INTRODUCTION

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Of late, national and international education strategies are targeting access and completion of basic education to all children by 2015 with an interim goal of elimination of gender disparities in education by 2005\(^1\), while the country attempted to achieve Universal Elementary Education by 2007\(^2\). Recently, the Government of India, with the passing of the 93rd Amendment of the Constitution, has made elementary education fundamental right. The Constitutional promise to achieve the same goal is a landmark development while the recent healthy revival among the civil society sectors for the right to education for all children has further added muscle to the bone. Despite these landmark developments in the history of relationship between children and the state, India’s wide diversity of socio-cultural, political-economy and governance are profoundly challenging. The sociological understanding of these challenges is indeed crucial in examining the complexities, problems and possibilities of ensuring educational right of children both by state and civil society sectors. The present study attempts to delve into some of these formidable challenges in ensuring access, equity and quality education both by the state and civil society sectors.

The right to education, rooted in the universality of human rights asserts that meaningful participation in education by all children is possible only when all children access schooling system of equal opportunity of schooling. The concept is profoundly challenging since it embodies the notion of egalitarianism that everyone ought to get some education as of right, not merely by chance or charity. The state in this context has the primary responsibility to ensure its duty so that that all people as right bearers possess rights (J.N.Wasserstrom,

\(^{1}\) The World Conference on Education for All (EFA) held at Jomtein, Thailand in 1990 called upon all member countries including India to make concerted efforts for achieving EFA by 2000. Goal:2 of The World Education Forum or popularly known as the Dakar Declaration, 2000 ensures all children of primary going age group to complete primary schooling of acceptable quality by 2015. During year 2000, the Millennium Development Goals agreed to eliminate gender disparities in primary education and secondary education as critical to eliminate extreme poverty (Year 2000 Assessment, Education For All, India, 2000 and EFA Global Monitoring Report, UNESCO, Paris, 2002).

L.Hunt, M.B.Young; 2000, D.Hodgson: 1998). It also suggests that the state must provide the conditions that enable one to exercise one’s right to access of equitable quality education, further suggesting that all members of society would enjoy a reasonable standard of living conditions irrespective of gender, ethnicity, religion, caste, class, or any such like attributes, simply because of the fact that educational right of children is a positive right wherein education is perceived to be rooted in the socio-economic political reality of a people. The remarkable shift in the nature of function of the state is a profound one in the history of relationship between children and the state.

This in turn forces the state to be hugely responsive in translating every policies and commitments into legislation against which the citizens have legal recourse. It is here important to revisit issues such as right, equality, social justice vis-a-vis the state since these treaties are intertwined. In an interesting debate on the issue of social justice that is inextricably bound up with welfare state, (Rethinking Social Justice: A Conceptual Analysis; Sharon Gewitz,p.49), Young illustrates a well meaningful argument as to how opportunities can be provided as enabling, rather than distribution, as articulated by John Rawls. Young argues one’s condition is not constrained by any factor from doing things; it is the existential

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3 Social justice is closely related to the concept of equality of educational opportunity and is more usefully understood when it deals with how everyone should be treated in a society that is believed to be good. This suggests two things: the distributional and the relational dimensions of social justice. John Rawls' classical contribution to social justice takes the form of distributional approach which concerns with how goods are distributed. According to this, a good society distributes resources to its members in a fairly manner and the subject matter of justice is the way how major social institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and determine the distribution of advantages from social cooperation. Reducing social justice to merely distribution of rights and duties and the social and economic goods accruing from social cooperation is severely limiting. As an extension to Rawls' concept of social justice, Sharon Gewitz, argues social justice from relational aspects by suggesting that it is about the nature and ordering of social relations, the formal and informal rules governing how members of society treat each other both at macro and micro levels. It necessarily entails to practices and procedures governing the organisation of political, economic and social institutions including family. Young's argument is: opportunity itself is more of 'doing' rather than 'having' and in that, opportunity entails to the concept of enabling rather than possession (Michael Peters: 1998). Coming to the central focus: equality of educational opportunity is accompanied with equality of outcomes. This takes the views of both weak and strong liberal views of justice. Conceptually, this is the essence of right to education agenda where every school going children should be given the same opportunity of objective school conditions to prevent disadvantage of equal success, more precisely equal outcomes. At the national policy level, it is the Kothari Commission report (1964-66) that endorses similar kind of approach to school education for all children.
condition that enables one to perform equally with others. And it is the social structures that create enabling opportunities. Therefore, for Young, opportunity is neither a thing to be possessed nor a thing to be distributed in terms of rights and duties and the social and economic goods accruing from social co-operation. But the primary issue is the creation of equal opportunities for all. Kathleen Lynch (1995, p.1) has neatly put the argument that equality of opportunity is dependent upon the existence of equal formal rights, equality of access and equality of participation to ensure equal outcome for different strata of society to prevent disadvantage, for example, through the provisioning of ameliorative measures, provisioning of quality education. This may not necessarily force the ordinary parents to feel the need of sending their children to carefully selected private high fee charging schools as a norm practiced by affluent families.

In similar articulation, Sociologists believe that ascribed characteristics of individuals should not affect individual’s life chances of vertical mobility and only that inequalities resulting from individual’s talents and efforts can be regarded as fair and just. And as such as schooling has become more and more closely related to adult status and modern societies treat schools as an important transit route through which equality of opportunity could be achieved to prevent any kind of handicap or disadvantage due to low income of his/her family. If this is the argument of the sociologists on equality of opportunity vis-à-vis education, equality of educational opportunity would then, mean equal opportunities provided by schools for all children regardless of status and income so that all can earn income and status in just and fair way which sociologists would argue as legitimate or justified.

The argument emphasises on welfare state in which the role became much more pronounced after the Second World War. A welfare state plays an interventionist role for

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4 Rooted in Western European tradition of social democracy, the idea of welfare state became much more pronounced after 2nd world war. The concept can be traced to the developments that took place in Britain in 19th Century. It is identified with a number of state interventions in social and economic affairs to alleviate mass poverty. After 'the system of poor' was rationalised and placed under state control, many welfare programmes became a rational concern. Consequent upon these developments, it was in 1870 that the Education Act brought primary education under the state responsibility (Sushila Ramaswamy, 2003). In USA, educational reform based on compensatory programmes was considered to be the most efficient mechanism for breaking the vicious cycle of poverty among the poor. The intense debates among its advocates such as Tawny, Adam Smith, Jeremy Bentham, John
the overall well being of its members by safeguarding minimum standards of income, nutrition, health, education, housing etc. The assurance of these benefits is treated as matter of political right. In this context, school expansion has been associated with the extension of citizenship rights (Michael Peters: 1999, p.438) for which the vision of equality of educational opportunity was envisioned. Skills, training, certification and political socialisation as a contributing factor for rational allocation of resources, social mobility, social integration and social control were seen as important roles of a welfare state. Schooling is thus viewed as major player in the action of the welfare state by undertaking educational reforms in favour of the poor masses and the traditionally excluded social groups.

