthening of these visible school infrastructure supply facilities and resources in turn depends much on the level of overall infrastructure development of the region, e.g. road connectivity, commutation facility, electricity connection, supply of drinking

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7 The genesis of the concept 'right to education' is traced to the age of enlightenment in Europe. Education was considered as vital important for human life that it was conceived as natural right for any human being. In broader sense, educational rights in 19th century were pursued to defend and advance the ideas of freedom of science, research and teaching against the dominance of church. The right to education with a corresponding state duty was, for the first time prescribed by Article 121 of the Constitution of Soviet Union and thereafter, the right to education was recognised as a prominent human right in various International treaties. Right to Education as second generation right can be completely achieved by positive state action.
water facility, postal service facility, health care system and also relatively peaceful existence of citizens. It is in this context that philosophers and theorists who strongly propound educational right from human rights approach treat educational right as second generation right wherein educational right of children can be guaranteed through positive state action. This further suggest that guaranteeing educational right for children is an obligation of the state, simply because markets, voluntary organisations or charitable institutions are not sufficient enough to secure the marvellous task of implementing educational right since guaranteeing the same right entails to guarantee other correlated rights of children.

Equally significant is the educational deprivation of children in situation of armed and conflict emergencies, conflict and violence, displacement as in case of Kashmir and parts of north eastern states. For example, taking the most recent incident in the state of Manipur is

**Picture: 1.1**

**Opposing faces of Summer Storm unveiled**

*Source: Sangai Express, April, 2009*
Operation Summer Storm (OSS) conducted by the Indian army to flush out insurgents from Keibul Lamjao, National Park at Loktak Lake. During the operation, besides thousands of villages being displaced, students near and around the region was stumped out of school. The OSS conducted by the Indian Army took place in the month of April, 2009 at Keibul Lamjao National Park, Loktak Lake to flush out local insurgents who have taken shelter at Keibul Lamjao by making it as one of their bases. During the nine day long operation, reports ‘The Sangai Express’, a local newspaper schools located in Nongmaikhong and Khordak, near the Keibul Lamjao park were shut down, withholding the regular functioning of schools, denied educational right to more than 1,168 children in the region. These students belong to the four schools operating in the region. The operation created a panic among parents and children if the situation would necessitate of losing academic year. Schools in such regions are no more safe havens for school going children. Militarisation during the OSS displaced communities including teachers, students and parents who took shelter at safer places so long as the operation continued. The operation also stripped of parents’ engagement in livelihoods occupation. Due to the incessant fighting of heavy guns and mortars, the villagers were unable to transplant paddy apart preventing them from fishing which is the main source of their income, partly supporting their children’s education.
The task of operating education systems in times of emergencies and post emergencies as faced by children and teachers community is not yet designed either by the state or the civil society sector to safeguard children’s right to education in emergencies. This is despite the fact that Indian state became a party to UN Convention on the Rights of Child in the year 1992. However, while pursuing educational right for children, an accountable state has a moral duty to provide educational service to children during such educational emergencies faced by its children.

1.3 State and Education Reconsidered

Given the above discourse, it would be a futile attempt to separate education from the realm of operation of the state apparatus vis-à-vis its role in overall development policy. The notion of 'state' therefore, becomes important for understanding its role in various sectors of society including education more or so during the 20th century when education has increasingly become a state function. From the Marxist perspective, state as an institution is of crucial importance in which the main function is to maintain and defend class domination. Therefore, for Marx, educational institutions, being a part of superstructure are seen designed by the state so as to facilitate the monopoly and domination of the ruling class who control over the infrastructure of society. Following this proposition, Antonio Gramsci argues that education systems and schools in particular appear as privileged instruments for the socialisation of hegemonic culture. The Marxian model thus emphasises on the exploitative aspects of state action by viewing state as a part of ideological hegemony of the dominant classes along with coercive state apparatus (Torres and Michael:1996). As against the Marxist discourse on education as an instrument used by the state to oppress and suppress the dominated, the liberal pluralists argue that state constitutes of not only one dominant class but rather groups of elites with competing interest and as such power is diffused and balanced and that no particular class is able to weight too heavily upon the state. Therefore, the state remains subjected to a multitude of conflicting interests and pressures and in that state is the only

