Chapter 6
Corporatization of the State in the Neoliberal Era

In recent times, the idea of neoliberalism occupies a special space in both academic and activist circles with its advocates and detractors. This chapter examines the idea of neoliberalism and the changing nature of the state in the context of neoliberalism. This chapter also discusses the concept of neoliberal governmentality developed by various thinkers. Thus, with the help of local practices, it shows how the state has gradually withdrawn itself from various critical sectors of social welfare like health and education.

Neoliberalism is one of the main ideas that this study is engaged with. Social scientists have used it frequently after the 1980s. It is very difficult to define the term; however, at the same time, it is imperative to conceptualize the term. This chapter is divided into four sections. The first part discusses the theoretical understanding of neoliberalism. The second part explores the relation between neoliberalism and governmentality. The third section examines the unfolding of neoliberal governmentality in India. The final section deals with the practice and manifestation of neoliberal policies in the context of the field study.

A. Neoliberal Governmentality: Blurred distinction between state and market

Scholars like Harland Prechel, Wendy Brown, Raymond Plant and David Harvey have discussed the idea of neoliberalism in a comprehensive way. If one looks at the idea, it can be traced to Adam Smith. The idea of neoliberalism is considered to have first sprouted in Adam Smith’s Wealth of Nations (2003), where it was argued that if there were no restrictions on economic transactions, i.e. laissez-faire model, the wealth of nations would increase. Classical economists like Smith considered markets efficient means for producing and distributing goods. In contrast, neoliberals consider markets morally good in themselves. Liberalism recognises individuals’ freedom, whereas neoliberalism prefers markets and individuals who choose freely (Prechel 2007). Neoliberalism is not simply a set of economic policies; it is not only about facilitating free trade; maximizing corporate
profits, and welfare mechanisms. Neoliberalism rather carries a social analysis that when deployed as a form of governmentality percolates down from the soul of citizen subject to education policy to practices of empire. Neoliberalism does not simply assume that all aspects of social, cultural and political life can be reduced to the calculus of utility, satisfaction and benefit as against micro economic grid of scarcity, supply and demand and value neutrality. Rather it envisions policies and rewards to naturalize the calculus. Neoliberalism produces rational actors and imposes a market rationale in decision making for all spheres (Brown 2005).

Neoliberal policies, which are guided by limiting government intervention and imposing market regulation on everything that can be commodified, include several interrelated tenet. Deregulation frees businesses from costly rules, privatization sells off public assets to more efficient private entrepreneurs, tax cuts on capital free up money for investment and capital formation, and social programs are dismantled to cut government spending and make individuals more personally responsible. Neoliberal ideology justify fewer government programs that advance the public good in order to facilitate growth in the economic sphere.

This new federalist deregulatory social structure of accumulation which provides a framework to ensure economic stability and growth, created a complex disguise for increased corporate power and restoration of the power of economic elites. Neoliberalism is best understood as an ideology that affects the political process, not as a theory that explains empirical events. Neoliberal ideology is a worldview that legitimates policy initiatives in the political sphere to support the capital accumulation agenda of the dominant power bloc (Prechel 2007). Bevir writes, “(T)he neoliberal concept of governance as a minimal state conveys a preference for less government. According to many social scientists, the neoliberal reforms fragmented service delivery and weakened central control without establishing proper markets. In their view, the reforms have led to a proliferation of policy networks in both the formulation of public policy and the delivery of public services” (Bevir 2010, 31).

Raymond Plant (2010) understands neoliberalism as a political, legal and economic doctrine. Plant gives detailed analysis of the neoliberal understanding of freedom, justice
and bureaucracy. In neoliberal thought everything (freedom, justice) has to be understood in relation to the rule of law but neoliberalism makes its ideals the rule of law and everything has to be understood in that term. Therefore, neoliberals view social democracy and socialism as outside rule of law. According to neoliberals, there is no such thing as substantive common good which should be pursued by the state. It sees the political pursuit like social justice or a greater sense of solidarity and community outside the rule of law. Therefore, freedom has to be understood as absence of coercion and coercion has to be understood in relation to rule of law. Thus, a neoliberal state is largely a nomocratic state. Nomocracy can be generally understood as a rule devoted to the attainments of private ends with no interest in common ends.

According to Plant, neoliberals understand that the welfare state set up in the interests of social justice will in fact spawn large scale bureaucracies which will embody undesirable features. The first is that welfare bureaucrats as rational utility maximizers have an incentive to grow the size of their bureau and one way of doing this is to expand the scope of the particular aspect of welfare that they are charged with delivering. If this view is allied to the point about the porous nature of welfare needs, such as security, health, and education and the equally porous nature of the goods which satisfy those needs, then it can be seen that bureaucrats have a strong incentive to ‘bid up’ the area of welfare need with which they are concerned. So both types of welfare states are likely to expand since bureaucratic delivery is central to both. If both sorts of welfare state can expand under these pressures without any clear stopping point, then it is clear that there will be endemic distributive questions about the sharing of scarce resources to meet expanding needs. If distributive politics stand outside the rule of law, as neo-liberals maintain, then both types of welfare state – the residual and the social democratic one will equally fall outside the rule of law. The argument here is that the welfare state means entrenching discretionary bureaucratic power at the heart of government just because it is not possible to write rules of law that secure to individuals in a way that is compatible with the abstract and universal nature of law a bundle of goods to meet welfare needs. Any view of the positive duties of government against the background of scarce resources is going to have a large place for discretionary power, which is contrary to the rule of law.
In neoliberal view, the objectivity of basic needs is deceptive because the needs are not objective and cannot be privatized. The neoliberals argue that health, education or any other service that falls within the realms of welfare has no objective line as in where it has to end, so the neoliberals cannot set the limit and privatize it. Neoliberalism advocates that a planned society means imposition of a particular service of certain values in society and this has severe implication for personal liberty. In similar line a planned economy would be coercive because it prevents individuals from doing what they would otherwise do to carry on with their plan. In a similar sense neoliberals have a negative attitude towards the interest groups. And all the argument against planned economy is an argument in favour of free market. Neo-liberals have deployed many arguments against historically important shift in the understanding of the nature of freedom.

Thus the neoliberal argument of freedom, justice, bureaucracy all talk in negative terms about planned economy which has welfare motive because a planned economy is in principle against only private production and capital accumulation. Therefore the chief argument of neoliberals is institutionalization of private capital accumulation, production and consumption.