However, in contemporary times, the idea of welfare state has become a threatening concept for the state itself. The philosophy of welfare state in the course of its own making and history, particularly in the present times has taken a backseat since it has failed to confront the fundamental problems of silent and loud emergencies such as widespread poverty, hunger, morbidity, malnutrition, illiteracy, conflict, violence, natural disasters and calamities faced by its people. The fundamental argument is, when the state tolerates a massive uniquely high level of silent and loud emergencies experienced by children living under certain socio-political and economic conditions; it equally imposes unfair educational disadvantage and deprivations on these children. Secondly, when state is fully equipped of providing equitable quality education to all in a democratic political culture, state remains a continuous arena in which different powerful social groups seek to make their vision of education and its role in society. This amply explains the reason why education policies and practices of the state are often driven by ideology, political expediency of powerful social groups, whose vision of education is fundamentally opposed to the welfare of poor masses. This is truly reflected by the extremely weak educational infrastructure of the country, leaving out millions as illiterates while they are capable of becoming educated citizens.

Rawls, T.H Marshall- all anticipate welfare state as a system that helps the poor than any other known system (Norman P.Barry:2002).

5. The Right to be Child, UNICEF,1994
With repeated state failure in generating mass schooling for all, it leaves mass education to philanthropic organisations, voluntary associations and other forms of civil society sector. Thus the idea of civil society entered into the public sphere, suggesting that it is capable of organising itself independently of the state in response to the crisis in providing welfare services including the provisioning of school by the state. For instance in India, such organisations render valuable supplemental educational services by extending educational facilities to those deprived children. Christian organisations, Rama Krishna missions for example, started rendering excellent educational services in remote far flung areas such as isolated tribal regions and undeveloped rural areas of the country where even state agencies cannot dream of venturing into these regions for implementing any development project.

It is in reaction to state apathy and its failure in addressing the issues of basic concerns of people, that there was mushrooming growth of various civil society sectors in different parts of the country as witnessed in late 70s. Further, it could be noticed that the growth of civil society and its expansion increased by leaps and bounds which could be visibly noticed in 90s. Yet, the nature of civil society, its aims and objectives though possesses a common dream of addressing issues of welfare for citizen follow different course of activism. As for instance, one notices that some of these sectors work closely with the state, some work independently such as the Christian Organisations, NGOs and Private schools in the area of education, while some sectors of civil society act as critics of state policy and practice. The diverse range of interest represented by these popular movements of civil society sector is huge and a great strength in responding to a diversity of needs and aspirations of people. Thus civil society groups are also capable of voicing a considerable challenge to the development of common position around a specific education policy through a collective voice.

Thus resurgence of civil society sector in its various forms particularly in post independent India as the most distinguishing feature cannot be underscored. The emergence of civil society during this period has been used to delineate the upsurge of popular movements against the state. It can also be creatively conceptualised as a meaningful space where like minded individuals pursue self defined ends in an associational form in response to state's failure in provisioning of welfare services to its people. Numerous civil society sectors thus emerged, willing to take up the challenges of development through grassroots activism.
Therefore from this point of view, formation of civil society and its movement need not necessarily target to topple the inherently failed state. It is in this context that the present study examines civil society’s contributions in education and mass literacy campaign in the state.

The failure of the state in education sector has not only paved a successful road map for these civil society sectors in establishing private schools which flourished in no time but also has simultaneously empowered them. The developments of many private schools such as the case of Catholic missionary schools which later acted as ideal models with a strong impact on producing more individual private schools, charging high fees where majority children from urban and semi urban affluent families traditionally attend. These private schools became very successful in terms of what it offers such as whole package, defined in terms general feel good factor atmosphere of the school, discipline and morality, habits of cleanliness, school uniforms, emphasis on English language learning, speech pattern, teacher accountability, management, weekly test, examination system, home work assignment, performance, class consciousness and so forth. The whole package, which is found missing in government schools is quite attractive for parents since they are considered essential for the future of their children in this era of fierce competition.

Freedom exercised by parents in school choice is no doubt considered legitimate right as parents are the better judges for their children. The parental choice for a particular school for their children in a way is in tune with the principle of equal opportunity since all parents irrespective of their social background exercise effective ability of sending their children to the school of their choice. However, the increasing phenomenon of parental liberty of school choice has further empowered private schools while virtually leaving government schools completely impoverished to be experienced by only impoverished children whose parents are either survivors or intermittent income earners, most of who are daily wagers. Government school is indeed bleak and it is never a happy experience for these children and parents. Therefore, there is constant fear that the future prospect of a child studying in a government school is most likely to disappear in the void.

The danger however is, the shift of focus towards differential levels of school effectiveness among private schools has proved immensely attractive not only for affluent and middle
class parents but also policy makers such as politicians, bureaucrats whose ruthless smothering of government school resources meant for children remains unquestioned. Therefore while pushing the responsibilities and accountability on non-governmental sectors and parents, it ignores the crucial issue of making education functioning for the system to deliver and how it can be made compulsory for the system to be accountable. Hence a more meaningful debate could be one that centres on rights, obligations and duties of the state.

On the other hand, when elementary education is made fundamental right, the focus shifts to self assertion, which is why it is rightfully argued that transformation of educational right to entitlement requires a great deal of assertion. But the typical experience of poor parents is the lack of voicelessness and assertion due to their everyday engagement in survival struggle. Several households are under the weight of severe economic constraints, greatly undermining their role in school participation and their life is surrounded with a sense of helplessness and despair. The existential situation of these parents denies them to form even the PTA, the fundamental basis of developing the much needed, social capital (among them) that can collectively contest the views of the policy makers and implementers and bring the unresponsive system to task for the sake of their children.

When state accountability fails, school children of poor households are the hardest hit since such action, by striping of reasonable school facilities, denies them even the very limited options that are there for their social mobility through schooling. This also defeats the hopes and dreams of parents and eventually children themselves who regard schooling as a key to higher income and status which is particularly crucial, for social mobility may mean difference between lifelong entrapment in poverty and descent living.