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8 Gramsci refers hegemony to the ideological ascendancy of one class over the rest of society in an attempt to establish its own ethical, cultural and political values as the dominant social norms. Therefore, hegemony must be worked for, it is not preordained (Jules and Apple, p.180) and can be exercised mainly through religion, education, cultural systems etc and in quite complex ways, and this is visible in the ways schools perform ideologically.
mirror which society holds up to itself (Ralph Miliband: 1976, p.5). In this sense, state policy is a collective consensus of public opinion imposed on the political arena by competing groups and hence state becomes an arbitrator of those competing voices. Therefore, state is a collective creation of its individual members, providing a set of common social goods including education. However, the voices of those competing groups need not necessarily represent all sections of society since those are the people who constitute the elites wielding state power as a distinct and separate entity. Furthermore, when public policy is defined and implemented, tensions, contradictions, agreements and disagreements among various competing groups are played out, sometimes requiring the state to use repressive forces to contain these contradictions. Domination exercised by the state thus remains at the center stage.

Weber, while highlighting the role of modern state views the monopoly of state as inevitable and compulsory for continuous effective administration (Thio: 1986). Weber, through, views the notion of domination as central to his analysis, looks at state and its functions beyond the notion of exploitation and domination and that state is to be seen as a set of comprehensive institutions varying from those responsible for law and order to those linked to social policy and education (Torres and Michael: 1996). Therefore, reducing the role of the state to a proposition of domination and exploitation is to downplay other important state functions especially when one attempts to examine the context of the role of a welfare state where the need for multiple role performance of the state arises. Education, in this context, remains an inseparable entity of the overall development task undertaken by the state.

1.4 The Welfare State and Education: Constitutional Landmarks

In the immediate aftermath of India’s independence, the Constitution of India provided the framework through its Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of state policy within which provisions are made for securing the welfare of all its citizens. The right to education

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5 Redistribution was the primary aim behind the welfare philosophy of the Indian Constitution: the common provision of education, health, income, employment insurance etc to improve the lives of those who are temporarily or permanently without sufficient resources. It formed a part of a large egalitarian reform for reaching greater social justice (Myrdal Gunnar: p.64). These hopes however, are not being realised and are unlikely to be realised because the idea of a welfare state is a comprehensive set of institutional arrangements that is inescapable of generating non-egalitarian attitudes on its actors and this experience is typically encountered by India as a soft state which is constantly under attack for its failure of fulfilling its welfare policies.
which is implicit in the right to life\textsuperscript{10} guaranteed by Article 21 can thus be construed in the light of the Directive Principle in part IV of the Constitution. Article 45 of the Constitution mandates that the state shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years. In other words, every child of the country has a right to free education until he/she completes the age of 14 years. And thereafter his/her right to education is subject to the limits of economic capacity and development of the state (Saikia Committee Report). The urgency and compulsion as stated in the Constitution was established way back in 1950\textsuperscript{11} within a time limit. After the 50s, various education commissions and policies were framed in an attempt to acquire education a mass character. The Kothari Education Commission, constituted in 1964-66, is of special significance since the commission strongly recommended a common school system in which the main aim is to promote equality of educational opportunity through the provision of equitable quality education for all types of schools- private, private-aided and government. The commission set the goal of achieving Universal Elementary Education (UEE) by 1986.

Since not much progress was made under the Kothari Commission, the National Education Policy (NEP) 1986 was formulated. The NEP 1986 is the most comprehensive and relevant education policy the country has devised so far to achieve UEE by the year 2000. To review NEP, 1986, the Ramamurthi Committee was set up in 1990, leading to the formulation of the Programme of Action (POA) 1992. The POA 1992 was perceived as a charter for action of the nation as a whole requiring the cooperative effort of Central, State and local communities. During the same period, India ratified the UN Convention on Rights of the Child, by which, it inter-alia, committed itself to remove children from work that interfere with their schooling and make primary education free and compulsory. The Convention also stresses the child's right to special protection including education when they are trafficked by armed and conflict emergencies, displacement etc. In the historic judgment Unnikrishnan versus the State of Andhra Pradesh, 1993, the Supreme Court of India not only asserted the right to free

\textsuperscript{10}The educational right of people is so vital that it is derived from the right to life and hence should not be treated as a mere pious wish of the state.