Harvey, echoing this, argues that the neoliberal state favours strong individual property and free functioning of the market. Private enterprise and entrepreneurial initiatives are seen as keys to wealth creation and it is only through free market and free trade that there could be elimination of poverty. But while personal and individual freedom in market place is guaranteed, each individual is held responsible and accountable for his or her own actions and wellbeing. And this principle extends to realms of welfare like educations welfare (Harvey 2005). Neoliberalism is therefore basically a private capital accumulation mechanism and not an agenda of economic prosperity for public interest. Neoliberalism, thus, dismantles welfare states and privatizes public services. It makes wreckage of efforts at democratic sovereignty or economic self-direction in the south and intensifies economic disparities everywhere. Thus, while neoliberal political rationality is based on a certain conception of market, its organisation of governance and the social is not merely the result

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1 For a more detailed discussion on this issue, please refer to Plant 2010.
of leakage from the economic to other spheres. Rather the explicit imposition of a particular form of market rationality on these spheres.

In contemporary writings on anti-capitalism, anti-globalisation or anti-imperialism, the word neoliberalism appears frequently. It is taken as if it is understood equally by all without explaining the word or without defining it. But this word creates much ambiguity if not analysed in proper context. The proponent of this idea hardly calls them neoliberalists, as it is taken as a pejorative term. Mostly this word is used in the sense of an economic ideology. However, this word has generated a lot of controversy debates. Those who oppose capitalism have been most critical of this idea. Pierre Bourdieu, for example, argues strongly against neoliberalism. In the book *The Act of Resistance: The New Myth of Our Times*, he demonstrates how the idea and action of neoliberalism takes the space of the state, and how it can damage the marginalized sections of the population if it is not countered through international collaboration and social movement. He is even critical of the intellectuals’ position on neoliberalism. As he writes, “one would need to analyse the work of the ‘new intellectuals’, which has created a climate favourable to the withdrawal of the state and, more broadly, to submission to the values of the economy. I am thinking of what has been called ‘return of individualism’, a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy which tends to destroy the philosophical foundations of the welfare state and in particular the notion of collective responsibility which has been a fundamental achievement of social (and sociological) thought” (Bourdieu 1998, 7). Bourdieu points out that the discourse of neoliberalism is very strong unlike other discourses. It is strong and hard to fight because other powers of a world of power relations help it. He calls neoliberalism “a programme of methodical destruction of collectives” (Ibid, 95). He goes on to say that “the neoliberal programme tends overall to favour the separation between the economy and social realities and so to construct, in reality, an economic system corresponding to the theoretical description, in other words a kind of logical machine, which presents itself as a chain of constraints impelling the economic agents” (Ibid, 96). Neoliberal ideology creates circumstances conducive to the state’s withdrawal from its duty towards the citizen. Instead of performing its duty, the state surrenders to market forces and gives more value to the economy, which is not concerned about societal conditions. Then the idea of neoliberalism
is embedded in the soul of the state. He affirms “neoliberal utopia [is] embodied in the reality” (Ibid, 100).

Harman points to the ambiguity in the term ‘neoliberal’; he asserts that the question about neoliberalism is not easy to answer; and defines it as an ideology that is a new form of liberalism. In its continental European sense, it means “free market economics”. State intervention is seen as distorting the economy and has to be restricted to defending private property, national defence and, in the monetarist version of neoliberalism, overseeing the money supply. Harman argues that contracting out, privatisation and encouraging private pensions are mechanisms to depoliticize the process of social provision, so making it easier to refuse it to those deemed not to deserve it on the one hand, and to clamp down on the workers in the welfare sector on the other (Harman 2007).

Harvey (2005) says that the crisis of capital accumulation of the 1970s affected everyone through rising unemployment and accelerating inflation. Besides that, there were widespread labour and urban social movements which pose threat to the economic elites and ruling classes everywhere. But one condition of post war settlement was that the economic power of the upper class would be restrained. And this is the main reason of the spread of neoliberalism. However its growth and success largely depended on the various local variations.

B. Neoliberal Governmentality

Neoliberalism, thus, is not simply a set of economic policies, facilitating free trade, maximizing corporate profits and challenging welfarism. Rather, neoliberalism carries a social analysis that when deployed as a form of social governmentality reaches from the soul of the citizen subject to education policy to practice of empire. Hence it becomes important to understand the meaning of governmentality. According to the Oxford Dictionary of Sociology (2009), governmentality refers to the complex set of processes through which human behavior is systematically controlled in ever wider areas of social and personal life. The concept of governmentality was introduced by Mitchell Foucault as a more refined way of understanding his earlier idea of power/knowledge. The significant characteristic of governmentality stressed by Foucault is the prominence of disciplinary
power over other kinds of social power that we can call government. He calls this
governmentalisation of the state (Dean 2010).

The term governmentality refers not simply to the ministers of the state and the political
means through which it works but to a complex set of processes through which human
behaviour is systematically controlled in the wider areas of social life. It is a form of
authoritarian control which combines the two forms of power: the sovereign powers of
command and productive, the disciplinary powers. The sovereign power is the repressive
power which is the coercive structure of exclusion, repression and punishment. Modern
states are concerned with ensuring their sovereignty and it is done with sovereignty over a
territory and management of its population which Foucault calls bio politics. Bio politics is
a form of governmentality that is premised on the active consent and subjugation of the
subjects where the social, cultural, economic and political dimensions as well as the
physical biomass of the society become the primary object of intervention. Thus neoliberal
governments are an active intruder in the personal and the social life of the subjects. It
constantly keeps a panoptic gaze over its population. Thus governmentality is a constant
control over security, territory and population (Burchell et al 1991).

Brown (2005) argues the concern of neoliberal rationality is not only market, but also it
seeks to extend its influence over various social institutions and tries to influence the social
action. Neoliberalism through a powerful discourse tries to inflict its market rationale in all
the social spheres of life. Therefore, such behaviour based on economic rationale is
naturalized. Brown goes on to say that the state caters to the needs of the market by
formulating policies in favour of the market. Therefore, the market is not controlled by the
state rather it is the other way round and the state is controlled by the market.

A similar argument is also put forward by James Ferguson and Akhil Gupta. They term it
as ‘naturalization of the legitimacy of the state’ or ‘rolling back’ of the state (Ferguson and
Gupta 2002). The logic of the market has been extended to the operation of state functions,
so that even the traditionally core institutions of government, such as post offices, schools,
and police are if not actually privatized at least run according to an ‘enterprise model’
(Burchell 1991). Meanwhile, the social and regulatory operations of the state are
increasingly ‘de-statized’, and taken over by a proliferation of ‘quasi-autonomous non-governmental organizations’. But this is not a matter of less government, as the usual ideological formulations would find it to be. Rather, it indicates a new modality of government, which works by creating mechanisms that work “all by themselves” to bring about governmental results through the devolution of risk onto the “enterprise” or the individual (now construed as the entrepreneur of his or her own “firm”) and the “responsibilization” of subjects who are increasingly “empowered” to discipline themselves (Ferguson and Gupta 2002).

