A STUDY OF SOCIAL ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION AT THE
ELEMENTARY LEVEL IN MANIPUR: A CASE STUDY OF
CHURACHANDPUR DISTRICT

DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING
AND ADMINISTRATION, NEW DELHI, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTERS OF PHILOSOPHY (M. PHIL)

C THANGMINLAL DOUNGEL   PROF. MADHUMITA BADYOPADHYA

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND
ADMINSITRATION, NEW DELHI

MAY, 2022

0

DECLARATION

Date: 10/05/2022

I, C THANGMINLAL DOUNGEL, hereby declare that this M.Phil. dissertation entitled 'A STUDY OF SOCIAL ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL IN MANIPUR: A CASE STUDY OF CHURACHANDPUR DISTRICT' is based on my original research work, and to the best of my knowledge, has not been submitted in whole or in part in this University or in any other University for the award of any degree.

(C THANGMINLAL DOUNGEL)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled 'A STUDY OF SOCIAL ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL IN MANIPUR: A CASE STUDY OF CHURACHANDPUR DISTRICT' is the work undertaken by C THANGMINLAL DOUNGEL under the supervision of Prof. Madhumita Bandyopadhyay, as part of her M.Phil. degree. We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiner(s) for evaluation and award of the degree of M.PHIL.

(Prof. Madhumita Bandyopadhyay)   **(Prof. Pranati Panda)**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Table of Contents

Contents   **Page Number**

List of Tables

List of Figures

Abstract

Access to education is bound by various social barriers that are often taken for granted or not taken seriously. These subtle social factors have deep impact on education in terms of access and participation of the child in the learning discourse. Mere physical access to school does not guarantee meaningful participation. Access to school must be meaningful through the active participation of the child in the classroom. It goes beyond mere enrolment and retention. Studies have found that considerable number of children of the poor and economically backward groups, and those of the tribal groups are still not in schools despite the existence of neighborhood schools (ASER report, 2021). The reasons for not being in school and not participating in spite of the access is a critical cause of concern of this study.

The present study looks into the status of RTE and its implementation at the elementary level with focus on the factors that determine access and participation. It entails to carry out the study amongst the Kuki tribals within Tuibong block in Churachandpur district through a survey questionnaires and interview schedule, and focus group discussion from amongst the various stakeholders. Studies have found that several bottlenecks act as a barrier towards achieving meaningful access and participation amongst the population under study. Utilization of the local expertise (civil societies) and resources will enable us to engineer long lasting solution to the perpetual educational drawbacks that has hindered meaningful access to education and participation in the classroom.

Keywords: Education, Social Access, Participation, RTE, Elementary Level, Tribals, Churachandpur, Manipur.

CHAPTER I

1.0 Introduction

Elementary education began to be recognized as a fundamental right, and a critical tool for change as well as an impetus for an economic boom and human development in almost all the countries of the world (Okidi et al., 2004, quoted in Vungngaihlun et al., 2018). Its significance is acknowledged and accepted by all as the cornerstone for building a virtuous society that can dispel many social ills. Extensive research confirms that universal literacy and basic education for all is the foundation for social change, and a bedrock for civilizational progress. Education as a fundamental human right is undisputable (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2014, quoted in Govinda, R & Matthew, A, 2018, p. 7) because it is held as an indispensable tool that propels the society towards its growth trajectory in several domains— economy, politics, social, environment, etc.

The significance of basic and elementary education and its global recognition dates back to the Jomtien Declaration in 1990 and the Dakar Framework for Action in 2000, which exclusively focused on elementary education. The UN Millennium Declaration proclaiming the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) included inter alia education and gender parity in education as important goals, and this concerted effort got more fillip with the declaration made by Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) that aims to *"ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all"* by 2030. India made stride towards fulfilment of elementary education for all by becoming an active partner in the worldwide movement for Education for All (EFA) that began in 1990 in Jomtien and also a signatory to the Dakar Framework for Action in 2000. It is also signed three key international instruments that guarantee the right to elementary education—Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (Chugh, 2020, p. 3).

Further, India made a constitutional obligation to provide free and compulsory elementary education in the country and endeavored to universalize the same to all children between the age of 6-14 years. The commitment is reflected in Article 45 of the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) which states, *"The state will endeavor*

to provide, free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years." With the enactment of the 86th Constitutional Amendment Act of 2002, and the insertion of Article 21 A, the Right to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) was made a fundamental right, enforceable in the court of law. In addition, the reservation of 25 per cent of seats at the entry level (class I) in all private schools for the disadvantaged and economically weaker sections to ensure equitable access and quality education also became the norm.

To improve access, disadvantage as the reason for inequity must be recognized as multi-layered, with multiple identities creating several handicaps for students. Institutions that are serious about correcting existing inequity must not only implement the state policy, but also have to go beyond the policy provisions to reach the students not yet covered (Chanana and Chanana, 2009: p. 284) because equitable education system can redress the effect of comprehensive social and economic disparities. Further, in an equitable situation, the girl would not be judged by her gender role but through her capability.

Access to school although dependent on the physical availability of the school infrastructure, material provision alone is not sufficient to instil interest in the child to participate in the learning process. And as Indian society is composed of a heterogeneous social background, and so are the students, recognising this inequity will not only accrue access, but also enhance participation of the child both in the school and the classroom. Because both access and participation are a crucial tool in enhancing the capability of the child so that they are able to decide what is best for themselves later in life. And since both access and participation are socially determined by various factors, it is critical that we address those hurdles that acts as a hindrance towards universalization of elementary education. Hence, in light of this, the renewed commitment pronounced by NEP 2020, to universalise educational access and opportunity to all children of the country for quality and holistic education including vocational education—from pre-school to Grade 12 is an objective move that is hoped to bring impetus towards UEE in the country at a crucial juncture (NEP, 2020, p. 10).

1.1 Elementary Education in India: Overview

Policy makers across the years continue to lay emphasis on education especially elementary education. The benefits of investing in basic education, both for its intrinsic value in enhancing human capabilities, as well as for its social development and economic growth, greater efficiency and better functioning of democratic institutions are often quoted as the reason (Babu, J R. 2009, p.8). The national and international level initiatives like, the resolution of the National Policy on Education (1986) and the Programme of Action (1992) to ensure free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality to all children up to 14 years of age by 2000, the EFA Summit of the nine high-population (E-9) countries held in New Delhi in December 1993, the World Conference on Education for all in Jomtien, in March 1990 and subsequent Dakar Framework for Education for All (2000) emphasizing on E-9 countries to generate their own approach towards achieving EFA, have resulted in a number of innovations, initiatives and strategies being implemented in India to achieve universalization of elementary education (IGNOU, 2017, p.76).

However, it was the Constitution of India that first laid the milestone to universalize elementary education soon after it was adopted in 1950 under Article 45 of the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) (ibid, p.73). Both National Policy on Education (NPE) (1986) and Programme of Action (POA) (1992) took universalization of elementary education with serious concern, albeit its call for making it compulsory was not supported by required public resources. A legal breakthrough was achieved in 1992 when the Supreme Court of India in *Mohini Jain vs State of Karnataka* held that the right to education is concomitant to fundamental rights enshrined under part III of the Constitution and that every citizen has a right to education under this framework. The Supreme Court subsequently reconsidered the above-mentioned judgment in *Unnikrishnan. J. P vs State of Andhra Pradesh* in 1993, where it maintained that the right to education flows from right to life guaranteed under the Constitution. It further upheld that the provision of free and compulsory education to all children till the age of 14 years of age is paramount, as Article 45 is the only provision that has timeline for implementation as mandated in the Constitution. Drawing from these arguments the Supreme Court of India delivered a judgment making right to education a fundamental right. A Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) committee on Right to

Education was constituted in 2004 to prepare the Right to Education bill, which was subsequently passed by the parliament that gave birth to the Right to Education Act (RTE) of 2009 (Chaugh, 2020, p.4). The subsequent declaration of RTE as a fundamental right under article 21A ushered in a wind of change in our approach towards universalization of elementary education.

1.2 Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE)

In India, UEE means making education up to class I-VIII available to all children in the age group of 6-14 years. This constitutional directive has been interpreted as making primary education of five-year duration available to all children between the age group 6-11 years and three years of upper primary education for children aged 11-14 years (IGNOU, 2017 p. 48). According to Mehta (2019) **universalization** means **universal access** (school facilities to all), **universal participation** (all relevant age-group children enrolled), **universal retention** (meaning all those who enter the system retain and transit from one level of education to another) and **universal quality of education** (satisfying criteria of minimum levels of learning) (Mehta, 2019: p.1).

Govinda, and Bandyopadhyay (2012) in their studies observed three major changes that has brought about a sea change at the level of elementary education in the country. Firstly, the direct involvement of the Central Government in strengthening infrastructure and delivery of elementary education has increased following the adoption of the National Policy on Education 1986 (GoI, 1986), where the central government became the prime mover in designing and implementing development initiatives in elementary education although not uniform across the country. Secondly, district was adopted as the base for planning development inputs for elementary education and decentralisation of governance through the empowerment of the local self-governance in the form of *Panchayati Raj* institutions and SMCs. This added a new dimension to the multi-layered planning and dynamics at the grassroots level. Lastly, demand for elementary education through massive social mobilisation emerged under the auspices of the National Literacy Mission. This move has substantially enhanced the role of non-state actors in providing elementary education and support services in the country (pp. 19-20). From these achievements and the progress made at the macro-level, we can say that elementary education has made a positive stride at the macro-

level in India. However, a close look at the micro-level suggests that materialisation of policy provisions at the level of implementation has many hiccups and is still far from satisfactory.

One major reason for our school's inability to meet this challenge is perhaps the failure to go beyond policy provision. For instance, in order to ensure universal participation, all relevant age-group must be enrolled in a class that is appropriate to their age, but in reality, what has been observed is that children are carelessly put into a class that is not appropriate to their age. Albeit tangible commitment has been made towards universalization of elementary education, in practice, the goal of universal literacy and basic education has remained unrealised in many countries across the world. (Vungngaihlun et al., 2018) observed that regardless of the enhancement in government outlays on investment in the education sector for universalising elementary education, the continual school dropout phenomenon remains as one of the most important problems in our society. The problems of children in association with school leaving are numerous and wide-ranging and it is not completely an educational problem, but a revelation of a number of factors working in a multifarious sociocultural, economic and political perspective (p.90). While the unchecked population growth is also one important reason for this failure, a host of other reasons like failure to provide enough schools, lack of proper infrastructures, poverty of the masses, and illiteracy of the parents, lack of conducive environment in the classroom are some of the critical reasons cited that prevents the children from participating in school and classroom.