\textsuperscript{11}However, it appears that the Indian state has flouted the basic premise of Article 45 on the ground that the Article merely calls upon it to 'endeavour to provide' as quoted in the text with the result that India has fallen far behind the unreal schedules of making universal elementary education a real one, leaving millions as illiterates while they are capable of becoming educated citizens.
education for all citizens up to the age of 14 years, but as a fundamental entitlement, being derived from the right to life. In this judgment, right to education is read in conjunction with Article 21 i.e. Right to life and liberty. This is the first historical Supreme Court judgment recognising educational right of people as vital as the right to life, but the judgment remained a 'mere pious wish of the state' thereby, undermining the judgment of a court of supreme order. The Saikia Committee was set up in 1997 to examine the implication of making elementary education a fundamental right. The Committee of State Education Ministers 1996 and the Education Ministers' Resolve of 1998 further recommended the making of elementary education a fundamental right.

These national developments were strengthened when India signed a number of international treaties. The Jomtein Conference 1990 was seen as a significant development since various issues of the Declaration were concerned with bringing all children under age within the ambit of formal schooling through the provision of basic learning needs - formal, non-formal and open learning systems to achieve Education for All (EFA) by 2000. The Declaration was seen significant since Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) considered the Declaration to be a reaffirmation of the Education Policy 1986, with special emphasis on the education of the weaker sections, improving educational outcomes, strengthening community involvement, improving teaching-learning material aids and so forth.

Thus soon after independence, there was large scale reform policies that were set on foot as a right step forward to achieve greater social justice by introducing parliamentary democracy. The Indian state being a conditioned state was, however, not indigenous in its social formation and had been an expression of pervasive elite domination and political power.

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12 Jules and Apple in 'The State and Educational Reform' argues that state in the third world is a derivative of colonialism and hence not an indigenous social formation. They further argue that significant dimension of coercive function of the state is to eliminate indigenous systems of knowledge while promoting rudimentary schooling directed towards the inculcation of social control and consequently, the education system is characterised by weak infrastructure differentiated by social stratification and pervasive elitism, directed to the recruitment of local service class.
continues to be under the control of the privileged groups\textsuperscript{13}. And being an interventionist developing state, it continues to control a substantial portion of resources of a poor economy and many of the society’s free floating resources are controlled by bureaucrats and politicians (Atul Kohli: 1985) while leaving a mass of population in an inescapable vicious cycle of poverty and helplessness. The elite dominated democracy in an inherited administrative colonial structure failed to bring a vibrant democracy that has further strengthened the existing social inequalities and human sufferings along the lines of region, caste, class, tribe, gender etc.

The increasing crisis of deprivation, disenchantment and various forms of human rights violation faced by the people in the hands of the state that began to experience in mid 60’s and 70’s clearly indicates deeper symptoms of crisis in human governance. When colonial government was ended, there was heightened expectations on the basis of new promises of the state but radically altered with periods of drift and inaction producing a growing hiatus between promises and performance and consequently between the government and people, resulting in massive discontent, unrest and violence (Kothari: 1976). One such incidence was the imposition of state emergencies in mid 70’s during which violations of human rights, particularly of civil liberties took place on a large scale. It was during this period that many began to challenge the actions of the state, giving rise to various grass root based movements yearning for social change. Late 70’s witnessed the growth of various voluntary agencies and civil society actors as strong forces in reaction to disillusionment with the state’s failure of addressing the persistence of silent emergencies\textsuperscript{14} such as hunger, morbidity, widespread illiteracy, poverty and loud emergencies\textsuperscript{15} including militarisation, armed conflict, displacement etc. Numerous voluntary agencies were created by activists to take up the challenges of development through concerted grassroots activism. Because of their involvement at the grassroots, these sectors emerged as most effective in strengthening and

\textsuperscript{13} In his book 'The Challenge of World Poverty', Gunnar Myrdal describes the political domination of the Indian parliamentary form of government by those privileged few including big landowners, industrialists, bankers merchants higher military and civilian officials. Indian democracy being trapped in a vicious cycle of exclusion and elitism forces millions of its population in the margin of social policy that essentially reflects elitist orientation.