Social scientists have observed a growing nexus between the state and the market. Ferguson and Gupta study Anganwadi centre and show how higher officials feel the presence of the state at the time of inspections and visits. The point I want to make here is that not only the presence of the state felt by the sudden visits but the way welfare measures like education, health are twisted and turned. For example, Baru and Nundy (2008) argue that the partnership between the private and public has broken the traditional boundaries between the state and the market leading to emergence of multiple roles and multiple actors. Thus, this has led to governance and control of welfare services. Therefore, neoliberalism and governmentality feed on each other and thus producing and reproducing each other.

In a similar context Clarke (2003) questions the role of the nation states, national governments and their public spending programs including social welfare because, first, there seems to be a clear corporate capital accumulation where the corporate have articulated a clear business environment with low tax, low regulation low cost, low risk, labour and, second, such concerns have installed “global economic wisdom” by supranational organizations and agencies like International Monetary Fund, World Bank and World Trade Organization. Their policies have tended to reinforce a vision of minimalist or laissez-faire government centred on reducing levels of taxation and public spending. Therefore, this kind of behavior of the state may be called the corporatization of the state.

In its usual sense, corporatization refers to the transformation of state resources or agencies into corporations to introduce corporate management techniques to their administration, but I use ‘corporatization’ to describe the process through which the state acquires the
characteristics and essence of corporations. In this neoliberal era in India, we can see changes in the non-corporate establishments like universities and hospitals become acquiring structures, features and behaviors like corporations. As the state comes up with various developmental projects under the influence of corporations, MNCs and TNCs, it tries to manufacture the consent of a large section of the people as part of the nation-building process.

However, it mainly ignores the indigenous people who inhabit those areas where the developmental projects are being executed. Indigenous communities are often denied access to the media and the political or decision-making process and mostly remain unheard. The neoliberal agenda and corporatization have a close link. These two lead to the privatisation of the state’s various welfare services. As Bevir argues, “(T)he neoliberal reforms had two main strands: marketization and NPM. The most extreme form of marketization is privatization, the transfer of assets from the state to the private sector. Hereafter, the state takes little or no responsibility for providing the relevant goods or services to citizens” (Bevir 2010, 10).

To paraphrase Hiroyuki Tosa (2009), neoliberal governmentality promotes the politics of inclusion, implemented by governing at a distance with its hegemonic powers. The global governmentality also promotes a politics of exclusion, and it is done by establishing targeted governance aimed at different groups at the periphery of global politics. Therefore, neoliberal governmentality works as a double edged sword, which cuts both, as form of gaze and control in the lives of the different heterogeneous groups from a very global level and also by, very decisively keeping certain groups at the periphery. This kind of exception existing at the marginalized periphery becomes normal of the neoliberal global governmentality. In this way, neoliberal governmentality promotes securitization of supposedly risky groups on the periphery. Thus Tosa calls neoliberal governmentality as anarchical governmentality.

Tosa further maintains, “(I)t it is not only states that play an important role in sustaining neoliberal global governance, but also other kinds of transnational actors, such as NGOs, IGOs, and MNCs. As part of this deterritorialization process, networked power begins to
form a global “power/knowledge” nexus, based upon the logic of neoliberalism (Tosa 2009, 415-416). The next section deals in neoliberal governmentality in the Indian context with special reference to health and education sectors in the Napam Panchayat of Assam.

C. Neoliberal Governmentality in the Context of India

In this section, I intend to see the co relation between development, neoliberal ideology and governmentality in Indian context with special reference to welfare parameters like health and education in Napam Panchayat of Assam. Development ideology, neoliberal thoughts and governance of the state are all interrelated processes. The process of development in India has to be mentioned if one aims to understand the way in which the Indian state has changed from post-independence period to post liberalism period. It becomes all the more important and interesting in the Indian context because of the nature of the Indian society. Indian society is a non-homogenous and highly stratified society. Thus, definitely the impacts of development are differently felt by different sections of the society. This differential impact is accentuated by the introduction of neoliberal ideology. It is seen that the neoliberal ideology favours only a certain sections of the society as neoliberal ideology is known for private capital accumulation rather than working as a private welfare mechanism. Thus when the neoliberal ideology works to implement development strategy for developing the conditions of the underdeveloped with the funding of the international monetary organizations like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Asian Development bank, etc it creates a kind of governance and gaze in the lives of mainly the poorer section of the society. A format of control and surveillance develops basically in relation to the welfare schemes like health care, education, women empowerment, etc. The mechanism within which the welfare schemes function creates its own form of governance with two combined aspects: welfare and surveillance.

In the Name of Good Governance

In the first two chapters, I have discussed about the idea of good governance devised by the multilateral organizations like WB and IMF. The politics of good governance is very deceptive. One has to look very cautiously not to miss the nuances of the matter. In the name of good governance, it is seen that various development agencies are trying to
penetrate into the grassroots level development activities. At times, they are trying to either replace state’s responsibilities or influence it by suggesting that CSOs and NGOs are more efficient than the state agencies.

In last few years in India, one can see the rise of a strong anti-corruption movement. Even large numbers of people from are middle class joining the movement. If one looks at the issue carefully, it reveals less and it hides more. Most of the movements are not durable as they do not come from strong class association in terms of fighting for a cause. Again, in general, people think that big monetary irregularities are the only form of corruption. Arundhati Roy argues that there are major problems with this kind of anti-corruption movement. If one looks at the kind of movement initiated in the name of civil society in India, it will be very clear as to how people who lead the anti-corruption movement somehow are related to various NGOs. Many of these NGOs receive funds from Ford foundation, Rockefeller Foundation and WB.

Roy says anticorruption movement led by Anna Hazare on behalf of India Against Corruption (IAC) and his team is basically an NGO-driven movement. She suggests that if one has to find real understanding of issues than one has to look at the history of different movements in India and at global level. History is immanent in any kind of social processes. Ignoring history, one cannot get into the core of the issue. The culture of a nation and symbols used in mobilizing people can reveal the motives behind any movement or mobilization.