1.3 Structure of Elementary Education

The national system of education was enunciated by the National Policy on Education (1968) in the form of 10+2+3. The National Policy on Education (1986) defined that the structure of elementary education would consist of 5 years of primary education and 3 years of upper primary education. But there are variations in the states with regard to organisation of elementary education. For example, some states have 4 years of primary and 3 years of upper primary structure. Some states have 5 years of primary and 2 years of upper primary structure. In spite of these variations, elementary education structure is understood as defined by the National Policy on Education (1986) (IGNOU, 2017, p.72). At the operational level, elementary school is generally divided into two parts

5

with five years of primary schooling (grades 1-5) followed by three years of upper primary or middle school (grades 6-8) as shown in Table 1.1. However, the structure of India's education system will now undergo a massive transformation with the present format as shown in Table 1.2.

Table 1. 1: Present National System of Education

Age 4-6	Pre-Primary	Elementary Education
Class I-V: Age 6-11	Primary	
Class VI-VIII: Age 12-14	Upper Primary	
Class IX-X: Age 15-16	Secondary	Secondary and Senior Secondary
Class XI-XII: Age 17-18	Senior Secondary	

Source: Compiled by the Author from NEP 2020.

Table 1. 2: Proposed National System of Education

Age 3-6	3years: Anganwadi/Preschool/Balvatika	Foundational Stage (3+2=5years)
Class I-II: Age 6-8	2 years	
Class II-V: Age 8-11	3 years	Preparatory Stage
Class VI-VIII: Age 11-14	3 years	Middle Stage
Class IX-XII: Age 14-18	4 years	Secondary Stage

Source: Compiled by the Author from NEP 2020.

At present, children in the age group of 3-6 are not covered in the 10+2 structure as Class 1 begins at age 6. In the new 5+3+3+4 structure, a strong base of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) from age 3 is also included, which is aimed at promoting better overall learning, development, and well-being (pp: 6-7). This initiative although is futuristic in nature, is hoped to usher in the desired quality and inclusive education, which have been envisaged for a very long time. In addition, the structural change in the education system with focus of five years of foundational education will enable us to prepare in advance the proper transition of the child to the next stage with less chances of dropping out. Universalization of education will be further pushed beyond elementary education to include secondary and higher secondary education.

1.4 School Education in Manipur

In Manipur, the first seed of primary education was sown during 1872 – 1886. Pioneers like Maj. General W.F. Nuthal, Sir James Johnstone and Rev. William Pettigrew contributed towards the growth and development of primary education in the state. In 1885, the first Middle English School was established in Manipur by James Johnstone. Primary education in Manipur was very slow for a long time because of the aversion of the local people towards Western (English) education. It was only in 1931-32 that 83 lower primary schools, 10 madrasas, 3 Sanskrit schools and a Girls' L.P. school were established in Manipur. Since primary education was not made free at that time, fees were collected from the students. The attendance of students was poor and not very encouraging (Ringmiso, 2013: p.148).

The launching of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) project in the state in 2004, in partnership with the State Governments and local self-Governments, and the enactment of the RTE Act in 2009 subsequently brought in a sea change in the educational system, particularly towards the schools in the state. The programme (SSA) was aimed at providing useful and relevant, elementary education to all children in the 6-14 age group by 2010 through proactive participation of community in a mission mode. It subsumed all major programme like, the District Primary Education programme (DPEP), the Lok Jumbish, the operation Blackboard, etc (Sharma, 2013. p.14). Post introduction of these programmes education in the state began to pick up at a fast pace. Schools were set up across the states and until today there's mushrooming of private schools in the state, while on the other hand privatisation of government school has become a norm. However, with renewed commitment of the present government through its flagship programme like the 'School *Fagathansi*' (let us revive the schools) mission, reform in the education sector (particularly school) is envisioned and is hoped to instil a new lease of life to schools, especially government schools in the state, and in particular the hill areas.

At present the school level education is primarily looked after by the State Government. The high school stage of education comprising of classes from class IX to X are under the academic control of the Board of Secondary Education, Manipur (BOSEM). And Higher Secondary Schools Education comprising of class XI to XII comes under the control of Council of Higher Secondary Education, Manipur (COHSEM). As per the data sourced from Unified District Information System for Education (U-DISE), there

are 4,812 schools in the year 2017-18, which includes 2,574 Primary Schools (I-V), 1,088 Upper Primary Schools (VI-VIII), 904 Secondary Schools and 246 Higher Secondary School. The number of schools in the state by management is shown at Table No. 4.3.

Table 1. 3: Number of Schools in Manipur

Sl. No.	Management	Primary	Upper primary	Secondary	Higher Secondary	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
1	Department of Education	1136	520	334	59	2049
2	Tribal Welfare Department	893	55	0	0	948
3	Social Welfare Department	2	1	4	0	7
4	Government Aided	401	96	90	8	595
5	Private Unaided	42	291	465	156	954
6	Others (Army Schools)	1	2	4	6	13
7	Un-Recognised	90	117	5	0	212
8	Kendriya Vidyalayas	0	1	2	9	12
9	Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas	0	0	0	7	7
10	Sainik School	0	0	0	1	1
11	Madrassa (Recognised)	9	5	0	0	14
	Total	**2574**	**1088**	**904**	**246**	**4812**

Source: Annual Administrative Report, 2018-19, Department of Education(S), Manipur
  Economic Survey Manipur (2020-2021: p.130).

1.5 Status of Enrolment in the State

a) Private Schools

Enrolment in private schools in the state of Manipur during the Covid-19 pandemic (2019-20) has hardly been disturbed. In fact, as per the 15th Annual Status of Education Report (ASER, 2020) enrolment in private school has increased in Manipur. As per the report, proportion of boys enrolled in private schools rose from 73.6 per cent in 2018 to 86.6 per cent in 2020. There was also a similar shift for girls with 70.7 per cent in 2018 to 87.7 per cent in 2020. In addition, the proportion of children from 15 to 16 years who are yet to get admission decreased from 5.29 per cent in 2018 to 3.66 per cent in 2020. The report further added that a whooping 97.5 per cent of the children have textbooks for their current grade and 85 per cent of the children have textbooks for their current grade and 85 per cent of the children get help in one form or the other from the families for home support learning.

b) Government Schools

On the other hand, according to the 16ᵗʰ ASER (Rural) 2021, enrolment of students in government schools has fallen in Manipur from 26.8 per cent in 2018 to 13.4 per cent in 2021, says 16th Annual Status of Education Report (Rural) 2021. This is in contrast to the scenario in the private schools and the all-India level data that shows a shift from private to government schools. This contrasting scenario is due to the failure of the government schools in the state to keep up to the challenges posed by the pandemic. It is also noteworthy that even pre pandemic, government schools have been trailing behind the private schools in all arenas—enrolment, participation, retention, etc. This reflection is in tandem with the all-India level data that shows children in the age group of 6-14, enrolled in private schools decreasing from 32.5 per cent in 2018 to 24.4 per cent in 2021. This shift is seen in all grades and among both boys and girls. However, boys are still more likely to be enrolled in private schools than girls, which is also the reflection of the society's step-motherly attitude towards the education of the girl child. Table 4.2 highlights the number of students enrolled at the elementary level in Manipur until the academic year (2016-2017). The number is sure to have increased, which is clearly evident from the 15ᵗʰ and 16ᵗʰ ASER report respectively.

Table 1. 4: Number of Students Enrolled in Elementary Level in Manipur

Year	Primary (I-V)			Upper Primary (VI-VIII)		
	Boy	Girl	Total	Boy	Girl	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
2013-14	1,98,065	1,97,054	3,95,119	78,208	76,570	1,54,778
2014-15	1,79,865	1,75,432	3,55,297	76,192	76,276	1,52,468
2015-16	1,74,772	1,70,541	3,45,313	79,140	78,136	1,57,276
2016-17	1,63,570	1,54,619	3,18,189	72,552	71,867	1,44,419

Source: Department of Education (S), Manipur
Economic Survey Manipur (2020-21: p. 130).

1.6 Sex Wise Enrolment at the Elementary Level in Manipur

The total enrolment at the primary stage (Class I to V) which was 4,71,629 in 2013-14 decrease to 3,26,779 in 2017-18. Out of 3,26,779, enrolment of boys is 51.70 per cent while that of girls is 48.30 per cent. In the case of Middle/Upper Primary, the total enrolment showed fluctuations during the period 2013-14 to 2017-18. In general, the number of boy students enrolled is

higher than the number of girls enrolled in Primary as well as Upper Primary Classes. Table No. 4.3 presents the number of boys and girls students enrolled by stages (Economic Survey of Manipur, 2019-20: p.128).

Table 1. 5: Sex-wise Students Enrolment by Stage/Classes in Manipur

Year	Number of students					
	Primary (Class I to V)			Middle/Upper Primary (Class VI to VIII)		
	Boy	Girl	Total	Boy	Girl	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
2013-14	2,74,597	1,97,032	4,71,629	78,804	75,974	1,54,778
2014-15	1,79,865	1,75,432	3,55,297	76,254	76,535	1,52,789
2015-16	1,69,508	1,65,971	3,35,479	77,528	76,530	1,54,058
2016-17	1,63,570	1,54,619	3,18,189	72,552	71,867	1,44,419
2017-18	1,68,951	1,57,828	3,26,779	77,105	74,521	1,51,626

Source: Directorate of Education (s) Manipur

Economic Survey of Manipur (2020-21: p. 128).

1.7 Social Category Wise Enrolment at the Elementary Level

As mentioned in the second chapter, Manipur is a heterogenous society composed of three major communities and several others—Meeteis, Kukis, and Nagas, Pangals, Biharis, Bengalis, etc. The meetei community are largely Hindu and the community is stratified into different social categories—general, OBC and SC. Whereas the ST population comprises of the tribals which is homogenous in nature, although there is a distinction between the two major tribal groups, viz., Kukis and Nagas.

A close look at the table no. 4.2 reveals that enrolment as per social category wise ST has the maximum enrolment, while SC remains the least. It may be noted that the ST are the schedule tribe communities inhabiting the hilly areas of the state. Despite challenges posed by difficult topographical terrain, poverty and other social factors the community is keeping up with the rest of the communities in terms of enrolment, although the 16th ASER (Rural) report says otherwise. In spite of the good accomplishment in terms of enrolment, the challenges still lie in the area of access and participation in addition to dropout and retention. Hence, mere enrolment scenario is not a sufficient criterion to conclude that education system is well established in the

state. In addition, in terms of enrolment both at the state and the district level enrolment of ST students far exceeds the rest of the other social categories, this status if built upon can bring about positive educational changes in the tribal hill areas of Manipur.