\textsuperscript{14} The Right to be a Child, UNICEF, 1994

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid, 1994
building indigenous capacity, address concerns for equity and democracy, promote respect for societal diversity.

The involvement of non-state actors in various social sectors became much more pronounced and underwent massive transformation in the 1990s in response to India's new economic policy as it moved from a closed planned economy to liberalisation and private competition. This represented a break from the past policies based on state intervention to new policies of self reliance and economic independence. Though the new policy opened up new opportunities and avenues, it raised serious concerns at the prospect of reduced role for the welfare state in addressing poverty and social welfare. The emerging scenario of state withdrawal had forced the non-state sectors to face new challenges of a radically different economic policies and apathetic state policies in the face of pervasive human crisis such as mass poverty, morbidity, mass illiteracy, discrimination, exploitation and injustice of various kinds. These new developments are often repugnant to Directive Principles of State Policy and the main thrust of good governance in India as wished to be pursued by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in his soul searching speech, ‘ending of poverty and ignorance, and disease and inequality of opportunity’ in the mid night of August 14-15, 1947.

After 90's, the policies pursued by the state is not only in total contrary but also a clear violation of the basic principles of ordering the economic system and political decisions based on the mandate of the Constitution. The new developments not only pushed the political masters and the bureaucrats in big moral confusion but also facilitated them to make hay while the sun of liberalisation policy starts shining. The huge concentration of economic resources and political power in the hands of a miniscule people caused a wide chasm and disjunction between the power and the people while the new development steadily pave the way for powerful private corporate sectors (whose interest is in sharp contrast to public interest ) to increasingly occupy the space vacated by the unresponsive state. Representatives of state machinery thus became far removed from the masses. In reaction to the non responsive state, there was further mushrooming growth of various civil society sectors. Some of these sectors work closely with the state, some independently while others act as critics of state policy and practice. The range of interest represented by these popular movements of civil society sector is a great strength in responding to a diversity of needs and aspirations of people, but also capable of voicing a considerable challenge to the development of common position around a specific education policy through a collective voice.
1.5 Civil Society and State

Following from the above discourse, the concept and scope of civil society is as complex as the nature of society and state so does its interpretation by many of its advocates. Historically, the concept was a part of Western intellectual tradition that has developed between the 17th and 19th along with various forms of social formations in the Western society. In the old European tradition, civil society was coterminous with the state, that to be a member of civil society was to be a citizen of the state and thus, citizens are obligated to act without engaging in harmful acts to other citizens. This notion of civil society vis-a-vis the state points to the concept of civil society-state developed by Locke and Hobbes. For both the thinkers, the state of nature can be abolished with the emergence of civil society, which is the same as the state of grace and good government. The concept remained unchallenged till late 18th century.

The notion of civil society became quite popular in 19th century Europe. During this period many political thinkers ranging from Thomas Paine, Hegel to Gramsci contributed to the notion of civil society as a domain almost parallel to but separate from the state. For example, in the discourse of state-civil society, Paine argues it is the civil society that existed before the emergence of the state, and the sociability of civil society predisposes that individuals are capable of regulating themselves and live in solidarity based on reciprocal self interest and shared sense of mutual help. And state is deemed a necessarily evil while terming civil society an unqualified good (Keane John: 1988). Paine was insightful in pointing out despotic Constitutional monarchy of Britain, the Bourbon absolutism of France and concluded that states everywhere crushes and barbarise their subjects. Political controversies surrounding the failures of Keynesian welfare state policies played another important role in stimulating the state and civil society schema. This new development in the political and economic domains was reflected in the changing economic realities such as rise of private property, market competitions and emergence of the bourgeoisie and proletariat classes.