Deprivation of schooling facility becomes all the more aggravated when the lives of these children are often critically constrained by insurgent violence, ethnic conflict, armed emergencies, displacement, state tyranny etc. where the writ of the state has ceased to exist. Because during such educational emergencies, schooling facility is periodically destroyed or destabilised. This has encouraged private tuition system to flourish at a fast speed which children of affluent families can only afford. The situation further deteriorates the public school system, with the strongest impact on children of poor families who cannot opt for any
alternative schooling except the failed government school. Secondly, every violent incident forces civilians to be in standstill since such incidents are treated with repressive state forces followed by curfews, destruction of property, mass strikes and bands, closure of roadways, offices and institutions, market places etc. Closure of public institutions including Keithels (market places) uproots poor household from day to day economic engagement, greatly diminishing their economic capacity to livelihood means and meagre earnings that partly support their children’s schooling. Thus the cumulative loss caused by violence and failure of government schools for poor students in the state is irreversible.

In the foregoing discussion, the educational development and literacy position where Manipur stands is particularly interesting. Beginning from a position well below the national average, 0.9 percent literacy in 1901, the present literacy rate of the State is 68.87 percent as against the all India average literacy rate, 65.37 percent (Census of India, 1991,2001). However, despite the impressive literacy achievement and overwhelming support for children’s education from parents and the community at large, issues of educational equity, quality and access remain critical. The above scenario needs to be explored in the light of state intervention and various civil society’s role in education. The present study attempts to explore how elementary education as fundamental entitlement can be exercised in the state of Manipur, where there is constant violation of multiple forms of fundamental human rights, including violence in public space that constrain one’s access to school. Paradoxically, facilitating the right to education as basic entitlement can be a step forward to ensure access, equity and quality in terms of accountability to agreed upon duties by the state and concerned civil society sectors, both of which call for inculcation of new sets of values in their contribution to achieve the same goal.

Manipur has been marginalised where educational research is concerned and perhaps no research study has been done to explore as to how the participatory rights based approach to education can be achieved. As against this background, the present research study attempts to explore the role of different institutions such as the state and non-governmental initiatives undertaken by the missionaries and private individuals by choosing Imphal district as a site of inquiry.
Site of Enquiry: Imphal District

Located at the heart of valley of Manipur, Imphal is the state capital of Manipur. The Imphal valley is bound on the north by Senapati district on the east by Ukhrul district, on the south by districts of Thoubal and Bishnupur and on the west by Senapati district. The district has 8 subdivisions with administrative set up of various levels such as the Community Development Block, the Zila Parishad, the Gram Panchayats, the pradhan etc. For administrative purpose, Imphal district is divided into east and west. Imphal east was carved out in the year 1997.

Imphal has been the hub of major economic, religious, political and educational activities of the people of Manipur since time immemorial. Imphal valley is also a mosaic of different communities such as the Meiteis, the Scheduled Tribes, the Scheduled Castes who are the original inhabitants, while the Meitei Pangals (Muslims), the Nepalis, the Jains, the Sikhs and the Bengali are immigrants. The valley is well connected to all important parts of the state through roadways.

Imphal district has also been the hub of learning and the growth of educational institutions since early times. The valley was the central place where the growth and inception of the formal education system began during the British occupation of Manipur. Among all the districts in the state, Imphal valley continues to be the most advanced district in educational growth with famous colleges and schools being located in the district. The district is also found to have the largest number of non-governmental organisations operating in the field of school education. Non governmental agencies such as Christian missionaries, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISCKON), the Madrasas, Shree Digambar Jain Society, Individual private run schools, All Manipur Students Union (AMSU), Democratic Students Association (DESAM), Teachers Association are the main agencies of civil society sectors that traditionally address the educational concerns of the region. Among these, the works of the missionaries and private individuals in school expansion have been found commendable while other bodies like DESAM, Teachers Association play roles in examination related reforms and fees hike. Apart other factors, the presence of these many non-state actors in the Imphal valley has prompted the researcher to undertake the present research study by choosing Imphal as a site of field inquiry.
Methodological Issues
For the purpose of the present research study, Don Bosco School, Chingmeirong, Bosco Mangaal, an NGO run by Don Bosco are chosen from Imphal east district while Bethel School and Phoijing No.6 Junior High School are chosen from Imphal west district. Phoijing No.6 junior High School is a government school. The sample households comprise of parents from rural Imphal west and urban Imphal west. Sample households consists of purposive sampling of parents residing in the sample wards or Leikai such as Phoijing and Keisampat wards with at least one or two children and more in the age group 6-14 studying at primary and elementary level.

The Respondents
Thus the main respondents in the study comprise of school authorities, teachers, NGO programme manager, social animators, parents and children. While interacting with these respondents, the researcher has utilised different perspectives of research methods. The researcher utilised purposive sampling methods for focus interview, direct face to face interaction method apart non-participant observation method. The data methods used has also both descriptive and exploratory one, using both qualitative and quantitative data analysis. Exploratory method is used to establish relationship between important variables and indicators as one goes on exploring about related issues in the focussed area of study. While using the above methods of inquiry, the researcher has used purposive sampling method of particular units of the universe so that each unit of selection can be potential interviewee. Parents, children, teachers, school authorities and select staff of NGO, Bosco Mangaal constitute the universe of study.

The Interview
The first encounter of collecting of information in the field from Imphal west district was among households of Phoijing ward No 17, a rural area at the margin of Imphal west district. The researcher collected information, case studies, interviewed parents of varied economic backgrounds such as rikshaw pullers, construction workers, brick makers, farmers, vegetable sellers, casual workers and salaried employees. In the process of daily and continued encounter with these informants, the researcher gained deeper knowledge and insights of previously unexplored issues especially in the area of present research.
Being a native and an insider, the researcher gained easy access to almost all parents—both males and females, most of who treated the researcher like their own daughter or sister. The identity of the researcher being a woman did not hamper interaction with male members while having deeper, face to face interaction with them. Interestingly enough, both males and females were quite receptive and open in the investigator’s approach to them unlike the very experience the researcher found in other places like Rajasthan where even a female investigator has to eventually lift the veil of another female respondent. Coming to the journey of the present study, citing an interesting case, the first encounter of interaction was with a household where the researcher had lunch with the fish bought particularly for the family. This was done to gain friendliness and ease with the first household to investigate. The researcher requested the mother to prepare the fish after ensuring of return to the house in the afternoon for lunch and interaction with her after visiting other nearby households. The son, Rishikanta, a 19 years old boy of the family is known to researcher’s niece, accompanied the researcher in identifying the most potential respondents in the area. This way the researcher utilised non probability sampling method through identification of households having children studying at primary and elementary stage. The selection of the units of the universe was done through the help of Rishikanta and household interaction since these households have a fair knowledge about their neighbourhoods. Non-probability sampling method in this way was of immense help to the researcher in reaching out to suitable households. Secondly these children must be under the care of immediate parents, not in the care of grandparents or relatives. The purpose was to understand the level of parental participation in children’s schooling, their perceptions about children’s school education, their concerns of the present education scenario in the state and so forth. This is how it all started.