Table 1. 6: Social Category Wise Enrolment at the Elementary Level in Manipur

Class I-VIII

Category wise	Girls	Boys	Total
General	52,592	55,912	**1,08,504**
OBC	84,200	75,430	**1,59,630**
SC	10,404	1,0676	**21,080**
ST	1,02,392	1,94,410	**2,96,802**

Source: Compiled by the author from UDISE+ (2020-21)

Table 1. 7: Social Category Wise Enrolment at the Elementary Level in Churachandpur

Class I-VIII

Category wise	Girls	Boys	Total
General	865	953	**1,818**
OBC	780	837	**1,617**
SC	189	173	**362**
ST	24,979	25,106	**50,085**

Source: Compiled by the author from UDISE+ (2020-21).

1.8 Defining Social Access and Participation

Social background factors such as race/ethnicity, limited English proficiency, family income, parental education, and family structure are associated with various levels of educational access and different educational outcomes. For example, differences in pre-primary enrollment, incidence of early childhood academic and behavioral problems, level of student achievement, and the likelihood of dropping out of school or going on to college after graduation are each associated with various social background factors. Such factors are interrelated, however, and must be examined jointly when trying to understand the effect of any single factor on education (Young and Smith, 1997).

i) Social Access

Social access precedes physical access. Availability of infrastructure and the existence of a neighborhood school is a sufficient criterion to ensure that access is enabled physically. However, this physical access is still dependent upon various social factors, without which, the existence of a mere physical school in the neighborhood does not guarantee 'access' to school. The socio-economic background, choice of the parents, educational qualification of the parents, occupation of the parents, parents' choice and preferences, lack of awareness on the prospects of education also determines the child's educational access to the school. Hence, the intent of securing access (here education) to the target group irrespective of the social background they belong to and enabling it to take shape despite the circumstances is term as social access.

New targets to universalise access to education need to recognise that access is more than enrolment, and that quality, equity and valued outcomes are inseparable if meaningful access to education is to be achieved. Most of what needs to be known to universalise access is understood in theory, but is often not applied in practice. The most powerful reasons why so many children miss out on their right to basic education lie with the political economy of commitments to widen access to opportunity, mobilise domestic resources and manage public services effectively towards clear goals (Create, http://www.create-rpc.org/about/why/ accessed on 21/3/22).

A multiplicity of factors, including lack of access to quality schools, poverty, social mores & customs, and language have had a detrimental effect on rates of enrolment and retention among the Scheduled Castes (NEP, 2020: p. 25). This gap is not far for the tribal children living in the hills as well. The reason being, tribals are rich in their culture and traditions, which they religiously hold closely to their hearts. There are instances where these traditional beliefs and values come in the way of their education. For instances, the education of the girl child is taken for granted while giving preferences to the male child, which may stem from poverty. Furthermore, the first male child is given much attention than the rest of the siblings. This acknowledgement at times act as a stumbling block to the poor families, and there is no room for redemption when the one who is given all the attention fails to live up to the family's expectation and fails to shoulder the family's responsibilities.

ii) Participation

Participation of children in the school and the learning process only begins when they have been assured of physical access. Ensuring physical access despite the various social and physical circumstances is not an end, but only a means to a meaningful participation. There are still various factors of exclusion that keeps the child from participation, if not access. This is because social exclusion is linked with the denial of equal opportunities to different groups with different social backgrounds (De Haan 1999; Thorat 2003), and that educational exclusion is closely associated with social exclusion (Sayeed and Soudien 2003; Sen 1999; Subrahmanian 2003). Retention and participation of girl student is still an issue, especially the girls from lower socio-economic sections, from the poorest of families are facing far worst situation that the others (Ramachandran, 2003),

1.9 Policy Perspectives

Access to education has found the central stage, and has drawn attention of the state, which is evident from the National Policy on Education (NPE) (1986) and its Programme of Action (POA) (1992) that followed. It postulates that all children, irrespective of caste, creed, location or gender, should have access to elementary education of a comparable quality. The same has been reaffirmed by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 to bridge the social category gaps in access, participation, and learning outcomes in school education (p. 24).

Further, NEP-2020 also emphasised on constituting a 'Gender-Inclusion Fund' to build the nation 's capacity to provide equitable quality education for all girls as well as transgender students. The fund will be available to States to implement priorities determined by the central government critical for assisting female and transgender children in gaining access to education (such as the provisions of sanitation and toilets, bicycles, conditional cash transfers, etc.); funds will also enable States to support and scale effective community-based interventions that address local context-specific barriers to female and transgender children's access to and participation in education. Similarly, 'Inclusion Fund' schemes shall also be developed to address analogous access issues for other Socio Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) as well (pp. 25-28).

1.10 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework is important to assert the credibility of the subject under study. It explains and validates the research problem under study. The present study identifies the capability approach of Amartya Sen. The capability approach is employed in order to assert that enhancement of one's capability is essential in order to achieve a quality life. Education must be able to enhance not just the cognitive domain of the child, but also broaden their scope of the choices they could make for their own wellbeing. To the child coming from economically disadvantage background, education is a critical weapon to uplift the status of the family as education is a great leveller. Hence, to attain upward social mobility in all areas of life, social constrains in access to school and participation of the child in the school and classroom must be addressed at the earliest. Diagnosing this lacuna at the earlier stage is an indispensable step to change the perpetual poverty and backwardness of the families and society. And understanding this concept will enable us to understand and analyse access in the social context and participation of the child both in the school and in classroom. Ideas drawn from the theory is discussed below:

1.11. The Capability Approach

The Capability Approach is a normative framework for the evaluation and assessment of individual well-being, and proposals about social change in the society. It underlines the difference between means and ends; substantive freedoms–capabilities–and outcomes–achieved functioning's (Robeyns, 2005). The core characteristic of the capability approach is its focus on what people are effectively able to do and to be, that is, on their capabilities (Herguner, 2012: p.23). In recent years, people working in diverse sectors of education have become more fascinated in the potential of the capability approach to contribute policies and practices; hence, it is also possible to consider what it has to offer to evaluations of specific areas like education (Vaughan, 2007). Education plays an empowering role. Without education, people can be subject to discrimination by those more dominant in society. Educational development has also been the prime mover in changing public perception of the role of human rights. It can also make a difference to the awareness and understanding of legal rights (Dreze & Sen, 2013). Hence, understanding education in light of the above statement, as an enabler

and agent of change is crucial. With social disparity so entrenched and the inequality that permeates the society so evident, education can be an agent of change towards minimising these social gaps if not demolished.

Sen (1992) argues that standard criteria like literacy rates or qualifications gained by passing an examination is not enough to assess the state of education. According to him the progress of education should be judged on the real freedoms, opportunities and options a learner has to make informed choices to achieve a life she/he has reasons to value. And it is in the light of these that the present study has been envisaged, i.e., to delve deeper and understand how education is an enabling tool shaping the lives of people and enlarging their scope for the future through the enhancement of their capabilities. Building on his argument further, Sen identifies three ways in which education can help capabilities—it is **instrumental, empowering and redistributive**. Instrumentally, education enables development, and that this development does not include mere growth in economic terms, but also a society's capacity for critical reflection. Education also enables people's participation in the same way by fostering dialogue, which is a necessary tool to ensure that everyone's concern is taken into account. Participation of children in education is of crucial importance, so that later in life they will eventually engage themselves and help contribute for the betterment of the society. And inculcating this culture of participation of children early at the elementary level is an inevitable step towards that fulfilment (Pareira et al., 2016, pp. 84-85).

In addition, education also plays an empowering role, without which people can be subject to discrimination by those dominant in the society. Dominance can emanate from different dimensions—caste, class, religion, tribe and even clan in the context of the tribal under study. Education thus create room for empowerment through which economically weaker families subject to poverty will be emancipated. Education is unique in that it is not only a human right but also a means to the realisation of other human rights, which is a crude example of empowerment through education. In addition, according to Sen education too has a distributive role to play. Without education, people might be constrained to find menial jobs that they do not cherish or fulfil their desires. Therefore, one's ability to convert facilities like education into

15

capabilities is important (Sen, 1992, Pareira et al., 2016).

Furthermore, ensuring that every child gets their due share of education is a step towards protecting the child's dignity, and paving the pathway to achieve his best potential. It is often the lack of capabilities available to the poor and the disadvantaged section of the society, coupled with the lack of freedom of choices that stems from poverty which has narrowed their life's choices that is critical for their liberation out of perpetual poverty. When education becomes a commodity that is hard for layman to access, the deprivation imprisons their cognitive minds from making strides to liberate themselves from the clutch of several circumstances that has held them to the vicious cycle of poverty and misery. Hence, education is a critical tool that is inevitable for the poor to emancipate themselves from all social maladies.

1.11.1 What Capability Approach Meant for the Tribal Children in the Context of this Study

In the light of NEP 2020, quality education must be provided to all students, irrespective of their place of residence, with particular focus on historically marginalised, disadvantaged, and underrepresented groups. Since education is a great leveler and is the best tool for achieving economic and social mobility, inclusion, and equality, initiatives must be in place to ensure that all students from such groups, despite inherent obstacles, are provided various targeted opportunities to enter and excel in the educational system (pp:6-7). This is a positive step towards realising the potential of all children, which thereby is the stepping stone to enhancing their capabilities. Because without capability enhancement, any form of progress that could transform their socio-economic status will be compromised leaving no room for progress and redemption. Hence, it is pertinent to understand their problems from their perspective so that enhancement of their capabilities that could be instrumental in changing the course of their future is addressed through the empirical findings.

1.12 Rationale of the Research

Lack of academic engagement with respect to social access and participation in government, private, and including government aided schools amongst the minority populace—tribals, poor and economically disadvantage groups in Churachandpur district propelled the direction of this research. There is a critical need to comprehensively study

and understand the factors that has direct or indirect link to access and participation of children at the elementary level in the district amongst this populace. This is to ensure that adequate steps could be taken to realise the goals of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) as envisioned in RTE.