According to Marx, civil society emerged when relationship between classes was based on property that had already grown beyond the ancient and medieval communal society and civil society as such develops only within the middle class-the social organisation evolving directly out of production and commerce which always form the basis of state and the superstructure. In another sense, civil society develops as a corruption from instrumental
relationship between propertied classes and is a product of capitalism. Hence the poor and the unprivileged are excluded from the encircle of civil society. Marx is thus critical of civil society from the point of the poor who are not corrupt as the civil society. For Marx, civil society while displaying many features of civility and democracy is essentially class oppression and they failed to live up to its promises, that of creating individual space where freedom and self-determination could find a meaning. And that it had to be organised through deep rooted democratic transformation which has to be revolutionary in nature. Then only it is possible to civilise the civil society (Chandhok Neera: 1995).

In striking contrast to Paine and Marx, Hegel’s understanding of civil society and its emergence is a historically produced sphere of the ethical life positioned between the male dominated patriarchal household and the universal state. Civil society, for Hegel is a mosaic of private individuals, classes, groups and institutions whose transactions are regulated by civil law, and as such civil society is not directly dependent on the state. Hence creation of civil society is an outcome of a long and complex process of historical transformation. The creation of civil society is the achievement of the modern world (as quoted in John Kean’s edited book, ‘Civil Society and the State: New European Perspectives, p.50). Hegel further argues that modern civil society is incapable of resolving its own crisis and problems and hence its civility cannot remain civil unless it is politically regulated by the higher surveillance of the state. In this argument, Hegel sees state as ethically superior and is capable of regulating and controlling the institutions of civil society. Hence civil society remains subservient to the state. Interestingly Antonio Gramsci, in contrast to Hegel, views state as an apparatus, an instrument that does not represent universal interest for all but particular interest. For Gramsci, in order to command legitimacy over civil society by the state, state uses different forms of control. Civil society is the sphere where state operates to enforce intangible, invisible and subtle forms of power through mass media, educational institutions, religious organisations, voluntary sectors etc. And it is through these mediums that the mind and the psyche of individuals are controlled. Thus for Gramsci, civil society belongs to super-structural sphere. Secondly, Gramsci justifies the fact that state does not require other methods of coercive forces such as the prisons, the judicial systems, the armies except in times of crisis so long the apparatus of ideological hegemony operates. Gramsci further argues that state could manipulate public opinion through the institutions of civil society, partly because the leaders of these institutions share common values and partly because of direct state involvement in these institutions. In other words, Gramsci would argue
it is in civil society that the state would find acceptance for its policies and programmes. Gramsci's attempt to abolish the state-civil society schema was shaped by the Marxian goal of a communist society without class divisions. Gramsci, specifically referring at the western bourgeoisie system anticipated that civil society comprises a variety of institutions which function to produce or to transform the dominant bourgeoisie sense of reality and this tends to be shaped by the by the dominated class. This would ultimately lead to a future society without a state which Gramsci referred as the regulated society or sometimes synonymously used as the civil society. Thus civil society in Gramscian sense constitutes an active and positive stage of historical development. Gramscian engagement on civil society-state relationship was greatly shaped by the new political and economic developments of crisis of Italy during the First World War during which the dominant class ceased to be the ruling class.

It is in the face of such complexities that the notion of civil society and its treatment vis-a-vis the state remains fraught with difficulties across regions, social formations, time and space. Yet, the reworking of controversies surrounding state-civil society relationship has thrown new dimensions as various civil society movements have grown out of popular movements across the globe such as the black and civil rights movement, feminist movements, youth movements, peace movements in western Europe, while some of these movements having roots in the movements of the English Revolution,1642, American War for Independence1776 and The French Revolution of 1789. These movements and its core messages are spread across the globe with huge support from all territorial boundaries and social class. In 90's civil society movements across the globe have become a new mantra encompassing a wide range of social issues asserting by individuals, social groups of various kinds. Such movements have gained vast prominence especially in relation to resistance against state actions.