After interacting with three households in the neighbourhood, the researcher returned to the first household for lunch though quite late in the afternoon. There, the husband of the land lady had returned from his construction work, teased the researcher fondly, appreciating the test of the fish, asking to join him for food, while other members looked on smilingly. The researcher along with her niece and the boy had food in the courtyard. The researcher and the niece cleaned the floor and washed the utensils with the nearby pond water. Being in the own setting of the respondents was one best method of easy and successful way of gaining their confidence that proved to be quite fruitful in getting as much information as
one wished to collect. Then the land lady spread the reed mat near the tulsi plant where the researcher sat down along with other family members such as grandmother, her other daughter-in-laws and their children around, keenly listening to our conversation. In an attempt to sustain the enthusiasm of the respondent during long hours of interaction, the researcher managed to arrange snacks and pakore from nearby tea stalls while the family of the respondent provided tea. In this way, the journey of investigation in this rural Imphal west continued for days and days. Interaction with one respondent used to take two to three hours. This was despite the fact that everyday life of these parents is resigned to the scarcity of time due to preoccupation of everyday mundane activities of making their livelihoods. Yet, the researcher, though little worried about parent’s scarcity of time, could successfully have focus, face to face and direct interaction with them.

To the researcher’s surprise and interest, most parents took keen interest in approach and interaction with them so far as the research issue is concerned. Most parents hardly bothered the purpose of such a study; rather they felt a sigh of relieve of sharing their long suppressed unshared grieve about a rotten system of education caught in the political corruption as grave as that of Manipur state. Yet, it can be recalled that well to do salaried households were in doubt of sharing any information, doubting the background of the researcher to be an agent of some insurgent group despite repeated clarification about her identity. That way, few of these parents were never willing to partake in interaction even if one tried hard. However in most cases, the researcher received ready cooperation and warmth from interviewees both males and females more or so if they were found to be related through affine and consanguine ties or if they were known to the researcher’s parents who all their colleagues would fondly share their memorable association during their teaching profession.

The researcher was fortunate to have access and contact with upper strata of the society and common population such as farmers, casual workers, weavers, traders of different kinds of rural area of Imphal west district. Yet, interviewing women parents were little difficult since most women in majority households go to market for trading, starting in early afternoon till sunset. Therefore in such a case the attempt to balance the representation of both the sexes was possible only if the researcher started off field investigation in early morning hours and end in late evening hours. Therefore most interaction with male
respondents took place during late afternoon. One gets completely exhausted by late afternoon since continued interaction on face to face basis is a tiring experience, though quite interesting. Therefore, sometimes when households readily offer a cup of tea, or some eatables, it was readily welcome without thinking even for a second.

In attempting to collect uninterrupted information from the area, the difficulty however was that of commutation facility. The area does not have public transport and commutation service facility. Therefore for a number of times the researcher’s niece being familiar with the area would lead the researcher to correct roads and directions through short routes. That way the researcher had to walk down through the agricultural fields. After crossing those fields of a one and half kilometre distance, the researcher could reach those households in shorter period. The researcher followed whatever route the niece directed since she had a good knowledge about the area. It was an interesting journey though. After such a struggle of reaching the area, the researcher hardly wanted to end deep and close interaction with households. Therefore occasionally, such close, face to face direct interaction with households lasted as late as 7.30 or 8 PM in the night. Again the difficulty is that in Manipur electricity facility is available only on alternate days for two short hours. So everyplace after sun set became pitch dark. That made the researcher to walk for a distance of almost 3 to 4 kilometres in the dark to reach niece’s home. At this timing, two or three local boys used to drop at safer place and from there the researcher and her niece used to walk alone on river bank until her house. It can be recalled that members of the researcher’s maternal uncle, Damu Singh, provided her unconditional support. His son and daughter-in-law often used to come in the dark with a big torch light to pick her from her niece’s home. The need to shorten our way to uncle’s house made us walk on the river bank in the dark. During our way, we braved barking dogs and haunting places. Most importantly in the state of Manipur, it is never safe to step out one’s home immediate after the sunset due to security reasons.

The entire journey of investigation in the area was quite challenging which the researcher was somewhat aware of. Yet, she chose the sleeping rural area of Imphal west with the purpose of knowing and understanding how parents in rural area of Imphal would actually perceive and view about educational situation in the state, their struggles to partake in the schooling of their children in difficult times that could certainly offer interesting insights as
those of parents residing in urban areas of Imphal west. Most importantly, it is a delightful experience of sharing the nuanced lived experience of these parents through close and direct interaction, besides gaining insights into their own lives through non participant observation. For example, the researcher would find some households engaging in kitchen garden, weaving, even agarbati making during the course of having focused interview while children and other families look on, keenly listening to the conversation.

Later she concentrated her field investigation on urban area of Imphal west district where the social political environment and overall terrain is in sharp contrast with those of rural area of Imphal district. The area being a much developed with good transport and commutation facility offered her an altogether different experience. Here she had the opportunity to reach target unit of universe and places of investigation through public transport system for a distance of about 16 kilometres every day.

At urban Imphal west, the site of enquiry is Keisampat Leikai (Keisampat ward). Its location is at the epicentre of Imphal capital. All routes of travail to all important places of Manipur start from this epicentre since it is an important bus station, providing transport and commutation facility. It is the most happening place for all kinds of trade and commerce of small scale industries. Apart these, important government offices are also located at near and around Keisampat ward.