Careful reading of the IAC movement and people involved in it will give the reader an interesting trajectory. The idea of good governance and decentralised planning are in a subtle way product of the neoliberal agenda. It aims to depoliticize the local level politics in the name of good governance so that international finance capital and vested interest can enter into the field. As Roy argues, WB report talks about 600 anticorruption programmes in Sub Saharan Africa region. The moot question is why World Bank is interested in anti-corruption programmes in the developing world. Roy emphasizes broadly on five points.

2 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d7c WirJNsSY> accessed 16th August 2012 interviewed on 30th August 2011 on CNN-IBN.
These are: increasing political accountability, strengthening civil society participation, creating competitive private sector, instituting restraints on power and improving public sector management. WB is trying to facilitate the penetration of international capital. One, therefore, has to interrogate the whole idea of corruption. The perception of corruption also varies in different communities and classes (Roy 2011).

For example, the living space and livelihood of a huge number of people in India are outside the legal framework. Corruption at different levels (police, municipality officials, etc) helps them eke out a hand to mouth living. The anti-corruption law is bound to the legal framework. The millions of slum dwellers, petty roadside sellers, street vendors, etc will not come under the purview of this law. She raises a question as to why this law is allowed to leave out corporate houses, NGOs and Media houses of its purview while any law should address the inequalities in society. In one context, she talks of Anna Hazare going to a private hospital after his fast. A private hospital symbolizes the withdrawal of health care facility by the state. NGOs and corporations are taking over traditional functions of the state.

There is a huge influence of corporates over the contemporary state, as can be seen from many scams in recent times. Due to the unholy nexus between corporation and state, the government is losing lot of revenue and public fund. Partial structure of the state is becoming like corporations. State tries to mold itself like corporations. Person like Chandra Babu Naidu, ex-chief minister of Andhra Pradesh was portrayed as CEO of Andhra Pradesh. State has not withdrawn itself totally from the activities of welfare governance. Sometimes it implements certain employment generation schemes like MGNREGA and NRHM to gain legitimacy among the people. But the state is also active in repressing people’s movement in many tribal areas of India wherein the big corporate are looking to exploit the rich natural resources against the wishes of the tribal people.

I shall try to demonstrate in the following how the developmental ideology has worked in India in relation to private corporations with ethnographic evidence from the field. Influenced by Nehruvian ideology, development has been the magical formula of post-independence India. It has always been seen as the answer to all the socio-economic
challenges that India was facing since Independence. This development is, however, a double edged sword: as few have gained from development at the cost of masses. This has occurred mainly as these developmental projects were generated and executed in a top down approach without taking into consideration the local specificities. As a result, the poor, marginal people lose their living habitats and traditional sources of livelihood like land, water and forest. Thus, while under current trend of development, poor are becoming poorer, farmers are becoming landless, tribal are losing their forest rights and common property resources and, above all, when people are not left with any alternative source of livelihood, then question of doubt obviously arises about the present development model and its promise to bring about a better society.

Such development projects are being implemented in various tribal areas of India. One may cite the examples of the Lanjigarh bauxite mining in Orissa and Lower Subansiri Hydroelectric Power Project in Arunachal Pradesh. Both the cases are special as indigenous endangered tribal groups inhabit these places. Tribal people in Lanjigarh region worship the mountain as *Niyam Raja*, i.e. King of Law. They worship the forests and the mountain. For them, it was their religion. They claim that even if they die, they will not leave the place. There are very few Dongria Kondhs left; if mining comes, their identity may disappear from this world forever (Das 2014).

Various international financial organisations in most cases have funded such ‘developmental projects’. The main motive of such projects appears to be control of land and resources and this control is a form of neoliberal governance. As the control of land or the surveillance over the life of the people is without their knowledge, it may be referred to as a kind of ‘biopolitics’, as explained by Foucault (Burchell 1991). Thus, the underlying politics of ‘developmental projects’ and neoliberal policies is a form of neoliberal governance. This governance is created due to neoliberal policies that enable a certain section of society to accumulate capital. Neoliberal hegemony is working at the global level as well as in India. It is producing class-based economic growth at the national scale. It shows how the coercive power of global governance institutions has worked in tandem with the interest of the local elite to produce neoliberal changes in India (Ahmed 2009).
As this public-private partnership got stronger in the 1990s, the WB, UNDP, and UNICEF became more dominant and active. The global endorsements by the WHO and other multinational organizations of public private partnerships had its influence on the local and national levels of planning and implementations of health policies in India. It strengthened and supported the free market that advocated a reduced role of the governments in the economy. It also reduced the roll of state in providing the services in the social sectors by breaking down the traditional boundaries of the state and the market.

Initially, health care was taken care of by the government with support from NGOs. But after the 1990s, the collaboration shifted from government and NGOs to government and for-profit organizations (Baru and Nundy 2008). From an empirical study of public private partnered tuberculosis programme, Baru and Nundy have found that the detection and treatment was supposed to be done by the private partners, whereas cases of referrals have to be done by government agencies. The authors argue that the division of role and responsibility between the state and market leads to fragmentation of the programme, which is bound to have a negative impact on the effectiveness of the programme. For example, in the Janani scheme in Bihar, the poorest groups were not taken into account as it only includes the lower and the middle-income groups who could pay a part of the expenses/prices of private sector (Ibid 2008).

On a slightly different note, quoting Shiva and Bandopadhyay, Ashok Swain (2010) quoting Shiva and Bandopadhyay argue that protest movements in different parts of the country has been the result of the threat that indigenous and traditional inhabitants have felt on account of loss of their survival base under the onslaught of the new development projects, whether led by the state or the corporate sector. Their protests against the latter are also part of the demand for the conservation of forest and river. The empirical experience of the impact of the various developmental projects gives the general view that the indigenous people have not benefited much and that the profit has been differentially shared. Case studies show a diversity of supra-state and non-state actors at work in varying alliances with one another at the local, national and supra-national levels.
But these projects also demonstrate that the state is not merely a victim of neoliberal economic globalization, since it remains an active agent in transposing it nationally and locally. The monopoly of the state over the production of law is certainly being challenged both by international institutions and by civil society actors, subnational as well as supranational (Randeria 2003). However, in contrast to the widespread diagnosis of the consequent decline of the state and the dismantling of its sovereignty, Randeria argues that the state does not become weak rather it becomes a cunning state, which capitalizes on its perceived weakness in order to render itself unaccountable both to its citizen and to international institutions (Ibid). This is how neoliberalism becomes crucial as it penetrates into the social sphere and creates new *mentalite* about state and society. Therefore, transforming a welfare state into a corporate state. This argument gives the base of the fact Migdal (1994) discusses about the state changing society and society changing state. Here it becomes important to understand as to how these various institutions like NGO, civil society, state along with the international financial institutions have changed their role in producing a state which is not weak, rather a state which has diversified and institutionalized various forms of governance in all spheres of life.