Thus, despite confusions and fluidities in the understanding of the concept, advocates on civil society refer it to the issues related to citizenship rights encompassing a vast level of segments of communities, which are organised for common purposes. As argued by many, the emergence of civil society is related to the relatively weak performance of the state in providing basic social securities or its overriding misuse of power, where people counterpose themselves against state power and in the process either replace them or reform it. It has therefore, inherent linkages with democracy and citizenship rights. Civil society institutions
organisations\textsuperscript{16} are thus considered to be crucial in enabling citizens to participate in the wider socio, political, economic and cultural life of their communities and nations. They can also act as important mediators between the state and the community they represent. Hence, as put forth by Prasad, Neera Chandhok and others, the important roles played by civil society include promoting good governance, strengthening democracy, citizen participation, social safety valve and community building roles. Thus in our present times, the resurgence of civil society in various forms is synonymous with popular movements in reaction to the Institutional crisis and governance of the state. There is a growing consensus that through the initiatives of civil society organisations, issues of public concern can effectively be addressed by providing platform and space for all\textsuperscript{17}. Civil society thus symbolises a condition necessary for the existence of a democratic mentality both within and outside the state that are fundamentally opposed to anti democratic and anti secular forces.

1.6 State, Civil Society and Education

While arguing that state is held responsible for providing school education to all children, all sections of society have to play a role to achieve the same goal. This forms one of the most important responses on the part of civil society sector particularly at a time when parents, households, communities, NGOs and other private bodies are increasingly called upon to share in providing educational services which were previously considered the responsibility of the state (Rekha Wazir:2000).

The right to education and its enforcement therefore, need not rest with a single institution such as the state; rather it should be a shared responsibility. This calls for a paradigm shift in the regulation and management of schools with shared responsibility on the part of civil

\textsuperscript{16} Civil society in the broader sense of the term can imply various levels of individuals and organisations that are formed by local communities, neighbourhoods, work places, NGOs, social movements, community based organisations e.g. local clubs and schools, churches and even a group of households for a common purpose. The critical and uncritical subscription of a large number of actors such as academicians, policy makers, international aid agencies, social activists, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) influenced by the historical shifts towards the idea of civil society, has made the concept more complex, ambiguous and to a large extent fluid. Worse, it has come to mean all sorts of things to its followers (R.Tandon and R.Mmohanty: 2003, p.11).

\textsuperscript{17} However, these possibilities may not take place unless state provides the space and opportunity for dialogue to take place.
society. This is an important development of building partnerships with various forms of civil society organisations such as Christian Organisations, Religious Organisations, Private Bodies, Community Based Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations etc. for bringing a number of children to schooling that would otherwise remain beyond the reach of schooling.

In conformity with the policy outlines of achieving educational right for children, the government of India initiated the latest education policy, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), a policy for universal elementary education to be achieved by 2010 with special focus to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and girl children. It is an attempt to deliver quality education to all children through the provision of community owned quality education in a mission mode. The purposed SSA is to be implemented (while in some states the programme has already begun in a war footing, some states are yet to catch up) by the government of India in partnership with the State governments with a long term perspective on cost sharing and through district level decentralized management framework involving local communities. The main goals of the policy include:

- All children should be sent to school by 2003.
- All children complete five years of primary education by 2007.
- All children complete eight years of elementary education by 2010.
- Focuses on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life.
- Bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education by 2010.
- Achieve universal retention by 2010

(Source: SSA, MHRD, New Delhi, 2003).