However, locating households and identifying target parents were not as easy as she experienced in rural Phoijing area of Imphal west. This was due to the fact that in urban Imphal, most houses are separated from each other by high concrete walls and tall iron gates unlike those in rural houses where bamboo fences, hedges and bamboo wickets are used to ward off stray cattle. Yet, in urban Imphal, one advantage was that the researcher could easily access both men and women since most of them were found engaged in self employment venture as the area is the hub bubs of trade and commerce. That way, the researcher would, without any hesitation approach them and starts conversing with them.

Most women, the researcher interacted were middle class traders, though few of them were lower middle class, and the interaction took place at the work place only though her conversation with male respondents took place at home since most of them were salaried
employees. In dept, face to face interaction with these women respondents took longer period than any other parent respondent since the researcher had to sometimes stop interacting as the respondent had to attend to either customers or attend to their own engagement of work. For example, while interacting with a women cook working in a canteen, though she was quite interesting and enthusiastic respondent and completely merged in the issue of discussion, she had to immediately stop at noticing the burning fire being stopped or eatables over fired or overcooked. Another such case is the woman respondent who runs a fast food stall where she sells delicious bora (pakore) shengjui (a kind of mixed green vegetable salad and tea). On reaching her stall located right in front of her home building, she was alone with her old mother-in-law who was in her late 70s. In the middle of our informal talk, suddenly the researcher could see young unmarried girls and middle age women group occupying the desks kept there for customers, ordering food. If not such interruption, casual, informal talk and chat with these women traders were most fruitful and satisfying. Here in urban Imphal too, the researcher had the privilege to utilise non probability sampling method besides observation methods.

The idea of interacting and casual chat with rikshaw pullers as parents though appealing was somewhat not easy since they did not want to lose a day’s wage. However the researcher managed to interact with few of them. They looked tired and completely drained. During the interaction, the researcher, in an attempt to gain familiarity made them sit comfortably in a tea stall to share a cup of tea or buy pan for them and start interacting in cheerful way. Here the purpose was quite clear that such friendly and cheerful approach could best remove all obstacles that could be in the way of getting into their perspective and collect maximum information through intense discussion.

The interview method the researcher used in this way of investigation was no doubt a journey of introspection. It is true that for the purpose of the present study, there were well thought prepared questionnaire schedules used for each of these respondents. The schedules no doubt guided the course of investigation, helped in initiating the interaction process and kept the researcher focussed. Once the interaction begins in this process, consequently, interesting and intensive conversation would naturally follow on the issue of research. Therefore, these schedules served as guidelines only.
However interaction with the respondents could not stretch beyond late evening hours since the researcher had to travail back for another 16 kilometres by public transport in which the facility is not available after late evening. Moreover, as the area is an important location in Imphal capital, very often, political chaos and turmoil was encountered during the course of the researcher’s field investigation. Occasional bands, strikes, sit in protest by various civil society sectors relating to various social issues including school education were occasionally experienced. Sometimes the researcher would be caught in the middle of the road by huge rallies and protest march. When such protest was found to be relevant for educational crisis in the state, it prompted the researcher to plunge among the protestors for detail enquiry since it is related to the area of the present research study. No doubt such disruptions in many ways hampered her engagement in routine schedule of interaction with target population and field observation. It also curtailed free movement within Imphal town, diverting ways and routes, sometimes forcing the researcher to cancel scheduled interaction with target population or making her take longer routes to reach the actual field site. However, the political violence and chaotic situation helped the researcher far deeply in understanding the perennial political crisis of the state which in turn enriched her understanding of the pervasive sociological dimensions in the operation of schools, most significantly, educational right of children in the state. In this way the researcher was bound to brave all possible dangers of uncertain political violence in Imphal during the journey of field investigation. No doubt, the rich experience the researcher gained during such emergency times in fact enhanced her field enquiry. Despite all odds and hurdles, the experience has indeed proved to be enriching for the present research study.

In this way, the researcher completed gathering data and information from 40 households of Imphal district both urban and rural area. Most parents, in fact all parents- the poor and the rich are deeply conscious about the crisis of the present schooling system which the researcher came to understand in daily engagement with them. Their vision of educating a child and the meaning it could hold for the society is a profound one if one deeply reflects. Therefore, the deepening crisis in today’s education system has thrown them in a huge dilemma. Naturally, it was bound for these parents to vent out their deep anger and feelings, agony, restlessness, anxiety and mounting frustrations caused by entrenched corrupt state, responsible for the deepening crisis of education which has gone beyond reparation.
Other respondents the researcher interacted used in this study are school teachers, educationists, Catholic missionary Fathers, NGO workers, programme managers, social activists and students. Government school teachers at Phoijing No.6 School were the first among teachers to interact with. They were quite welcoming, encouraging and cooperative. Unlike interacting with households, in case of interaction with these teachers, one could access them only during office hours i.e. from 9.30 AM to 2.30 PM. It was during these hours one could have informal chat, talk, observe and study the school setting and environment. Though the researcher had questionnaire schedules as the framework not to divert from focusing on the issue of research, the interaction with these teachers went far beyond any structured schedule since the nature of engagement and informal talk could in no way be guided by any structured schedule. Most of our talks and face to face interaction was more of deeper conversation, informal chat, serious engagement on school education in which the process was largely substantiated and enriched by observing the concrete existing situation of the school and its environment. Their ready sense of understanding of the purpose of the research made it quite easy for the researcher to access school premise and even join classroom interaction with students and be a part of them.

The teachers at Phoijing No.6 junior High school were knowledgeable, intelligent, dedicated and sensible. Most appeared to be somewhat happy to realise that the school they are teaching is one of the rarest surviving functional government schools in the region at a time when other government schools are almost death. Throughout the researcher’s interaction with them, they were quite encouraging and cooperative. They, too like parents interviewed were quite articulate and expressed freely their deep grievance against state Ministers and officers who are responsible for the sorry state of their school condition while some openly condemned the insurgents who in connivance with the bureaucrats smother school resources secretly. The teachers willingly permitted the researcher to interact with students and sit among the students in classroom teaching. The researcher at this moment had the opportunity to engage in participant observation as she sat down among students in the last row of the classroom that would help her in observing the classroom situation and study it more deeply and comfortably. There, to be in the classroom, it was necessary for one to put up good spirit and remain self motivated if one was willing to examine classroom interaction in a discouraging environment of this kind. The dusty and dingy room, with waste papers littering around, broken walls and windows
were constantly disturbing. To take a good breath and concentrate in that classroom situation, the researcher had to constantly cover her nose with handkerchief without letting the teacher and children notice. Children initially looked at the researcher with suspicion, wondering at noticing someone quite new among them. Later, when the researchers joined them for days, children slowly forgot the idea that the researcher was even sitting next to them.