D. Manifestation of Neoliberal Policies in the Local Context

In the present context of state-society relation as discussed above, where state is gradually withdrawing from critical social sectors paving the way for private intervention, I am trying to look at how health and education, two important parameters of social welfare, are dealt with by the Indian state and what implication it has among the poor people at the rural grassroots on the basis of the responses of the latter to the policies of the state with empirical evidences from Napam Panchayat in Assam. For this, I interviewed a number of persons from the two villages of Napam and Amolapam across community, economic status and gender to elicit their views on the health and education facilities provided by the government. The following presents some representative cases.

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3 Most of the people are economically weak. But there are villagers who have enough land for subsistence; villagers who are engaged in petty business and those who are in teaching and clerical professions. These villagers have relatively better economic status.
**Education**

P. Saikia, aged 23, hails from the Assamese community. He is a private security guard by profession from the Napam village. He narrated that his family preferred to educate girls as they felt girls need to be empowered. Both he and his sisters have been sent to government schools as they provide education without much expenditure. He felt that government education system could be better if necessary facilities are provided and teachers are sufficient. Private schools have done better as they have competent teachers and all kinds of facilities in place. But because of this, the fees in private schools become too high and most people cannot afford to send their wards to private institutions. He also informed that in government institutions some financial help is also given to good students which help them to complete their education. Respondent said that he would prefer to send his children or relatives to government institutions at the primary level but for higher education, if need be, private institutions could be an option. Even if money were not a cause of concern he and his family would still prefer government schools for primary education. He was aware of policies like Sarba Shiksha Abhiyaan and Mid-day meal schemes. He has heard that some corruptions are taking place in the implementation of these schemes.

Abhishek Thakur, aged 40, hails from Bihari community from Napam village. Engaged in a clerical post under the Central government, Thakur stated that he preferred to send his children to private schools for education up to higher secondary level. Depending on the subject of study, he would not mind sending them to government institutions as well. Though he himself completed his education from government institutions, he had put his children in private schools. He said that in this modern age it would be foolish to differentiate between boy and girl and opined that irrespective of gender both ought to get equal opportunity to study. He has two sons. He had not seen any discrimination between boys and girls in his family. According to him, private schools fared better, for government schools are plagued by corruption and lackluster attitude of the authorities. On the other hand, private institutes have a good work culture and a better infrastructure, etc. So, they have a comparative edge over government schools. He made a significant point that government schools in Assam followed state board syllabus. But many prefer to send their children to CBSE and ICSE curriculum based schools which help them to do better in
various all-India competitive exams later on. But those who are financially not well off have little option but to send their children to government schools. He, however, felt that at the level of higher education, government institutions have done better and is a boon for all. The respondent was skeptical about the government schemes like Sarba Shikshya Abhiyaan and Mid-day meal for he has come across many reports of the lapses in the implementation of these schemes which is a cause of concern. After all, it is a matter related to children. Salema Begum is from Amolapam. Aged 28 and a mother of three, she stated that education is very important and in whatever way it comes she is happy. She noted that her children go to government school and there is no question of differentiating between her son and daughter. In fact, she wanted her daughter to pursue higher education. Furthermore, she opined that it was a matter of pride for her and her husband that they managed to send all their children to government school and that they did not care about private schools. On being probed about her view about government schools, she said, fewer students went there as the schools were truly in bad shape. But people who do not have the resources have no option to send their wards to private schools. She felt that education in private schools was better as they had good amenities. The students speak English well and are confident and apparently have an edge over others. If money were not a cause of concern then she would send her children to private schools, for like all parents she too wanted her children to be the best. She assumed that private schools and other institutions are better than government schools. She opined that the Sarba Shikshya Abhiyan was a good scheme but was not aware whether it was implemented well. Mid-day meal scheme, according to her, also was a good scheme for it helped families who could not provide good food to their children.

Maloti Das, a teacher in a kindergarten school, stated that people from lower income groups were mainly forced to send their wards to government schools. However, as far as the higher education is concerned, students preferred government colleges as fees were much less and institutes were well known. In the lower level, the government education system was in bad shape and needed an overhaul. She also passed out from a government school and during their time there was hardly any option of the private schools. Though she did not have any children yet, among her relatives all the children went to private schools. She
mentioned that Kendriya Vidyalayas\(^4\) who were doing well, but admission to these schools was restricted to a selected few. Government education system, according to her, should have been better, but sadly the case is not so as the foundation of primary education system is in ramshackle state allowing the private education system to gain an upper hand. The growing demand for CBSE and ISCE curriculum also placed government schools in a tight spot for they still followed state board syllabus, which she felt was another problem area. The respondent did not express her confidence on either Sarba Shikshya Abhiyaan or Mid-day meal scheme, for she questioned the reliability of the officials who implemented these plans, and cited example of Maharashtra where many children fell ill by consuming adulterated food offered as a part of Mid-day meal scheme.

The case of 14 year old respondent Jahangir Alam is an interesting one. He dropped out of school after class 7. Jahangir ran a small shop, and informed that his brother and sisters were continuing their schooling from a government school. Though he had dropped out of school, he felt that private schools were much better for facilities there were good and their uniform too fascinated him. The young respondent expressed his desire to join a private school for higher secondary if he passed class 10 with good percentage. When probed as to how he intended to complete his education till class 10, very hesitantly he informed that his father admitted him to Dirajaan Madrasa, where along with religious studies they could also complete general school education. He narrated that like him many other boys too went to such madrasas. Some of them had joined it voluntarily even if they were not school dropouts. He had a hard-core believe that private education is better but at the same time he mentioned that if facilities like Tezpur university were provided then even government run institutions could be good. He knew Mid-day meal scheme and felt it was a good initiative as children get wholesome meal under it. His younger sister was a beneficiary of the scheme.

Indramamul Haq is a 17-year-old enthusiastic boy, preparing for his School final examinations. He informed that in his house all the children were sent to school and that in terms of education his sisters did not face any discrimination. Just like his brothers, they too

\(^4\) Also known as Central Schools which are part of an Indian school system under Government of India.
were sent to government schools. On being questioned about his opinion regarding
government education school, he said, fewer students went there as the schools are in bad
shape. He narrated that the school his siblings went did not have electricity and hence no
question of a fan. During summers they somehow managed classes and most students
stayed away from school. He opined that education in private school and colleges are better
for they have good facilities, the student’s converse well in English and also look smart.
But he also pointed out that everyone could not afford to send their children there.
Fascinatingly, the respondent himself went to a private school, and informed that he was
better in academics compared to his siblings and hence his father decided to send him to a
private school hoping he will do even better, by availing the facilities. On the question as to
whether his father would send his sister to a private school if sister too did well in studies,
he answered that at the moment his family could afford the expenses of his schooling only.