One of the focus areas of SSA is to establish linkages with other social sectors (including NGOs and other civil society initiatives) in thriving to achieve EFA by adopting the bottoms-up process of planning wherein the felt needs of the served communities and educational needs of neglected children are well taken care off. Micro planning including districts and block wise target with specific focus on girls, Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes and other disadvantaged groups is the main thrust of SSA policy strategy.
SSA project began during the NDA government in the year 2000. However the picture on educational participation of children remains dismal. By taking gross enrolment figure, the Selected Educational Statistics (SES) 2003-2004 reported that 98.2 and 62.5 percentages of children being enrolled in the primary and upper primary stages. Yet, what is alarming is the poor retention rate, that more than 30 per cent children of primary stage and 50 per cent of upper primary stage leave school. The figure is extremely discouraging in the case of Scheduled Tribe children whose drop out rate was as high as 50 per cent at primary stage and 70 per cent at elementary stage in 2003-2004. Even SES of 2005-2006, indicates the retention rate continues to be dismal, which stood at 52.21 per cent for boys and 47 per cent for girls at primary stage as against that of 52.21 per cent and 45.80 per cent at elementary stage.

The mission mode of SSA campaign emphasizes strong community involvement whereas a careful study on the section of community mobilization and its campaign strategy shows that government has not addressed the section with seriousness. The section dealing with community leadership training in the participation of SSA campaign is least prioritized both in terms of its intervention and norm. At the outset, it shows that the policy is contradictory and fails to realize that community mobilization with the support of state resources can make UEE real. Further, the same target was to be achieved by 2000 as one of the main goals of NEP, 1986.

As a follow up mission of the SSA, the Government of India by introducing the recent 93rd Amendment Bill, 2001 to the Constitution of India seeks to make free and compulsory education to all citizens of age 6-14 years, a fundamental right\(^{18}\). The Bill came about as a result of massive policy advocacy efforts primarily led by NGOs, joined by a broad based spectrum of civil society sectors. It is the most recent and most binding judgment as far as the right to education for children is concerned. The Bill also enjoins a fundamental duty on the

\(^{18}\) When compulsory education upto elementary stage is made fundamental right, the focus shifts to self assertion and provides mechanisms for safeguarding human right of people under age. Therefore, the right to education and its transformation into reality requires a great deal of assertion on the part of individuals, social groups/communities willing to claim over their rights. Yet, many social groups/communities who are under the weight of various disabilities (including chronic hunger, poverty, illiteracy, geographical isolation and communities living in constant violent situation where civil life is constantly in traffic) may not be allowed to exercise their right to education.
parents/guardian of such children to provide such opportunity\textsuperscript{19}. And ideally, this would make basic education a justiceable right.

**Box 1.1**

**Triggering the debate: Constitutional amendments and CSOs in India**

In 2002, the 93\textsuperscript{rd} Amendment of the constitution Bill making education a fundamental right, free and compulsory for all children aged 6-14 years was passed. One critique of the amendment galvanized a broad civil society front: the National alliance on the fundamental Right to Education (NAFRE). NAFRE decried the amendment as a retrograde step to the exclusion of the 0-6 groups in the provision of free and compulsory education that had been provided in a Supreme Court judgment of 1993 (Unnikrishnan vs. the state of Andhra Pradesh). NAFRE and FORCES (Forum For Child Care and Crèches Services) argued that although it is well established that the development of a child in the age group of 0-6 is critical, the provision for free primary education including crèche facilities in the country has been very limited. Moreover, the conception and implementation of the ICDS located in the department of Women and Child Development neglects the crucial area of education. The campaign united CSOs involved in education and brought education issues to the fore in public consciousness and policy debates. This augurs well for enhanced accountability in the future. Furthermore, the inclusion of ECCE in Article 45, albeit as a directive principle of the state (implementation is discretionary), recognized the critical links between pre-primary education, child care and development, thus opening some space for a prospective convergent.

*Excerpts from* EFA, UNESCO, p. 208, 203

The state’s effort of making education a judiciable has in turn brought many civil society sectors such as NGOs, philanthropic organisations, voluntary agencies, Christian missionaries etc. to actively partner in the programmes of education for all\textsuperscript{20} in the country.

Interestingly, the experience of strong civil society movements in the field of education in various parts of the country shows that civil society has led the way in demonstrating that a strong demand for education enjoins the obligation on the state to act upon. The famous Lok

\textsuperscript{19}The Bill in the present form has been heavily criticized by many for making parents accountable for children’s education.