In Manipur, the six Autonomous Districts Councils (ADCs)—Churachandpur, Chandel, Kangpokpi, Senapati, Tamenglong and Ukhrul, which are all hill districts are inhabited by tribal communities, majorly divided into Nagas and Kukis. The two major tribes, have kindred tribes, with unique cultures, customs, and belief systems whose physical access to education has improved over the years, however, meaningful participation in the school and classroom is still in question. The impact of education are also felt differently in the hill districts as compared to the districts situated in the valley. Physical access to schools in the valley districts is better off than those in the hill districts due to the topographical conveniences. Kengoo (2012) opined that schools in the hill areas lag in terms of infrastructure, availability of teachers and regular functioning of schools (p. 136).

The study of Tamenglong and Ukhrul district in Manipur, revealed that the development of elementary education in the two hill districts remains below average, as the progress has been hampered due to prevalence of various problems unique to the region (Ringmiso, 2013). Unlike schools in the valley, the progress in the hill regions is hampered by various bottlenecks—rural underdevelopment, rough hill terrains, absence of all seasons motorable roads, scattered villages, frequent insurgent activities, and low level of literacy. Instances of acute negligence of education among the poor due to various social, economic, and political setbacks are still rampant, perpetuating their educational plight.

To tackle this menace, the state through different measures also tries to absorb children to schools through attractive amenities like free books, free uniform, mid-day meals, but government schools continue to be riddled with absenteeism, lack of accountability, retention problems and various other issues (Debarrma, 2009). Lack of infrastructure, teaching-learning equipment and other facilities, disproportion of pupil-teacher ratios, quality education, and classroom teachers' ratio, etc., are also posing a great threat to fulfillment of long cherished educational goals in India (Kamra and Sheokand, 2016).

This grim reality continues to persist even after enforcement of SSA and RTE Act, 2009 in government schools, and the earnest quest to ensure universal access and participation to education has made a little or no progress in some areas of Manipur and has become more evident over the years.

With this backdrop, the study is designed to explore the problems and issues of social access and participation in basic education (elementary level). It intends to study and understand the underlying social factors that thwarts children from having access to education and those hurdles that keep the child from participating both in the school and classrooms despite having been enrolled. The study proposed to analyse the problems amongst the tribals living in Churachandpur district of Manipur. And the reason for choosing the district and tribals is because, most of the tribals are bound by customs and traditions, and these values they hold closely at times stands in the way ensuring equitable education, hence, the issue of equity becomes the elephant in the room. In addition, being a socially cohesive community, there are various social factors that does not allow the intent of various provisions to take concrete shape.

1.13 Statement of the Problem

Awareness of RTE provisions and its implementation at the ground level reveals the short-sightedness of the parents, teachers, and other stakeholders in the educational discourse. Similarly, access to school is dependent on various social factors, which often act as a stumbling block for effective implementation of the act. A study by Rana and Das (2004) in the tribal villages of Jharkhand has revealed that the daily struggle for food preoccupies the households and renders them less capable of sending children to school. Their vulnerability deepens further during exogenous shocks such as sickness or death of an earning member which causes children to take up economic roles in the family. The pressure of unsustainable livelihoods, weighing of costs and perceived benefits of educating a child ultimately decides schooling opportunities that children actually receive (quoted in Thapa & Sarkar, 2019, p. 25). These factors pose a challenging pathway for the poor and economically disadvantage families.

In addition, effective participation of the child enrolled in the school is often given inadequate attention. The case is acute when children of the poor and vulnerable

families in government schools are considered. This conundrum further extends even in private schools not just in the rural areas, but even in the urban towns. The research under study goes beyond the age-appropriate enrolment (school participation) of the child as per the RTE provision. It looks into the 'classroom participation' post enrolment to understand if the child is actively engaged (participating) in the classroom transactions. It is, therefore, pertinent to look beyond the lens of mere access and enrolment to understand the learning pedagogy at the elementary level. Hence, these existing issues and challenges evoke questions that can only be answered through research. To answer these questions, the following problem is proposed which is stated as:

A Study of Social Access and Participation at The Elementary Level in Manipur: A Case Study of Churachandpur District.

1.14 Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the study:

- To examine different factors that determine children's access and participation in school in the context of Churachandpur district of Manipur.

- To study the background of students facing the issue of social access and participation at the elementary level.

- To find out various actions that could be employed to achieve universal access and improve participation of children at the elementary level.

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH SETTING AND METHODOLOGY

SECTION I: RESEARCH SETTING

2.1 Brief Profile of Manipur

Manipur is one of the Border States in the Northeastern part of the country having an international boundary of about 352 kms long stretch of land with Myanmar (Sagaing Region and Chin State) in the east, Assam in the West, Nagaland in the North and Mizoram in the South. It lies between 23.8°N to 25.7°N latitude and 93.5°E to 94.8°E longitude. The capital of Manipur is Imphal. It is an oval-shaped valley of approximately 700 square miles (2,000 km) surrounded by blue mountains and is at an elevation of 790 meters above the sea level.

The valley is inhabited by a composite of communities comprising of Meeteis, Tribals, Muslims, Nepalis, Bengalis, Jains and Sikhs and others. Among them the Meeteis forms the largest population and they are concentrated in the valley. The valley districts comprise of—Bishnupur, Imphal East, Imphal West, Kakching and Thoubal occupying only 8 per cent of the total geographical area. On the other hand, the hill districts comprise of—Chandel, Churachandpur, Jiribam, Kangpokpi, Noney, Pherzawl, Senapati, Kamjong, Tamenglong, Tengnoupal, Ukhrul occupying 93 per cent of the state total geographical area. In terms of population concentration, the population density in the valley districts is high inhabited by the above-mentioned communities, while districts in the hills are sparsely populated with tribal concentration. Imphal west has the highest population amongst the valley districts and the highest in the state. While Churachandpur district has the highest population amongst the hill district, it is the fifth highest amongst the 9 districts as per the 2011. In terms of literacy Imphal West comes at the top with 86.08 per cent while Churachandpur with 82.78 per cent comes in the second place, highest amongst the districts in the hills.

Figure 1. 1: Sixteen districts of Manipur.

Source: Economic Survey Manipur 2020-21

2. 1.1 Administrative Set up

Prior to its rule by the Britishers, Manipur was an Independent princely State till 1891. After the Independence of India in 1947, the Princely State of Manipur merged with the Indian Union on October 15, 1949. Manipur became a full-fledged State of India on 21 January 1972 with a Legislative Assembly of 60 seats of which 19 are reserved for Scheduled Tribes and 1 for the Scheduled Caste.

The State is broadly be divided into two topographical regions, i.e., the Hills and the Valley. The Hills comprises of the ten districts, viz., Chandel, Churachandpur, Kamjong, Kangpokpi, Noney, Pherzawl, Senapati, Tamenglong, Tengnoupal and Ukhrul districts while the Valley comprises of six districts, viz., Bishnupur, Kakching,

21

Imphal East, Imphal West, Jiribam and Thoubal. The hill districts occupy about 91 percent (20,089 sq. km.) of the total area of the state and the valley occupies only about 9 percent (2,238 sq. km.) of the total area of the state.

2. 1.2 Population

The state has a total population of 28,55,794, of which male and female population are 1,438,586 and 1,417,208 respectively and with a density of 128 person per kilometer as per the 2011 census. The Sex Ratio in Manipur is 987 for each 1000 male and has increased from 978 per 1000 males since the last census. The child sex ratio is 934 per 1000 males and has decreased as compared to 975 in the last census. Manipur has a literacy rate of 79.85 percent, with male literacy at 86.49 percent and female literacy at 73.17 percent.

Table 2. 1: District wise information on population, growth, sex ratio, literacy and density in Manipur as per 2011 census

District	Population	Male population	Female population	Growth	Sex ratio	Literacy	Density
Bishnupur	240363	120185	120178	15.36	1000	76.35	485
Chandel	144028	74543	69485	21.72	932	70.85	43
Churachandpur	271274	137748	133526	19.03	969	84.29	59
Imphal East	452661	225130	227531	14.63	1011	82.81	638
Imphal West	514683	253628	261055	15.82	1029	86.7	992
Senapati	354972	183081	171891	25.16	939	75	109
Tamenglong	140143	71762	68381	25.69	953	70.4	32
Thoubal	420517	209674	210843	15.48	1006	76.66	818
Ukhrul	183115	94013	89102	30.07	948	81.87	40

Source: Manipur Sex Ratio (2011 Census)

2.1.3 Literacy in Manipur

It has been observed that significant progress had been made in term of literacy rate in the state. The literacy rate in Manipur has gone up from 11 % in 1951 to 76.94 % in 2011. In the state, the rate of male literacy was as high as 83.58 % while rate of the female literacy stood at 70.26 % in 2011. Despite the rise in literacy rate, the absolute number of illiterates has also increased. Out of the total literates, the percentage of male and female is 54.49% and 45.51% respectively while in case of illiterate, the percentage of female (57.91%) is higher than that of male (42.09%) in Manipur. Among the districts, Imphal West had the highest number of literates followed by Imphal East and

Thoubal while Tamenglong recorded the least. The highest number of illiterates is recorded in Senapati (2,14,671) followed by Thoubal (1,52,864) and Imphal East (1,31,499) and the lowest in Chandel (53,880) District as evident from **Table No. 2.**

Table 2. 2: District wise Number of literates and illiterate persons of Manipur according to 2011 census

Sl. No.	State/District	Number of literate			Number of illiterate		
		Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Manipur	**1908476**	**1039858**	**868618**	**947318**	**398728**	**548590**
1.	Senapati	264477	148012	116465	214671	99311	115360
2.	Tamenglong	85006	47403	37603	55645	24968	30677
3.	Churachandpur	195935	104013	91922	78208	34807	43401
4.	Chandel	90302	51053	39249	53880	23526	30354
5.	Ukhrul	129829	70148	59631	54169	24570	29599
6.	Imphal East	324664	173314	151350	131449	52780	78669
7.	Imphal West	392626	205985	186641	125366	49069	76297
8.	Bishnupur	156333	87313	69020	81066	31469	49597
9.	Thoubal	269304	152617	116687	152864	58228	94636

Source: Economic Survey of Manipur (2020-21)

2.1.4 Profile of Hill Districts of Manipur

Prior to 2016 there were only nine districts in Manipur. However, with the creation of another seven districts (5 hill districts and 2 valley districts), the total number of districts now stands at sixteen. The hill area of Manipur is characterised by exotic landscapes, green valleys, blue lakes, forests, wild animals and there are still unexplored area which has both scenic and mosaics of culture. The ranges of hills are in a sense offshoot of the Himalayas. The Shangpo or the Brahmaputra after flowing in a West-to-east direction on the north of the Himalayas makes a sharp bend and enters Assam near 95º E longitude. Ranges of mountains still continue from this point towards the east. The hill ranges of Manipur are higher in the north, reaching well over 2,700 meters above the sea level and then gradually diminishing in height as they run towards the south.