A small time businessman by profession, 31 year old, Abdul Rafiq, clearly stated that he
did not differentiate between girl or boy and choosing whether to send his children to
government or private school solely depended on his income. Sending children to private
school was an expensive affair which he could not afford. He opined that government
schools had good facilities. In an interesting comment he stated that private jobs are not
secure and the working condition is also very oppressive. He hoped that education of his
children in government school would help them get government jobs eventually. He
believes that education was a must these days so that no one could demean anyone and also
prayed that his children could graduate from the university. If money were not a concern,
he would still prefer to weigh which education system was better between the government
and the private and then take a decision as to where he would send his children. He felt that
government education system was better. He very clearly was not aware of any government
education policies but did know that in Anganwadi schools and lower primary schools
children were given lunch. He informed that in the area he lived educational facility was
becoming better for they also had a junior college along with high school. Further, Tezpur
university’s presence in the vicinity also gave impetus to the overall educational scenario of
the area for people also newly realised the importance of education.
Shiv Prasad, a 19 year old student of the junior college in Panchmile, proudly said that both he and his brother have been pursuing their studies well despite financial difficulties. He did not have a sister of his own but thought that his parents would not discriminate between them in case he had a sister. When asked about his view regarding government schools, he said, that fewer students went there as the schools were in bad shape. He narrated that he too faced many difficulties as a small child when in school. They did not even have proper drinking water and without any fan sitting in class in peak summers became a serious problem. Therefore many a times they stayed away from school during those times. He felt education in private schools and colleges are better for they have better infrastructure and opportunities are many. He hoped that even government schools could come at par with private ones so that children from poorer families also get similar opportunities. He did not have much idea about Sarba Shikshya Abhiyaan or Mid-day meal scheme, but had heard that small children who went to the Anganwadi Schools did get good food.

Leela Chetry, a 45 year old housewife and mother of two, said that her priority was to provide good education to her children and since they could afford to send their children to private school they did. She herself could complete her schooling and hence by all means wanted her children to be educated. According to her, government should invest more money for development of education although corruption had spoilt everything in this country and education system was not left untouched. She stated that the private educational institutions had strict norms and so things were in-order. Therefore, in the current times, private education system was better than that of the government’s. She opined that at present people are aware about the importance of education and, by and large, do not differentiate between boys and girls. She had two daughters and whole heartedly wanted them to do better than boys. If both government and private educational institutions were at par, then she would send her children to government schools. After all, these services were meant for the public and if they did not use them, then who would. The respondent was aware of both the schemes- Sarba Shikshya Abhiyaan and Mid-day meal and felt these were viable plans, but constant reports about children falling ill after consuming poor quality food made her shudder.
An undergraduate student, Sangeeta Rana, strongly believed that any government plan such as the Sarba Shikshya Abhiyan or Mid-day meal scheme or any other scheme for that matter cannot be trustworthy as they are afflicted with corruption. She felt that people do discriminate between girls and boys in terms of sending them to school, though she never faced any such problem and passed out from a government school. Private education system was better than government for they are focused on giving quality and holistic education to the students whereas government schools do not even have teachers. Education has become so important in the present times that people have no option but to send their children to government schools even if the condition of the schools in bad. Given a scenario where government and private educational institutions are at par, then government schools would be a better option. After all many government institutions in the field of higher education have done very well.

It is evident from the people’s opinion that if the welfare schemes related to school education such as Sarba Shikshya Abhiyan and Mid-day meal scheme work properly, people would prefer government schools. But the government has failed to improve the education at the primary level. There has not been enough interest and investment to develop the government schools. People are apprehensive about the government establishments and show lack of trust in government run educational institutions. Income has a direct influence on the choice of schools for the children as well. Generally, it is seen that people would prefer private education to government one if their income is not a constraint. This is due to the neglected state of educational infrastructure and quality. The case of 14-year-old respondent Jahangir Alam is noteworthy who perceives that private education is better than government education. Such examples substantiate that the state has failed to provide the necessary welfare support to strengthen the basic education system. Interestingly, the villagers advocated the case for improving government education which is more accessible to them. They also feel that government education at higher level is better. It may therefore be inferred that people’s opinion and choice for private education services stems more out of compulsion arising out of the ramshackle state of public education.
Health Services

Durga Devi aged 35 of the Nepali community stated that the most common diseases in her household were common cold, stomach ailments, fever, etc. On being questioned about her understanding of health care the respondent did not seem to have any concrete idea. Then she informed that due to meager income for any kind of medical assistance they preferred to visit government health centres, the nearest one being Panchmile health Centre. Additionally she was not aware of any government funded health schemes nor did any representative from Gram Panchayat or government official visited them to inform them of such schemes. But she did know about ASHA and was quick to add that it was of no use to her as her children were grown up now. She opined that health care services offered by the government was satisfactory and that given a choice to select between government and private health services she would prefer to pick government services as it affordable to her. However, she also stated that private health care service was better than the government’s which is not accessible to her. Furthermore, on being questioned if any of her family members visited the doctor for general check-up the answer was in the negative. They would visit the doctor only when they were stricken by some illness.

A gardener by profession, Bengali speaking Sukumar Pandit, aged 40, informed that common cold, stomach ailments, fever, cough frequently affect his family, and that they do nothing extra in the name of health care, except maintaining the general cleanliness of the house and consuming boiled water. For prenatal and postnatal health care he took his wife and child to government centres for there he had to pay the cost of medicine only. Similarly, for child care too, they relied on government facilities for vaccination, etc. On being questioned what kind of diseases can be treated under government health care schemes, he said that he had only taken the child to the government hospital and when it comes to the elders he prefers availing private health care facilities, for he does not think public healthcare is reliable. He opined that government health care is both good and bad. For the women of his house, only government help he took was that of ASHA. Otherwise, he went to private health care, as treatment was much better and behaviour of the staff was good and that it was much more trustworthy. He did not care about the ongoing government health care schemes for he felt more secure availing private health care.
affirmation to his believe he narrated about an incident that had taken place in their village few years back wherein many children fell ill after consuming medicines that was given by the government, he believed the medicines were back dated and said money was not more important than the life of a human.