The next step was to interact with students of class VIII. On the first visit, children studying in class eight were a bit hesitant to come forward and interact. On the second day visit, the researcher shared eatables with twenty children to be interacted with. It was rather a difficult task since they were not readily and willingly speaking out. This is despite the fact the researcher after gaining familiarity and communicating with them in one's own mother tongue. In fact it was the effort of the cook for mid day meal that helped the researcher in breaking ice with children. Steadily meaningful interaction could be conducted specially after visiting them often. Finally with the assistance of the lady cook for mid day meal, the researcher successfully could communicate with these children not just about the issues relating to their schooling in the sample school, but also about their innermost personal problems faced by them at home and in the larger community. It is heart rendering to experience that some of these children face stunted growth and are prone to anaemic due to want of appropriate food at home.

On the contrary, children in Bethel and Don Bosco Schools were not only articulate, interactive but also inquisitive about the researcher's purpose of visiting them and converse on the particular issue such as education as a matter of right for children. In fact, few children of Don Bosco School enquired about how and in what ways the research study would benefit them in the future. Children in Don Bosco School were quite sharp, capable of discussing on wide range of issues including political violence and human rights issues in Afghanistan, Palestine and consequently drawing their observation in their own home state. Children in both the schools listened to the researcher's conversation very keenly and were readily participating.

Though it was not very easy to enter Bethel school, once the researcher was permitted to be inside the premise of the school, in-depth study could be undertaken. However, not much
time was allotted to interact with the students by the secretary of Bethel school considering that it would take away time from academic engagement of children. Hence the researcher had to comply with the secretary’s permission to interact with children only for one hour. Among the staff teachers, the principal, the secretary and the female teachers were quite welcoming and cooperative. The teachers being in the private school were not that open to speak freely on certain issues such as their unhappy and negative experience in the school, reasons for not forming PTA in the school, school fee structure, salary etc.

The administration staff of Bethel school were quite supportive, extended all possible help by opening thick registers and records of past years on the status of children’s enrolment drop out and boys and girls participation in school although the researcher had to fix the appointment as per their choice of timing and convenience. However, despite every day visit to the school, it was difficult to make an appointment with the secretary who was found actively engaged in supervising administration and academic works and construction work. Even meeting him and chatting for few minutes were not easy. However, it was compelling for the researcher to engage the secretary in sharing the journey and the possible factors of establishing an enterprising school as Bethel that apparently seem to function unhindered from unwanted elements such as extortion business of the insurgents who at any time can target any enterprising individual whose life is at the mercy of their bullet if the individual fails to offer the amount of money they demand. Secretary of Bethel school, Tomba Sir was quite forthcoming in the researcher’s approach to him and showed his enthusiasm in sharing his enriching journey of establishing Bethel school. The researcher made appointment with Tomba Sir for three times. He finally agreed to interact with her at great length. In an interaction of this kind, the researcher did not follow any strict yardstick as far as the discussion and exploration about the school was in point. His voluntarism, entrepreneurship and the urge to serve his talented village children but illiterate due to lack of schooling facility is quite a commendable service. His rough journey of establishing the school is quite an inspiration for anyone who learns about its journey.

As per his convenience, the interaction took place on Sunday that lasted for several hours in the afternoon. The interview revolved around mostly on the journey of establishing Bethel school as a response to the failure of the government in providing a functional school in his own village where many talented children are deprived of schooling
facility. With immense self motivation and constant encouragement from friends, kin groups and other likeminded people, he started the school journey without a roof. Today, the school, despite its rough and humble journey has become one of the most successful and sought after schools in the locality, providing schooling facility to hundreds of children from far and near localities. His entire experience in the journey of establishing Bethel school informs one that in every community there are individuals who are quite voluntary in nature. And that there are immense possibilities to make impossible during societal crisis if one has the will to do so.

From the intense and close interaction, one comes to understand that in his journey of operationalising his vision of running Bethel school, he had braved all sorts of threats to his life from local armed insurgents. Added to this is the frustration of non-cooperation from the state government by helping the school in terms of grant offer despite its success. As against his conscience, he also signed some of the ambiguous government papers related to the release of SSA fund though his school did not receive single money from the state government.

After examining of Bethel school was completed, the researcher shifted her focus to Don Bosco School located at Imphal east. Don Bosco is situated at a distance of 2 kilometres away north of Keisampat Leikai (Ward or village). Visiting Don Bosco School was a rather difficult experience since there is direct bus service link except rickshaw pullers and public tempo. These were not readily available since the station of these tempos is located right in front of Kangla, some 100 meters away distance from Keisampat, where there is the main bus station. Though the distance is few meters, the area is quite a crowded one with traffic jams and heavily armed police commandos and army personals patrolling the area. Uncertain events at any time can envelop the area and traffic anybody. By being insightful to such uncertainties, the researcher was determined to reach Don Bosco School in early morning hours every day before the area between Keisampat and Kangla became crowded.

On the first day of the researcher’s visit to Don Bosco School, the researcher before embarking into the school and the residential complex, looked around and observed the surroundings of the area. She noticed a church of Mary virgin, rich in its architect and right beside that church, there she observed children playing valley ball. The intension and the
purpose of the researcher’s visit on the first day was not related to field study directly, rather to observe and study the environment, its setting and the people, particularly the Catholic organization of church and the engagement of Catholic Fathers in different preoccupations.

As the researcher was standing near the church of Virgin Mary, a Catholic Father approached and inquired about her purpose of visit. It was indeed a sheer opportunity since the Father took the researcher straight to Father M.C. George who was the director of Don Bosco School. Father George was extremely busy, engaging in routine paper work, but he encouraged the researcher and shared his experience enthusiastically though the talk was short. It was mandatory to have casual talk and introduction of the researcher to the Director before any research study about Don Bosco School is taken up. Father George readily accepted and extended all possible cooperation and made arrangement of the researcher’s meeting with the Head master of Don Bosco School. Through intensive interaction with Father George, the researcher also learnt about Bosco Mangaal and its education services in the state.