2.1.5 People

The people living in the hills are of mongoloid stock, and speak Tibeto-Burman sect of language. The tribes are divided into two major groups namely: (i) the Nagas and (ii) the Kuki-chin-mizos. The naga tribal's are such as the Zemi's, the Liangmei's, the Rongmei's, and the Kabui's which they live in Tamenglong Districts. The Mao's, the Maram's, the Thangal's and the Poumai's live in the Senapati Districts. The Tangkhuls live in the Ukhrul Districts. The Maring's, the Mayon's, the Monsang's, the Lamkang's, and the Anal's also known as the old kukis live in Chandel Districts. On the other hand, the Kuki-chin-mizo tribes have their maximum concentration in Chandel, Churachandpur, Kangpokpi, Pherzawl, Tengnoupal districts and sparsely present in Tamenglong, Noney, Ukhrul and even in the two valley districts of Imphal East and Imphal West. At present, there are 29 recognized tribes in Manipur as per the 2011 census.

2.2 A Brief Profile of Churachandpur District

The district of Churachandpur derives its name from the town of Churachandpur after Sir Churachand Singh, the Maharaja of Manipur. It lies on the south-western part of Manipur between 24.0 N and 24.3 N latitutde and 93.15 E and 94.0 E longitude. The district is bounded on the north by Tamenglong District, on the east by the districts of Imphal and Chandel, on the south by Myanmar (Burma) and Mizoram and on the west by the State of Mizoram and Assam. The average altitude of the district is 914.0 metres above the mean sea level. The area of the district as furnished by the Surveyor General of India is 4570.0 sq.km.

Churachandpur, the headquarters of a majorly Christian dominated district locally known as Lamka is located 60 km south of the capital Imphal. The district is situated in the south west part of Manipur. The district is bounded by Senapati district in the north, Bishnupur and Chandel districts in the east, Assam and Mizoram state in the west and Myanmar in the south. The total geographical area of Churachandpur district is 4,570 sq.km. It lies between 23º 55'N and 24º 30'N Latitudes and between 92º 59'E to 93º 50'E longitudes. The topography of the district is hilly. The district got its name "Churachandpur" from the Manipur king Churachand Maharaja. It is home to 271,274

people, as per 2011 census, dominated by 15 ethnic groups like the Chin, Kuki, Mizo, and Zomi.

Out of the total Churachandpur population for 2011 census, 6.70 percent lives in urban regions of district. In total 18,357 people lives in urban areas of which males are 9,161 and females are 9,196. Sex Ratio in urban region of Churachandpur district is 1004 as per 2011 census data. Similarly, child sex ratio in Churachandpur district was 945 in 2011 census. Child population (0-6) in urban region was 2,095 of which males and females were 1,077 and 1,018. This child population figure of Churachandpur district is 11.76 % of total urban population. Average literacy rate in Churachandpur district as per census 2011 is 88.65 % of which males and females are 92.89 % and 84.47 % literates respectively. In actual number 14,417 people are literate in urban region of which males and females are 7,509 and 6,908 respectively.

As per 2011 census, 93.30 % population of Churachandpur districts lives in rural areas of villages. The total Churachandpur district population living in rural areas is 255,786 of which males and females are 129,659 and 126,127 respectively. In rural areas of Churachandpur district, sex ratio is 973 females per 1000 males. If child sex ratio data of Churachandpur district is considered, figure is 948 girls per 1000 boys. Child population in the age 0-6 is 35,350 in rural areas of which males were 18,150 and females were 17,200. The child population comprises 14.00 % of total rural population of Churachandpur district. Literacy rate in rural areas of Churachandpur district is 82.34 % as per census data 2011. Gender wise, male and female literacy stood at 86.54 and 78.05 percent respectively. In total, 181,518 people were literate of which males and females were 96,504 and 85,014 respectively.

Geography

Geographically, Major parts of the district are occupied by rugged and uneven terrains/hills constituting parts of the southern extension of Naga Hill ranges, with their elevation ranging from 350 to 1,950 m above mean sea level (AMSL). Of the total geographical area of 4,570 sq. km. of the district, about 5.57%, i.e., 255 sq. km. is the valley portion. A small and narrow valley adjoining Churachandpur having an area extent of 200 sq. km. is present through which the Khuga River, a tributary of Manipur River is flowing towards northern direction. This valley actually forms the southern

extension of Manipur valley and is locally known as Khuga valley. In addition, small valley areas are seen around Behiang, Leizangphai and Tuilaphai. The area is mainly drained by the tributaries viz. Khuga, Tuila, Tuili, Leimatak, Tuivai and Barak of Manipur River. Leimatak River and Tuipiilui River, tributaries of Irang River flow towards northerly direction, while the rest of the rivers flow in general southerly direction. Most of these rivercourses are structurally controlled and are parallel to sub-parallel with one another, generally flowing in the direction of NNE-SSW. Dendritic to parallel drainage pattern is also noticed in the district (District Survey Report, 2020: p.3)

2.2.1 Administrative Division

The district Magistrate-Cum-Deputy Commissioner (District Collector) is the head of the district. He is assisted by an Additional Deputy Commissioner/Additional District Magistrate and Assistant Commissioner by such other officers and staff as are appointed from time to time.

Maintainace of law and order, revenue administration, economic development are the main duties of the District Administration. The district is divided into a number of administrative units (Subdivision) which are in the charge of Sub-Divisional Officer (Magistrate). The district has five such subdivisions namely (I) Tipaimukh Sub-Division (II) Thanlon Sub-Division (III) Churachandpur North Sub-Division (IV) Churachandpur Sub-Division (V) Singngat Sub-Division having their headquarters respectively at Parbung, Thanlon, Henglep, Churachandpur and Singngat.

Each Sub-Division is concurrently a Tribal Development Block and each Sub-Divisional Officer functions as Block Development Officer in their respective jurisdictions. However, Churachandpur Sub-Division has an additional Tribal Development Block in the name of Samulamlan Tribal Development Block in charge of by a separate Block Development Officer who is junior in rank to that of a Sub-Divisional Officer (District Census Handbook, 2011).

Table 2. 3: Administrative Division Churachandpur

Administrative Divisions	No. of units
Sub-divisions	5
Tribal Development Blocks	6
Village Authority	612
Sub-Deputy Collector Centre	9
Vidhan Sabha Seats	6
District Council Seats	20

Source: District Report Churachandpur

Figure 1. 2: The Five Administrative Sub-division of Churachandpur District
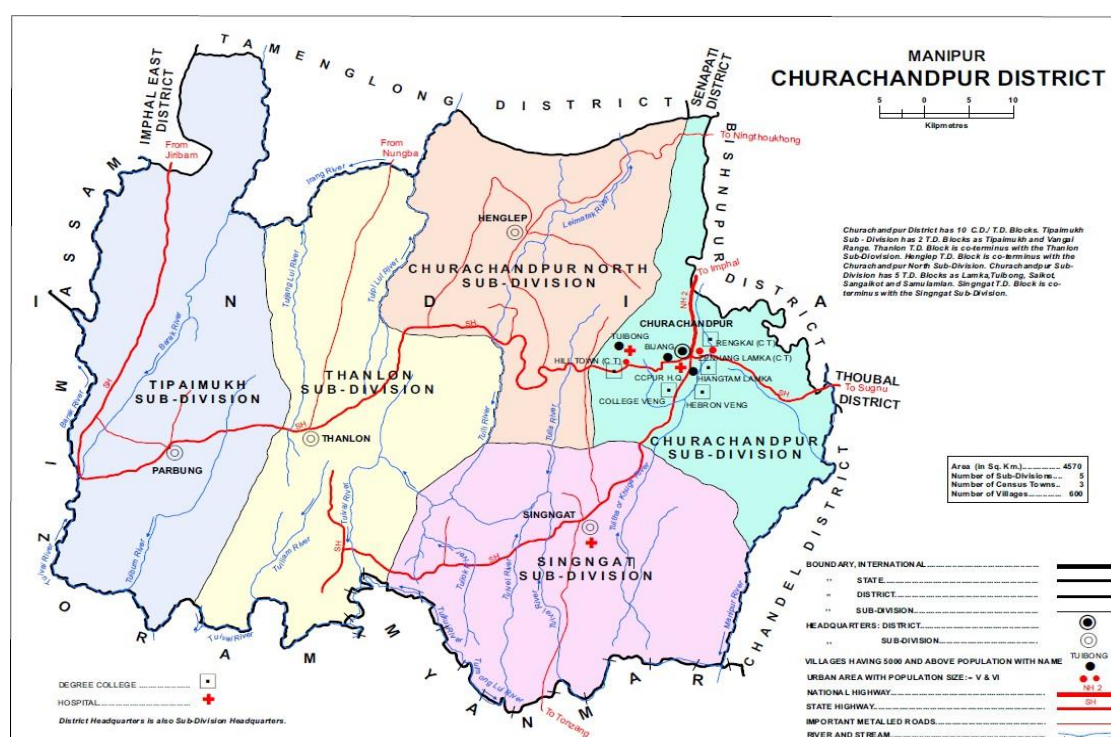
Source: District Census Handbook 2011 (p.3)

2.2.2 Brief Description of Area under Research

This research was carried out within Tuibong block, Saikot constituency in Churachandpur district of Manipur. The Block is 7 kilometers away from the main town, Churachandpur. The area is inhabited by a homogeneous community—the Thadou-Kuki tribal groups, who constitutes the major tribal groups in the district. The community's main source of income is subsistent agriculture and manual labour as only few families are into regular government service. The area is specifically chosen considering the social, economic and educational backwardness of the place. The poor access and participation of children from these social settings in the block is the area that needs critical attention as there has been perpetual drawbacks in their educational

status, with a stigma attached to this area as 'backward.'

The block under study is Tuibong Block. It has a total of 189 villages as per the 2011 census. The data has been collected from four schools from four different villages within the block—Khengjang village, Naa'ang village, Koite village, and Molnom village. Government schools were selected from Koite and Molnom, whereas private schools were from Khengjang and Naa' ang respectively. The reason for choosing government schools from these two locations despite the physical existence of neighborhood schools in the vicinity s due to the fact that the schools nearby are mostly dormant and the schools were inactive at the time this research was conducted.