45 year old Uday Singh, belonging to the Bihari community, said that the common illness he and his family members suffered from were cold, stomach ailments, fever and cough. He also informed that the male members of the house went for daily morning walks as a part of their effort to stay healthy alongside drinking boiled water. Generally they procure water from the well which may not be always safe to drink. For all kinds of health issues they preferred to avail government health care services that include pre-natal and post-natal care. Even for child care they opt for government health care. They get information about the government health care from the local ASHA. Remarkably the respondent noted that to get better attention of doctors in government hospitals, he pays them some amount of money. He opined that even though government health care services are improving steadily, the private health care service is much better. On the reverse side, he said that if both government and private health care services come at par, he would prefer to avail government facilities because they can afford it. Like all other respondents, he and his family members are largely ignorant about the government health care schemes and do not visit any doctor unless they are extremely ill.

Durga Kashyap aged 43, a Nepali woman, narrated that most common diseases in her household are stomach ailments, common cold, fever, etc. On being asked about her thought on health care she was quick to say that on a daily basis she and her family members practice Yoga in a bid to maintain their general health. Moreover, for all kinds of medical assistance, they preferred to visit private health centres as she doesn’t like the ill treatment meted out to them by government hospital staff. But she did have knowledge about ASHA, but was swift to say that it was of no use to her as she had grown up children and during the time she was pregnant such facilities was absent. She opined that health care service offered by the government was satisfactory and complicated ailments were good to be treated in government centres. But the callous attitude of the government hospital staff makes matters risky and therefore she does not have confidence in them. Additionally, on
being questioned, if she or her family members visited the doctor for general check-up she replied that both female and male members visited the doctor only when they were suffering from some sickness. Remarkably, she also stated that women of the household did avail government health care facilities, but the male members of the family visited private practitioners. Given a choice to select between government and public health services she would prefer to pick government services, only if the staff were more attentive and trustworthy. She was the only respondent who claimed to own a Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (National Health Insurance Scheme), but had not taken received any benefits out of it till now. She said her family found out about such scheme from the neighbours. But interestingly no other respondent spoke about owning such card or even being aware about such government schemes.

A young housewife, Hindi speaking Sushila Devi, aged 30, and mother of two daughters, informed that stomach ailments, common cold, fever, cough frequently affected her family. For ensuring the good health of her family members, on a regular basis she ensures that all her family members drink plenty of water in the morning along with chavanprash (a popular Ayurvedic product taken for good health) and seasonal fruits to her children. For both prenatal and postnatal health care, she took the assistance of private health care facilities. However, for child care like vaccination, etc she relied on government facilities. On being asked about what kind of diseases can be treated under government health care schemes she replied that all kinds of complicated ailments could be treated in government hospitals provided the staff in these hospitals gave attention to patients and behaved well, for she felt that though facilities were available in the government hospitals, lack of care was the biggest drawback. The women members of the house along with male members availed government health care, as she still believed government health service was better despite herself availing private medical service during pregnancy. The only ongoing government health care scheme she was aware of is ASHA about which she found out from her friends in the neighbourhood. Free medicine or any other kind of aid from government is always beneficial given their financial condition. But she is afraid of availing such aid, for there have been many incidents where children were taken ill by consuming medicines supplied by the government.
Thirty-year-old Babita Ram, belonging to the Bihari community, is a mother of three children. She informed that the common illness she and her family members suffered from were cold, stomach ailments, fever and cough. She also informed in a bid to stay healthy she gives her family boiled water. For all kinds of health issues they preferred to avail government health care services that include pre-natal and post-natal care for they could not afford to pay the fees at private health centres. Even for child care they opt for government health care, nearest one being Panchmille Health Centre, information of which they get from the local ASHA. She informed that despite her elder son suffering from persistent ailment like dysentery she would purchase medicine from the local pharmacy and visited the PHC only if he was seriously ill. She could not afford to take her son to the government civil hospital in Tezpur town and preferred to use the cost of transport to purchase medicines from the pharmacy. She also informed that she believed that government help did not reach the down trodden like her and therefore many a times private medical service becomes compulsory. But she couldn’t afford that. Only her youngest child was born in a government hospital; her elder children were born at home, which reduced their expenditure on child birth. Vaccination for the children had been administered in the government hospitals. She had no information about any government health care scheme except ASHA. She believed that if free medical aid was offered that would be a boon for families like hers. While in conversation, she expressed her fears that she would have to invest a good sum on her son’s treatment which would be difficult to gather and hoped for government assistance.

Bengali speaking Rashmi Karmakar, 25 year old and mother of three, presented a rather different picture from all other respondents. She was ignorant of the idea of anything called health care and said she fed her family usual dal rice, the bare minimum that they could afford. She informed that she gave birth to all her three children at home with the help of a midwife who came from Solmara. She said since her first delivery was successful at home she felt no need of doctor’s aid or hospitalization and the story remained the same during all the pregnancies. She was not aware of ASHA but on hearing from her neighbours she took her children for vaccination to government hospitals. On being questioned about her preference between the government and the private health care, she replied that her days are
spent thinking about the survival of her family each day, doctor and health schemes are the last thing on her mind. If any aid came her way, she would gladly accept it.

Safiqur Rahman, aged 38, narrated that his family members commonly suffered from headache, influenza, common cold and stomach trouble. On being questioned about his idea of health care he was quick to add that on a daily basis he or his family members did nothing extraordinary to maintain the general health, but did pay attention to general cleanliness, drinking boiled water and visiting doctor when any one fell ill. Likewise, for all kind of medical aid they favoured visiting a private clinic as he could afford to pay for the expenses there and would not like to be the recipient of any bad behaviour of the government hospital staff which many of his kin have been recipient of. Though he was aware about ASHA and the government aid, he took his wife to private clinic for the delivery of all his four children. Similarly, for child care like vaccination, etc he relied on private assistance. He opined that health care services offered by the government was satisfactory but those who can afford did prefer to opt for private services. The insensitive attitude of the government hospital employees in treatment makes matters risky and he did not have confidence in them. He informed that he or his family members did not visit doctors for any health check-up unless they fell ill, and it applied to both female and male members of the household. Given an option to pick between government and public health services he would favour government services, provided it is reliable, if the staff behaved well and became trustworthy. He emphasized that a person’s life is not more important than money and he would like to spend the money if it ensured good treatment for the ailing family member.