Though it was quite difficult to get appointment with the School Head teacher, Mr. Indu Bushan (since he was busily engaged almost all the time either in academic related work or attending guests or parents), once the researcher got introduced then, it was not that difficult to easily access the school premise for the remaining days and started in dept research. More than any other teacher in the above schools mentioned, making appointment with teachers of Don Bosco was not as easy as it looks. Even if the researcher planned to interact with even two to three teachers a day, it could not be possible at all. Therefore, each day interaction could be only with one teacher since in-dept conversation with them takes several hours. Experience with teachers of Don Bosco school were indeed enlightening though most of them did not have sufficient time enough to converse with the researcher due to their hectic schedule or else interaction with each of these teachers could have lasted for several hours since they were quite experienced and interesting to understand their nuanced interesting methods of teaching methods. Though focussing on the issue of research study was prioritised, interaction with these teachers went beyond the confined issue of investigation. Even the gestures of their talks, behaviour and keen interest in the conversation were quite fascinating enough to get bored or exhausted on the part of the
researcher. Sometimes, in the middle of face to face interaction, the focus shifts from deep down serious issues to light, cheerful jokes. Yet, keeping the issue focussed was kept prioritised by the researcher.

Therefore, in an investigative study of this kind, a researcher cannot simply investigate by the structured schedules and question-answer method; rather she enters into a dialogue that will facilitate her to explore maximally through qualitative interaction with the respondents. The researcher went beyond such meaningful, close, direct interaction. She also focussed on the environment, setting, the events and the general atmosphere of the respondents. During such informal, free chat and casual conversation, a researcher, for all sense has to incorporate both objective and subjective criterion. Incorporating subjective issues are important since the research issue deals with human and social issues which sometimes can be quite delicate. Yet, it is extremely important to firmly remain ethically neutral so that the outcome of such research is not coloured by the researcher’s attitude.

During the course of field work, it is not that everything is in place and everybody is a potential respondent, in that sense, not that all teachers in Don Bosco were potential respondents despite being accomplished teachers. For example, a lady teacher who was the assistant Head teacher kept the researcher following her for days just for an interaction. Finally the teacher refused by directing the researcher to other teachers. Here, what one is trying to convey is that the potential to collect as much information as possible also depends much on the effortless willingness, cooperative, genuineness, flexibility and ready to share of the respondents. Therefore, at the spot a researcher, while facing uncomfortable situation, instead of being upset, should be able to use her skills and move on with undying faith in herself for the next course of investigation. Teachers who were already in interaction with the researcher were of great help in selecting potential respondents. Here again, the researcher used purposive sampling method by selecting potential teachers who could provide the best insights on the issue of the researcher’s interest of investigation. This way the researcher completed her focus interaction with the respondents from Don Bosco School. The experience was one of the most interesting and fascinating one in one’s journey of gathering information at the empirical level.
The duration spent with each of the interviewee teachers were of quality kind. First of all, these teachers, as she experienced, despite their being under the strict Catholic Fathers adopted the most humanistic approach in their everyday dialogue with their students. Besides being knowledgeable and possessing the art of teaching skills in their respective disciplines, they were skilfully trained in dealing with students of different temperaments, psychological attributes and calibres of different kinds. Even the teaching methods they use go far beyond conventional ones that are usually confined to arithmetic, reading and writing but innovative and pragmatic ones. After all, these teachers consider themselves to be serious professionals in teaching and dedicated to their call of vocation. And they seemed to be quite pleased to carry such reflections on themselves that the future generations look upto them as role models.

However it was not an easy exercise since getting each of these interviewee teachers made the researcher wait for several hours as per their convenient time. Even after waiting for several hours, interaction may not simply take place due to busy schedule of the teacher. This was particularly true in case of the Head teacher who looked after myriad task even at the cost of his personal busy schedule; say looking after his ailing mother- in- law as the Head teacher was sharing with the researcher.

The approach to study Bosco Mangaal was little different. First, it was Father M.C George who prompted the researcher to visit Bosco Mangaal. On the first day itself, the researcher, without preparing any schedule approached the programme manager. The structure and functions of Bosco Mangaal, being in its early stage of establishment is not complex to study. The programme manager was cooperative and interactive. It was a delightful experience to come to know about Bosco Mangaal since not a single NGO in the state is working solely in the area of education for children. In addition, the focus of Bosco Mangaal is completely on educating children of destitute families of all communities. The researcher’s main attempt to study about Bosco Mangaal was to understand the modus operandi of Bosco Mangaal including its far reaching successful journey. As per the convenience of the programme manager, the researcher used to visit the programme manager for detail, long and satisfactory interaction. The programme manager without losing temper, with tremendous patience interacted and responded to the researcher’s query. One interaction will further lead the researcher to carry on the conversation for further
interaction. This way the researcher visited Bosco Mangaal for days together. During these visits, she became quite familiar and comfortable with the staff, social animators and administrators. Occasionally the researcher used to interact with staff members to extract information even by sharing food with them. The researcher after every visit consistently documented what was discussed during close and face to face interaction with the programme manager. This method of systematic documentation prepared the researcher to identify irregularities and doubts in her next visit.

After having clarified about their mission and activism, the researcher visited literacy centres to interact with the teachers and the students. The social animators from Bosco Mangaal centre accompanied the researcher to literacy centres. In the absence of public transport system in these villages, the researcher joined the animator while visiting literacy centres by means of motorbike. The narrow roadways on river banks leading to literacy centres could be commuted through this means only. On reaching the literacy centres, the animator introduced the researcher to the teachers and the children. This was a rare opportunity for the researcher of visiting to the empirical sites of inquiry. Visiting the literacy centres is not only an enriching, satisfying experience but also privileged for the researcher since she could be a part of those children on whom the present study has been undertaken. Finally, through the visit, the researcher got exposed to alternate forms of teaching - learning methods by utilising modest and limited facility, yet, a form of joyous learning methods children enjoy the most.

Besides selecting the right sampling unit of interaction and observation, observing the universe of research, interacting with the target population in close, direct, face to face interaction on sustained and continued basis on the focussed issue with an objective approach demands rigoroussness, discipline, impersonality, determinism, courage, patience, empathy, flexibility, enthusiasm, alertness, adventurous, passion, insightfulness and above all, unshaken faith in the researcher. The researcher has exhibited a host of these attributes while undertaking the present empirical research study. By possessing these traits, it is possible for a researcher to effortlessly win the hearts of the respondents, arouse immense contribution, an ocean of knowledge and information from them as crucial informants. In this way, the research was completed by interacting with 40 households, 30 teachers, 10 teachers from each school such as Don Bosco school, Bethel school and Phoijing No. 6
school, 60 students, 20 students from each schools, Oja Tomba, Secretary of Bethel School, Father M.C George, director, Bosco Mangaal, one programme manager and two animators of Bosco Mangaal. So the data set used in the present study has the strength of 135 interviewees who form the universe of focus interaction in the present study. The data and information so collected was minutely recorded in a diary notebook without much effort before the interviewee themselves. After every visit, the researcher examines the information gathered and the questionnaire schedules for further verification and clarification, if needed. It is also important to note that in a research study of this kind which is based on observation, close and focus interaction, informal chat on face to face long basis, there are no demarcated yardsticks to be followed by the researcher.