As highlighted in Chapter III, data was collected from teachers, parents, school heads and students from each school by using a structured interview. The observation schedule and informal interaction method was also used to understand the general perspective and how the classroom discourse shapes and enhances the child's capability reflected in the behavior within and beyond the school.

ii) Villages

The district has a total 596 villages, an increase of 56 villages from that of 2001. Churachandpur sub-division has a total of 321 villages followed by Churachadpur North with 122, Singngat 64, Thanlon 49 and Tipaimukh has only 40 villages. Most of the villages are of smaller sizes and large size villages are very few. Villages having less than 500 population constitute 80.03 per cent of the total villages.

iii) Literacy

There are 195,935 persons which are literate by census definition (78,208 persons are illiterate) and the literacy rate is 82.78 per cent and the district ranks second in the state and first among the hill district. The literacy rate for the state is 76.9 per cent. The male's literacy rate in 2011 is 87.0 per cent against the female's literacy rate of 78.5 per cent, the gender literacy gap is therefore 8.5 points. The literacy rate among scheduled caste and scheduled tribe is 72.9 and 82.8 respectively. About 92.9 per cent of the total population of the district is Scheduled Tribes, the absolute population being 254,787 persons, of which 126,328 are males and the rest 128,459 are females. Only 0.2 per cent of the population belongs to Scheduled Castes whereas proportion of general population

is 6.9 per cent. Of the total population, 44.7 per cent (1,22,655 persons) are workers, the percentage of main workers being 32.8 per cent whereas 12.0 per cent are marginal and 55.3 per cent are non- worker. Among the categories of workers, Cultivators constitute 52.86 per cent of the total work force while 6.75 Agricultural labourers, 4.13 Household Industry worker and the rest 36.26 per cent are other workers

Table 2. 4: Literacy Rate Block Wise (Rural)

Sr.No.	Name of TD Block	Number of literates and illiterates						Literacy rate			Gap in male-female literacy rate
		Number of literates			Number of illiterates						
		Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	0012-Tipaimukh	11929	6009	5920	4188	1963	2225	87.15	89.02	85.33	3.69
2	0013-Vangai Range	8927	4721	4206	3751	1728	2023	80.74	83.79	77.57	6.22
3	0014-Thanlon	11766	6429	5337	6698	3056	3642	75.03	80.08	69.74	10.34
4	0015-Henglep	19439	10632	8807	11177	5131	6046	73.9	78.97	68.59	10.38
5	0016-Lamka	42678	21699	20979	12353	5366	6987	89.56	93.17	86.11	7.06
6	0017-Tuibong	35390	18520	16870	12523	5380	7143	85.78	90.09	81.49	8.6
7	0018-Saikot	10848	6032	4816	3513	1592	1921	85.69	89.28	81.59	7.69
8	0019-Sangaikot	8551	4551	4000	4806	2146	2660	75.68	80.46	70.88	9.58
9	0020-Samulamlan	18141	10056	8085	6978	3039	3939	82.65	87.86	76.98	10.88
10	0021-Singngat	13849	7855	5994	8281	3754	4527	73.32	79.11	66.9	12.21
	Total	**181518**	**96504**	**85014**	**74268**	**33155**	**41113**	**82.34**	**86.54**	**78.05**	**8.49**

Source: District Census Handbook 2011 (p.45)

Table 2. 5: Literacy Rate Block Wise (Town)

Sr. No.	Name of town	Number of literates and illiterates						Literacy rate			Gap in male-female literacy rate
		Number of literates			Number of illiterates						
		Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	269800-Zenhang Lamka (CT)	5733	2964	2769	2038	801	1237	83.12	89.36	77.35	12.01
2	269801-Rengkai (CT)	6868	3634	3234	1425	653	772	93.29	95.58	90.84	4.74
3	269802-Hill Town (CT)	1816	911	905	477	198	279	90.66	94.4	87.19	7.21
	District (Urban): Churachandpur(274)	14417	7509	6908	3940	1652	2288	88.65	92.89	84.47	8.42

Source: District Census Handbook 2011 (p. 43)

In terms of the literacy rate, the gaps between literates and illiterates are higher in the rural areas and narrow in the urban areas (table 4.6 and table 4.7). The reason is because of the concentration of educational facilities in the urban towns, while those in the peripheries are comparatively less advance, and hence educationally backward resulting in the gaps.

SECTION II: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Method

The present study employs a mixed methods approach. This is because mixed-method research combines elements of quantitative research and qualitative research in order to answer the research questions in an in-depth manner. Moreover, a mixed methods can also give us a more complete picture than a standalone quantitative or qualitative study.

The study is descriptive and analytical in the sense that it delves deep into the subject under study. It analyses the factors and challenges of social access and participation at the elementary level with a macroscopic approach through the lens of RTE and tis provisions. An in-depth study is done through the perspectives of the respondents—teachers, parents, school heads and students. It is also qualitative research as data are qualitatively analysed.

3.2 Population

The present study was undertaken in Churachandpur District of Manipur. Four schools (two private and two government schools) located in in Tuiboung block comprised the population of this study. Likewise, teachers, parents, and students (5 in each category from four Schools) whose children were studying in these sampled schools, and four school heads formed the composition of the populations.

3.3 SAMPLE OF SCHOOLS

i) Sampling frame

Four schools (2 government schools and 2 private unaided schools) from Tuiboung blocks were taken as a source material.

ii) Sample

Four schools from Saikot Constituency, Tuiboung block were selected through a simple random sampling technique. Stratified random sampling was adopted for the selection of parents, teachers and students. The final sample size comprised of 120 (Out of which there were 40 parents, 40 teachers, and 40 students).

3.4 Sources of Data

Keeping in view the nature and objectives of this study the researcher made use of both primary and secondary data. The research employs a case study method to minutely study and delve deep to give concerted emphasis on the subject under study. The research relies on both primary and secondary data/sources. However, secondary data composed a more prominent source due to the difficulties posed by the pandemic. Despite the restrictions and challenges posed by the pandemic Primary data was collected through fieldwork in selected schools in Tuibong block, Churachandpur district, Manipur.

3.5 Tools and Techniques used for Data Collection

Interviews were conducted using both close-ended questions (quantitative), open-ended questions (qualitative). A total of 120 respondents were interviewed in all the four schools—with school heads (headmasters), school teachers, students, and parents. The researcher also conducted informal conversations with parents on several occasions. Based on the objectives of the study, interview schedules and questionnaires were prepared. The schedules included School Principal/headmaster Schedule, Teacher schedule, Student Schedule and Parent Schedule. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was also conducted with the members of the SMCs. The reason for choosing FGD in the research is because; focus groups are contrived settings which bring together a specifically chosen sector of the population so as to discuss a particular theme or topic, where the interaction with the group leads to data and outcomes (Cohen, et al., 2011). With this idea in mind FGD was conducted although it was way more complex than imagined.

CHAPTER – III

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

3.0 Introduction

Study in any field of knowledge is worthwhile when the researcher has an adequate familiarity on the subject area, he/she intends to research upon by referring upon the work which has already been done for a significant outcome. To tackle the present problem in depth, it is imperative to have a clear conceptual understanding of the subject or area of study, which is quite impossible without reviewing the previous works done in that area. Literature review thus throws light on the areas touched upon and those areas that needs to be address to bridge the gaps and ensure continuum of the area under study, so that contribution can be made to further the understanding of the area under investigation. Best (1977) asserted that "familiarity with the literature on any problem area helps the student to discover what is already known; what others had attempted to find out; what method of attach have been promising or disappointing and what problems remained to be solved." This creates room for the scholar or the researcher to strategized his method of study to address the topic/subject under research.

The review of literatures focuses on the conceptual understanding of the subject under study through the studies that has already been done. The aim is to ascertain the progress of the subject knowledge under study and built on the arguments through the gaps observed. Through the knowledge of the existing studies, the various factors that determine access and participation of the child in the educational discourse will be analysed.

3.1 Access and Participation: A Reality Check

Access to basic education in India is improving, but areas of concern remain with respect to equity and quality (Sinha and Reddy, 2010; Juneja, 2010; Smita, 2008; Härmä, 2010; Sedwal and Kamat, 2008; Bandyopadhyay and Subrahmanian, 2008). Many children are still not able to access a quality education (Govinda Madhumita Bandyopadhyay, 2010: p.3). A close look at the Indian society reveals growing inequality in educational access and participation having its roots in India's patriarchal and caste-based stratified social structure. Opportunities and resources are not distributed fairly and the access to them is determined by the position of individuals in society based on caste, class and gender, leading to disparity in education (B a n d y o p a d h y a y nd.). Further, income poverty does not only diminish opportunities for children's education but it does create other barriers to schooling that reduces meaningful access to schools as well (Banerji, 1997; Bhatty, 1998a, 1998b; Rana & Das, 2004; Smitha & Panjiar, 2007; Tilak, 2007, Thapa & Sarkar, 2019). For instance, a study by Rana and Das (2004) in the tribal villages of Jharkhand has revealed that the daily struggle for food preoccupies the households and renders them less capable of sending children to school. Their vulnerability deepens further during exogenous shocks such as sickness or death of an earning member which causes children to take up economic roles in the family (Thapa and Sarkar, 2019. p.259).

A study conducted in Pakistan has also found how the educational system is riddled with gigantic problem that overshadows all others, is the lack of facilities, shortage of schools, and the non-existence of any kind of schooling, even on the primary level, especially in rural areas (Shahzad et al., 2010: p. 139). Hence, factors that act as a hurdle to the successful completion of elementary schooling are not only manifold but also strengthens each other to pose a threat to those disadvantaged children in the society. In Manipur, lack of access to quality and affordable education as well as vocational training institutes outside the capital city of Imphal as a critical reason that led students from other parts of the state to drop out before acquiring any meaningful educational qualification (Sharma, 2016. p. 3)

Although physical access to school today may not be a challenge that is hard to achieve as it has already made tremendous improvement over the years, social access, however is still an area that demands attention and focus due to the entrenched social inequality that determines the real beneficiaries when it comes to accessing public goods.

Education despite being promoted on a large scale by the government still struggles to survive. Increase in dropout rate, decrease in enrolment rate. Lack of infrastructural facilities, indifferent attitude of teachers towards students and vague understanding of the benefits of education among the parents are some of the major ills plaguing educational scenario in our country (Joshi, 2004).

3.2 Social Access and Participation in the School

To ascertain social access and meaningful participation of the child to school, addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education (UNESCO, 2005) is critical. In short, it means strengthening the capacity of the education system to reach out to all learners, involving restructuring of the culture, policies and practices in schools so that they can effectively respond to the diversity of needs faced by the students in their classrooms (Maheshwari & Shapurkar, 2015, Sujatha & Sucharita, 2016).