45 year old Rajeshwar Das of the Assamese community, in a very straightforward manner narrated that health matters seldom concerns them for day to day to survival is their main concern. His family of five members had not visited the doctor in the last two years. He said that whenever some form of medication was required they would resort to home remedies or at most purchase medicine from the local pharmacy. He stated that at a time when his first two children were born they did have the know-how of institutional delivery, and as desired by his family, the children were delivered at home. Only during the birth of his youngest daughter did he take his wife to government civil hospital at Tezpur. He did
not remember if all his children were vaccinated but recalled taking them for polio vaccination. Since the services are provided by the government he believed that the government health care services are better than private and would prefer availing the services of the former. He said his wife ensured they drank boiled water, and basic cleanliness was maintained in the house and he believed that was enough for good health. Furthermore, the respondent iterated that people are born with some immunity which is enough to live. He then jokingly said that if more complicated disease grips a person then government and private hospitals do not matter, everything had to be left to god. He had no qualms about government health centres and did not know much about private practitioners and refrained from taking any side or showing preference for either.

Jayesh Singh, a young adult, aged 28, working in a retail outlet in Guwahati city as a sales person, said that he and his family members most recurrently suffered from stomach ailment which is also accompanied by fever. He and his father went on morning walks regularly while the women of the household did not follow any specific fitness regime. Another common practice they all followed was drinking plenty of water which he felt helped them to stay fit. On being asked about his preference between government health services and private services he said they availed both, depending on what the requirement was. He explained that for simpler, common ailments they went to the Public health centre in Panchmiele, Napam, or Civil hospital, Tezpur. But for more complex ailments they preferred private doctors. For instance, his father was suffering from heart ailments and had undergone a surgery, for which the entire treatment was carried out in a private hospital in Guwahati. He opined that if finance permitted they would never visit a government hospital for the surrounding is dirty and behaviour of doctors uncalled for. He and his family were aware about the ASHA and Janani Suraksha Yojna (Mother’s Safety Scheme) but so far they did not have any occasion to avail the benefits of such schemes. He also opined that it was necessary for government health services to become better because majority of the people cannot afford expensive treatment of private hospitals.

From the above cases, it appears that the poor rural people are at the receiving end of the government’s policy of withdrawal from the health sector. They are poor and uneducated and not conscious of health issues. They are vulnerable to most common diseases.
However, they are often compelled to take the help of private medical services because the public health services are either inadequate or they have no confidence in it. Even if they go for private health service out of some compulsion, they would prefer public health service if the facilities are good because private health service is beyond their affordability. It is also important that the lone public health care facility available to these from where the respondents were chosen is the Primary Health Centre at Panchmule area which is located from 3 to 4 kilometers from these villages. This government facility also caters to the need of twenty seven more villages. This is a huge burden on the health centre which does not have the required number of doctors and other paramedic. Besides, as pointed out in Chapter 4, the health centre is always short of medicine and other facilities for regular medical tests for which the people invariably have to depend on the private sector hospitals and facilities at the Tezpur Town. The government civil hospital at Tezpur is also inadequate in terms of its infrastructure and staff. Important medical instruments are either not there or they often remain non-functional compelling people to go to the private health care centres spending huge sum of money. All these have generated skepticism about the government health facilities and a newly emerging faith in private facilities among the villagers. Interestingly, however, they would often emphasize the necessity of a good public health system which is accessible to the rural poor.

Thus, neoliberal policies and reduction in the social welfare measures have facilitated the commercialization of critical social sectors like health and education. It has thus helped the private corporations to make enormous increase in their wealth leading to polarization between rich and poor both within individual countries as well as among the countries of the world. However, this has cast a devastating effect on the poor and marginal people in terms of their accessibility to the basic necessities of life like health and education. Despite this, the fact the even the poor people are now losing faith in the government services and are posing new faith in the private services is but an impact of neoliberal governmentality.

Neoliberalism upholds the production of certain of subjects and behaviour through market incentives and deterrents. It produces citizens on the basis of the bipolarity between entrepreneurs and consumers and subjects them to extensive governance. Neo-governmentality achieves what Foucault’s biopower and discipline together accomplish and
which in turn creates statism. As neoliberalism identifies the state with entrepreneurial and managerial functions and remakes the state on the model of the firm, it facilitates and legitimizes the power of the state (Brown 2006).

One can raise the question that whether the term ‘neoliberal’ which is often used to describe social and economic policies in developed countries can be applied to the Indian context. Neoliberal policies are part of the global capitalist system. Therefore, these policies can be implemented and are being implemented even by the governments of those countries (of Asia and Africa) where capitalist system may not have developed to the fullest extent as in the case of the advanced countries. This often happens through the global financial penetration facilitated by multilateral financial institutions. However, the public welfare provisions in the advanced countries have a long history and they are well-entrenched. It is not that the gradual withdrawal of the government from these provisions has not created a crisis in these countries. But in a developing country like India, with one of the most backward Human Development Index in the world, the government’s withdrawal from these welfare provisions can lead to catastrophic consequences.

Coming to the context of Assam, in recent times, approach towards privatisation in the state has manifested quite strongly. Assam’s minister of Education and Health Himanta Biswa Sarma declared in late 2013 that the state government has decided to hand over the one hundred model high schools, being set up in the state, to private institutions like Don Bosco and Sankardev Sishu Niketan to look after their academic aspects. He pointed out that the bill on Assam Model School Act will be tabled very soon in the State Assembly. Appointment of teachers to these model schools will be done by the State government and the infrastructure will be provided by the Rashtriya Madhyamik Siksha Abhiyan, a government of India mission to promote high school education in India. He emphasised that the private institutions will extend academic support to these schools to have better academic performance which is lacking in government run schools. According to the

Education Minister, students enrolled in these model schools would have the option to choose either English or Assamese as the medium of instruction.

This step clearly shows how government is also interested in taking up the help of private organisations. Many social scientists and critics argue that this is a step to further privatisation of the education sector. This kind of strategy is often adopted by the state in the name of public-private partnership and efficiency. The corporate sector and the government today together are engaged in trying to create a belief in the public mind that private sector symbolises efficiency. Thus, neoliberalism and governmentality are two sides of the same coin and one feeds on the other to produce and reproduce each other. Neoliberal ideology has thus turned the welfare states to corporate states with the state behaving as market. The state is not dismantled but is reproduced in a sense where it behaves like a market which favours capital accumulation of a certain section of the society at the cost of the masses. As part of neoliberal policy, the process of corporatization of the state continues despite that the poor masses cannot access them as demonstrated by the empirical evidence of the impact of the neoliberal policies on education and health sectors of the government of Assam.