After careful examination of the data and the detail information recorded, it was found that data interpretation of the households and students could be meaningfully interpreted by using the technique of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) since the number of respondents was not of small size. This way the researcher processed the data of the universe of households and students. Coding and classification of each of the schedules was done in a minute and systematic way so that data entry through the process of SPSS could be completed and processed without error. Data entry by feeding accurate information was carried out minutely so that the findings of the study do not distort the information provided by the universe of study and hence the outcome of the research studies. It is on the basis of the findings of the above empirical study, chapterisations of the research study are made.

To begin with, Chapter1 brings out a body of literature on the debates of how it is important to situate education issues within the larger prevalent socio-economic political operation. This further leads to examining education phenomenon from different perspectives of its understanding within the structural–functional paradigm. The theoretical paradigm enhances our understanding of the education issues such as social role of education, whether education is a channel of social change by promoting social mobility and integration or whether education remains solely in the hands of dominant strata of society. The chapter seeks to explore these debates and how state wields considerable power in funding, regulation and control over curriculum and pedagogy of school education which are heavily in favour of the dominant culture that essentially excludes the wider socio-cultural experience and historical legacies of the disadvantaged communities. Yet, the culture of
politics of exclusion played out by the state need not militate against educational rights agenda for all children when there is active involvement of strong civil society movements at the grassroots. In the light of the argument, the chapter seeks to explore the dynamics of interface between state and civil society in education endeavour, both of which calls for the inculcation of new set of values to make educational right of children an achievable goal.

In the context that the rights agenda to education is to be understood in the socio-political and economic reality of a people, Chapter 2 brings out the socio-political, economic and educational setting of the people of Manipur and Imphal district as the empirical site for the present study. The chapter depicts the favourable socio-cultural dynamics of the state in terms of the nature of social organisation and its articulation that is reflected in inter-personal, intra-ethnic relationships which are not so marked by rigid hierarchy based on caste, tribe, non-tribe, gender, class relations etc. Similar ethnic background, sense of village community and belongingness to each other has positively contributed in making schooling for children as a social norm. Yet, social opportunity created by the favourable social fabric is destroyed by the absence of accountable governance where various institutions have been proved to be failure. The political turmoil, sporadic violence coupled with economic backwardness of the state has virtually taken a great toll on the lives of its people, the youths in particular and has seized various sections of civil society sector from its engagement in constructive dialogue of generating a public discourse on making education a fundamental right for children. What emerges from the above argument is that understanding of education phenomena will have to be an integrated one exploring its linkages between a number of factors such as the larger socio-economic, political and cultural dynamics in which school education, its policies and agenda are placed and mediated.

Educational right for children has to be understood vis-a-vis family, community and the society as a whole. Household occupies a critical locus for decision making as regards the sending of children to school. In a small, close society such as Manipur one household’s decision is often influenced by the households in one’s neighbourhoods. This makes parents believe that schooling of children is elemental and a part of every child’s upbringing. Every parent has high aspirations of enriching their children’s life through education which must begin right from early age. This also suggests that aspiration for children’s schooling in the state has deep social roots. Reflecting on the parental concerns for education of children,
Chapter 3 examines the deep rooted educational aspirations of children by parents against all odds such as economic constrains, political violence, state apathy, factors influencing school choice of parents, parents’ response, anxiety and frustrations over the prevalent deepening education crisis in the state. This is despite their commitments to educating their children; and clear vision of what a humanistic, emancipatory education could mean for their children and the future of society as a whole; and how such an education agenda could remain a mirage in the absence of societal reforms, without which education as a matter of right for children remains an illusion.

Signalling the importance of how educational policies and practices are organised in most situations by the state in terms of provisioning of schools, funding and regulation in pedagogy and curriculum choice, Chapter 4 brings out how powerfully and forcefully the state in the nature of its policy implementation failure in providing equitable quality schooling can systematically uproot the disadvantaged children from their access to formal schooling. It is in this context that the present chapter examines the state apathy by examining school resources of both physical and human dimensions. The chapter brings out state apathy by examining a host of factors that impinge on poor teaching-learning process affecting access, equity and quality schooling of children in government school. Yet, the chapter also highlights how teachers as one of the most powerful school resources can play positive roles in sustaining and making a failed school function in extremely challenging school environment such as the case of the present school illustrates. It is in this context that the present chapter examines how crucial it is to maintain a constant dialogical relationship between the two resources of physical dimensions and human as well in ensuring education of equitable quality to children.

In the face of widespread spiral downfall of government schools in the state and various departmental failures of delivery of mass schooling of equitable quality education for all children, Chapter 5 examines civil society sectors’ intervention in the literacy and educational campaign in the state. These civil society sectors such as Christian Organisations, private schools and NGOs have emerged as not only critical institutions but also as saviours for those parents whose children have no means of any alternative form schooling in the state. In this, the chapter examines a host of factors that are contributory to the successful journey of these schools, each having different stories to share and enriching one. The growing failure of government schools and its inability to provide schooling facility in villages has finally
culminated in the establishment of schools and undertake education campaign and literacy mission by these civil society sectors far and wide in the state. But the point is that, despite the committed mission of the civil society involvement in education, there are impeding constraints, possibilities and limitations of civil society institutions in educational participation and hence their limiting role in ensuring educational right for children.

Reflecting upon the above findings, the concluding Chapter brings out crucial observations and commentaries, leading one to further queries that have been largely marginalised in popular education discourse, state policy and prerogatives so far as education of the disadvantaged children is concerned. Further, while it is observed that the involvement of civil society in ensuring educational right for children cannot be guaranteed in the light of various constraints, state remains crucial in providing and fulfilling critical issues of access, equity and quality education to all. Going beyond this, the emerging issues suggestions and problems raised, equip us to understand that rights agenda to education remains a formidable challenge in the absence of an educational reform of emancipatory and liberative education that every toiling parents dream for their children. Yet, realising the dream of such an education reform may not take place without undertaking the herculean task of societal reforms.