The inclusion of 25 per cent reservation in the RTE Act for those Economically Weaker Section (EWS) at the entry level, i.e., class I is to ensure social inclusion, and to negate those social factors that pose a hindrance to the child's access to education. It is also meant to guarantee that no child feels alienated because of their social background, and live with the feeling of being a minor group within the classroom. This in return is meant to encouraged participation of the child in the learning discourse. But more often than not, it is found that the there is a huge mismatch in the intend and the implementation at the grassroot.

3.3 Distance Factor

Distance travelled to school also has a directly proportional relationship with absenteeism, delinquency, truancy, indiscipline and non-attendance in school. When distance travelled to school is too far for the child, besides fatigue, there is a tendency for the child to be truant and may drop out of school completely (Arubayi, 2005; Duze, 2010, Chugh, 2020). Through empirical evidence, Duze (2010) found that a number of primary and secondary schools in select provinces of Nigeria were located far away from homes of children and this had a negative impact on the attendance of students in schools. Further, Chugh (2014) found that availability of school in the neighborhood

impacted the participation of children. The study revealed that participation of children from slums of Hyderabad was higher in comparison to Ludhiana as slums in Ludhiana did not have close access to schools (Chugh, 2020: p.10). In addition, the remoteness of habitations within rural areas also affects the participation of children, particularly girls and those with disabilities (Create, 2009: p.3).

3.4 Socio-Economic Factor

The socio-economic background of children acts as a determinant for access to schools, which differ in terms of resources and quality. As Govinda points out, 'The life pattern of poorer people remains the same, affecting their participation in the school process, irrespective of the fact that they live in a better provided urban environment.' Many children from disadvantaged groups have to join the labour force to support their family, thereby losing the chance of receiving education. Lack of parental care and attention negatively impacts not only their education but also their health, nutritional level, physical growth, emotional and cognitive development. A large number of these children, though enrolled in school, fail to attend regularly, resulting in their poor learning attainment (https://www.india-seminar.com/2012/638/638_madhumita.htm. accessed on 7/5/2022).

As per the 75th round household survey by NSSO in 2017-18, the number of out of school children in the age group of 6 to 17 years was 3.22 crore. The reasons for this non-attendance are linked to the children's health and physical condition, or to their family's extreme poverty, making it necessary for the children to work. Other factors include: communities' cultural habits (e.g., encouraging early marriage), discriminatory practices against girls or certain ethnic groups, the overall environment (conflicts), the states (corrupt, fragile, non-existent, unstable, undemocratic), and political leaders (not committed enough) (Lewin, 2015, p. 8-9).

A concerted national effort will be made to ensure universal access and afford opportunity to all children of the country to obtain quality holistic education–including vocational education—from pre-school to Grade 12 by 2030 with a goal to achieve 100 per cent GER (NEP, p. 10). The aim must be for India to have an education system by 2040 that is second to none, with equitable access to the highest-quality education for

all learners regardless of social or economic background (ibid, p. 3). This renewed commitment is a push factor for the existing schemes and programmes such as the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (now the *Samagra Shiksha*), RTE and others to achieve the goals they set out to accomplish.

3.5 Supply and Demand Factor

Access issues can also arise when problems on the supply side lead to failing demand, especially among older children and in communities where the opportunity costs of school attendance are high, school quality is low, and relevance is perceived to be problematic. In this case participation in basic education may stall if no steps are taken to monitor the changing pattern of demand (Lewin, 2015: p. 35).

On the supply side governments have worked steadily to reduce the cost of schooling and thereby make educational opportunities more accessible. In recent years their efforts have moved beyond the construction and staffing of schools toward the provision of a growing variety of distance and on-line alternatives to traditional schooling, and allocation of resources to encourage student attendance at all levels of the educational system, ranging from school feeding programs in primary schools to massive subsidies for students in public universities. On the demand side governments have sought to encourage households to send their children to school through policies that encompass both gentle persuasion and active coercion. On the other hand, they have also adopted policies including compulsory schooling and child labor laws that reduce the relative cost of schooling by raising the cost of alternative uses of children's time (Plank, 2005: p. 3). Hence, educational planning must equally concentrate on both supply-side inputs and demand-side management to address the cause of dropout, which can stem from the de-motivation of the parents and children when there's no effect in the learning process.

3.6 Meaningful Access

Meaningful access would mean high attendance rates, progression through grades at the correct age with little or no repetition, and learning outcomes that confirm that basic skills are being mastered, and there is no gender discrimination. Many children are physically

present in school but not learning, and are therefore falling into the category of what is termed as zone 3 or 'silent exclusion' (Lewin, 2007; Govinda and Bandyopadhyay, 2008). Access, to be meaningful, has to pay equal and simultaneous attention to the issue of 'what happens to children who is enrolled in school?' (Lewin, 2007; Reddy and Sinha, 2010, Govinda & Udhyopadhyay, 2010).

The factors associated with meaningful and equitable access to basic education fall into five arenas, located at different levels of analysis (see Figure 3.1). A simple model includes individual and household characteristics, community-level attributes, such as livelihood and social preferences and practices, school-level attributes, and aspects of local and national educational administration and resourcing. These interact to shape meaningful and equitable access (Lewin, 2015: p. 34).

Figure 3. 1: Model of Meaningful and Equitable Access
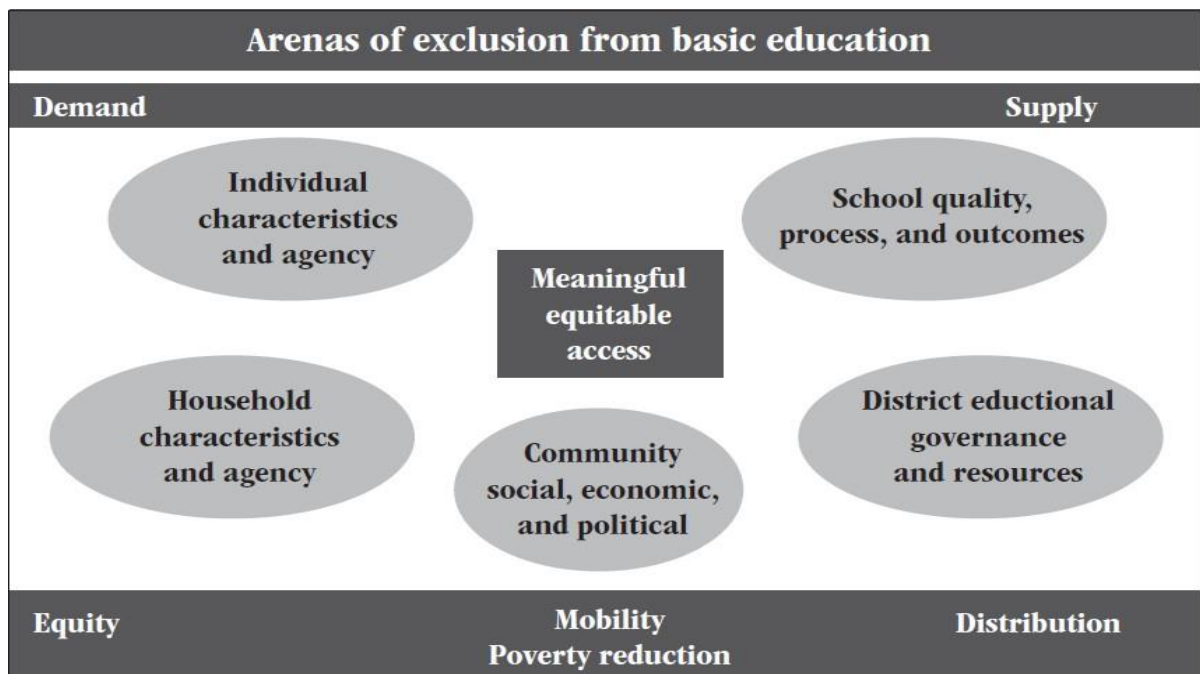
Source: Lewin 2017a, 2015.

And despite a 'no detention policy' enshrined in the RTE, many children repeat their grades and many fail to learn adequately and eventually drop out because of ineffective teaching and discriminatory attitude of teachers towards them (Bandyopadhyay, 2012), and this has hugely and negatively impacted meaningful access and participation of the child in the whole learning process. Policy makers whilst making great strides to

improve physical access to schools, have ongoing challenges to provide meaningful access for all children in India (Govinda and Bandyopadhyay, 2009). Studies have found that involvement of active school management committee (SMC) at the local level has also helped in promoting meaningful access and participation of children particularly girls (Bandyopadhyay, 2012: p. 7).

3.7 Hierarchy in Access

The socio-economic inequality and the disparities emanating from the caste-based stratified society to a great extend determines the level of access even in education. Ramachandran (2004) define 'hierarchies of accesses' of different socio-economic groups to different categories of schools. She points out that as one goes down the social and economic pyramid, access and quality issues become more pronounced. In her experience, the vast numbers of the poor in rural and urban India have to rely on government schools of different types, and the quality of these may vary. The relatively better-off in rural and urban India either access better government schools or opt for private-aided and unaided schools (Juneja, 2010).

In urban areas too, the schools in resettlement colonies are often under-resourced, with poor infrastructure while those in better-off areas have access to better facilities and better-quality provision. Thus, increasingly it appears that there is more polarised demand for some types of schools. Elite schools at the top of the hierarchy are the most sought after. Socio-economic status becomes more or less correlated with certain types of schools to which children have access (Govinda and Bandyopadhyay, 2009).

3.8 Gender Issues in Access

In a study by Govinda and Bandyopadhya (2010) it was found that in terms of access in every sphere of life, girls in India are in a more disadvantaged position than boys, and that the girls from poor, SC, ST and Muslim communities are doubly disadvantaged including education (p.350). The daughter of a poor and illiterate mother is more likely to be out of school as compared to children of educated mother (Nayar, 1999, Ramachandran, 2004, Bandyopadhyay, 2012). Rapid growth of private schools has also jeopardised gender equity. Early marriage of girls and unwillingness of parents to spend money on girl's education are important reasons among many, for not sending girls to schools in Chhattisgarh. Though all children face threat of not being sent to school when

their parents are not economically well off, girls find it even more difficult because of their prescribed gender roles in society. Besides social issues, another reason for poor attendance of girls in schools is the concern for safety. Girls belonging to disadvantaged groups face more difficulties in accessing school (Bandyopadhyay, 2012: p. 9).