\textsuperscript{20}In India, 63 percent of education sector organisations see themselves as assisting government, a similar percentage make direct education interventions, over half describe their work as innovatory and 50 percent working in geographical areas neglected by government (EFA, 2003/4 UNESCO, quoting Nawani:2002).
Jhumbish programme that began in 1980s in Rajasthan is an evident of such a movement by applying the strategies of micro and school mapping through participatory appraisal method. The uniqueness of the programme lies in its decentralized participatory approach with involvement of civil society sectors including the Village Education Committee, nominated by the community themselves. Another most important project taken by the state is the Shiksa karmi project (the barefoot teacher) that was initiated in 1990's. This is implemented to overcome the problem of teacher absenteeism. The idea is to substitute the absence of primary school teacher by a local educational worker. The project aims at universalisation and qualitative improvement of primary education in remote and socio-economically backward villages through community support and local ownership in order to meet the educational needs of the deprived sections in such areas.

The case of the famous Education Guarantee Scheme of Madhya Pradesh shows that educational developments in the State are mostly due to the state initiatives with civil society actors, playing as partnership role. The experience of Education Guarantee Scheme shows the involvement of various stakeholders such as the local communities, Panchayats and the state government in the effort to universalise Elementary Education. The model shows the unique rights based participatory approach in demanding for schools in villages where such facilities are not available. Other such major important educational projects undertaken are the Bihar Education project, Total literacy campaign of Kerala etc. The outcomes of these projects in all these regions have shown varying response in educational progress in respective states. For example, in Rajasthan state, the trend of literacy progress in the last decade is indeed fascinating. The literacy increase between 1991 and 2001 was by a difference of 22.48 percent. The increase in literacy was due to the phenomenal expansion of educational facilities in the state.

While highlighting the successful educational experience of Rajasthan, role of NGOs in enlarging the network of agencies and individuals for implementing basic education has been greatly appraised. NGOs also bring flexibility and innovation into basic education. Social mobilisation, facilitating the formation of VECs, establishing network between PRIs, assisting in supervision, training, and evaluation, assisting resource units in the planning and modification of curriculum with relevance to children's social background, providing training in local communication skill to educators and participating in review of and evaluation of activities on a continuing basis are the major areas NGO sector has been
involved. These roles are identified as crucial in meeting the educational needs of children in socially and economically backward and marginalised sections of society.

As discussed above, the role of NGOs in education sector in the state of Rajasthan is indeed significant. NGOs that strongly participate in education include Digantar, Vihaan in Rajasthan, the M.V Foundation, Andhra Pradesh, CREDA, Uttar Pradesh, Mobility India, APSA, REDS and Rastrothana Parishad in Karnataka. These NGOs serve with innovative experimentation, with different models with grassroots communities for and with whom they work, by devising best solutions for addressing short term and long term issues of inequality in educational participation.

Equally important is the role played by Christian Organisations in education sector, which is indeed significant. Kerala or regions in the North eastern states depict impressive attainments in literacy and overall educational progress. Much of this success has been attributed to the pioneering works of the missionaries working in education sector in the regions. It was also noticed that in mid 19th century in Travancore region of Kerala, 65 percent of the Christians were literates while among Hindus and Muslims, literacy rates were 53 percent and 35 percent respectively (A.Sen and J.Dreze:1998). The education activities of the missionaries however were not so much successful in Northern parts of the country or almost negligible such as the case of Rajasthan shows.

Despite the important contributions played by non-state organisations in education, the role of state in providing educational services continues to be crucial since mass education cannot be dependent on charitable or private organisations or market institutions more or so when education is made fundamental as a matter of right in as much as educational right of children and its fulfilment depends on institutions such as the state within society. Therefore its fulfilment depends on how various sections of society assert its right in education issues and the state as an important institution fulfils the same as a duty bearer. In the given argument, the next chapter attempts to examine the socio, political, economic and cultural context of the state of Manipur to explore significant linkages between these factors and educational right of children under age.
CHAPTER 2

THE STATE OF MANIPUR AND IMPHAL DISTRICT: UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIOLOGICAL LANDSCAPE