Dreze and Kingdon (1999) in their PROBE survey conducted across four northern states in rural India have found that parental education (both mother and father); family income (household wealth) determines participation of the child in school, and that the effect is highly significant for girls. As per the findings, parental motivation also plays a significant role in the enrolment of the child, and the impact is positively felt in the participation of the girl child. The PROBE survey also suggests, that school participation is influenced by 'enrolment drives' undertaken by teachers at the beginning of the year. Furthermore, maternal education has a large positive effect on the daughter's chance of completing primary school. It also added that participation of a girl child is enhanced when Mid-day Meal is provided and child-teacher ratio is low in the school. The study found that lack of participation of the underprivilege social groups is partly mediated by lower parental motivation, and that lower participation of SC/ST children even after parental motivation suggest that social discrimination in the school may be involved (p. 12, 18-25).

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This section is based on the analysis of the data obtained from in-depth interviews with teachers, parents and school heads; interaction with the students through structured interviews; observations of school activities; and informal discussions with students and parents during the pilot field visit. In general, this section will discuss the thematic analysis of data, which will include the narratives of head teachers, teachers, and parents and the student themselves. This is centred around the themes like choice of schools and factors that hinders them from getting access to and participating in the school and classroom. The chapter is divided into two sections: Section I will bring to light the overview of the sample villages and schools in the district under study, and Section II will deal with the analysis of the data from the empirical findings.

SECTION I

4.2 Overview of the Village Under Study

i) Naa'ang Village

The village is located 7km away from the nearest town Tuibong. The village has only 20 households and is sparsely populated. Majority of the bonafide students come from the neighboring villages. The population is a homogeneous composition comprising of schedule tribe belonging to the Kuki community, and speak the same language, but belong to different clans. In terms of economic standing most of the families are poor and are dependent on manual labor and agriculture. Most of families reside in kutcha houses with very few households' residing in pucca houses/buildings. The village is close to the border of valley district Bishnupur. Demographic data is not available for this village as it was established only in the year 2016 and was not covered during the 2011 census.

ii) Khengjang Village

Khengjang is a village in Tuibong block in Churachandpur District of Manipur State, India. It is located 3 KM towards North from District headquarters Churachandpur, and

64 KM south from the state capital Imphal. The village is surrounded by Churachandpur block and Lamka block towards south, Henglep block towards north west, Saikot block towards north. Most of the villagers lived in pucca house while few still lived in kutcha house. The village is also under the influence of urbanisation and is growing fast. In terms of literacy, the village does not do well much, as most of the young population are still first-generation learners.

Table 4. 1: Demography of Khengjang as per 2011 Census

Census Parameter	Census Data
Census Parameter	Census Data
Total Population	766
Total No of Houses	145
Female Population %	47.4 % (363)
Total Literacy rate %	83.4 % (639)
Female Literacy rate	40.6 % (311)
Scheduled Tribes Population %	97.1 % (744)
Scheduled Caste Population %	0.0 % (0)
Working Population %	46.2 %
Child (0 -6) Population by 2011	111

Source: Khengjang village (onefivenine.com) (accessed on 8/4/22).

iii) Koite Village

Kumbipukhri (koite) is a village that lies within Tuibong block in Churachandpur district of Manipur, India. It is located 2 KM towards North from District headquarters Churachandpur and 65 KM from State capital Imphal. The village is surrounded by Churachandpur, Lamka, Saikot block towards the south, and Samulamlan block towards East. The village is old with more than 200 households, and is still growing. The rate of urbanisation is also high in the village as the NH-150 passes right through the village. Majority of the families lived in pucca house are in one way or the other employed (govt./self-employed). Literacy rate is also high (Kumbipukhri (koite), Tuibong Village information | Soki.In).

iv) Molnom Village

Molnom village unlike the rest is a fairly developed/urbanised village. It is located within Tuibong block in Churachandpur District of Manipur State, India. It is located 3 KM towards North from District headquarters Churachandpur. The village is 1 KM

from the nearest town Tuibuong and 62 KM from the State capital Imphal. Molnom is surrounded by several neighbouring villages—K. Salbung (1 KM), Lajangphai (1 KM), Boljol (1 KM), Khomawi (1 KM), and Bethel (1 KM).. Molnom is surrounded by Churachandpur, Lamka and Saikot block towards the South, and Smulamlan block towards the east. The population comprises of Schedule Tribes professing Christian faith although of different denominations.

Table 4. 2: Demography of Molnom as per 2011 Census

Census Parameter	Census Data
Total Population	1466
Total No of Houses	265
Female Population %	52.7 % (772)
Total Literacy rate %	78.2 % (1147)
Female Literacy rate	39.6 % (580)
Scheduled Tribes Population %	99.4 % (1457)
Scheduled Caste Population %	0.0 % (0)
Working Population %	23.0 %
Child (0 -6) Population by 2011	231
Girl Child (0 -6) Population % by 2011	53.7 % (124)

Source: Molnom Village Details: Census 2011

All the above-mentioned villages are administered by a chief who is the head of the governing body and other members who are elected for a specific term. They take all the critical decision in the village from environment to education, and from health and sanitation to all other major decisions that pertains to the village.

4.3 Overview of the School Under Study

As mentioned in the first section of the chapter, the data has been collected from four schools from four different villages within tuibong block (tehsil)—Khengjang village, Naa'ang village, Koite village, and Molnom village. Two of the government schools were chosen from Koite and Molnom and private schools from Khengjang and Naa' ang respectively through purposive sampling.

This section will unfold in details the physical infrastructures, enrolment, social category wise enrolment and other relevant information to ascertain access and participation of the students in the school. These schools were selected as a sample school because they have a good number of teachers and students apt for the study.

Table 4. 3: Sample Schools and Villages

Village	Name of the School	Government	Private
Naa' ang	Heritage Academy		✓
Khengjang	The Gateway Academy		✓
Koite	Kumbipukhri High School	✓	
Molnom	Gandhi Memorial Govt. High school	✓	

Source: Authors Field Survey

i) The Heritage Academy: Naa'ang

School is a walking distance for most of the students living in the vicinity. The school is located close to the NH- 150 that runs across from Imphal to Churachandpur (also called Tidim/Tipaimukh Road) and is easily physically accessible. The school is a single one-floor pucca building with broken boundary wall and a well-built main gate but not maintained. It has thirteen classrooms, and 3 other rooms meant for different purposes.

In addition, the school also has a library, which is now dysfunctional due to lack of proper maintenance. During the school visit it was found that the school have toilets but not separate toilets for both boys and girls. The classrooms have proper benches and desks to write upon, and whiteboard to supplement the teaching-learning process. The principal's office was well decorated and has an almirah, two chairs, a wide table. The staffroom also has a wide table and plastic chairs for the teachers to sit upon and do their work during free time. The school also has enough space for the children to play (Volleyball/Basketball) although the space is not sufficient for a football field. The school doesn't have a proper railing and is not differently-abled friendly.

Figure 4. 1: Main Building of The Heritage Academy

Figure 4. 2: Library of The Heritage Academy

Figure 4. 3: Principal's Office of The Heritage Academy

As seen from the above figure (1&2) the school is well decorated and so are the classrooms. However, the building needs repair due to the wear and tear that had

occurred during the course of time. Table 4.3 highlights the physical provisions of the school.

Table 4. 4: Physical Resources of the School

District	Churachandpur
School Type	Co-educational
Management	Private
Year of Establishment	2015
Medium of Instruction	English/Local Dialect (Thadou Kuki)
Year of Recognition (Upper Primary)	Unrecognized
Year of Recognition (Secondary)	NA
Location	Rural
Type of Building	Pucca
Number of Classroom	13
Other Rooms	3
Number of toilets	2 rooms (shared)
Boundary Walls	No
Computer Lab	No
Library	Yes (not maintained properly)
Area for Playground	Yes
CWSN Toilet	No
Drinking Water Availability	Yes
Handwash Facility	Yes

Source: Primary Observation (2021-22)

Students' Enrolment

All the students enrolled in the school are from the neighboring villages. Although few students come from far off places, they stay in a rented house in the villages nearby. While on the other hand, few chose to stay in the boarding run by the school itself. The enrolment of students used to be good, but the effect of the pandemic was felt as just merely 100 plus students had enrolled during the time of the field visit in the month of February. Hence, absolute number of students was not recorded at that point of time as it was bound to increase once the school functions in full swing. In terms of social category wise, no other besides STs are enrolled in the school.

Number of Teachers

Table 4.4 shows the number of teachers teaching in the school. It is heartening to see that the school has more female teachers than males, with the head teacher being female. Many of the teachers are young and inexperienced, while few of them are seniors with more than a year of teaching experiences. In terms of social category wise all the teachers belong to STs and profess Christianity. The reason for this is because the

45

school lies within homogeneous tribal group who are mostly Christians. It is also worthwhile to mention that all the teachers are on contract basis but regular attendance is mandatory for all.

Table 4. 5: Number of Students and Teachers

Total Number of Teachers	15 (Contract)
Male	6
Female	9
Students	250 (plus)

Source: School Record (2021-22)

ii) Gateway School: Khengjang

The school lies 300 meters from the National highway 150. The location of the school is now renamed as K. Lhangniem, where K stands for Khengjang. The village is the extension of the parent village Khengjang. As per UDISE records, the location still remains with the parent village. The school is a walking distance for most of the students living in the vicinity and is accessible by an all-weathered road. The school is a single one-floor pucca building with barbed wired as a boundary wall and a well-built main gate. It has nine classrooms, and 3 other rooms meant for different purposes.

During the school visit it was found that the school have toilets (3 rooms), but not separate toilets for both boys and girls. The classrooms have proper benches and desks to write upon, and whiteboard to supplement the teaching-learning process. The principal's office was well decorated and has an almirah, desktop and printers used for several academic purposes. The staffroom also has a wide table and plastic chairs for the teachers to sit upon and do their work during free time. The staffroom has closet for teachers' usage. The school also has enough space for the children to play (Volleyball/Basketball/badminton) and there is a scope for expansion in the near future. The school, however, does not have a proper railing and is not differently-abled friendly. It is a co-educational institute and was established in the year 2016. Sandwiched between several surrounding villages the school is a hotspot for education especially for people living in the surrounding area who cannot afford private schools in the town that charges exorbitant fees (See table 4.5 for more details).

Figure 4. 4: Main Building of Gateway School

Source: Primary Survey (2021-22)

Figure 4. 5: Kindergarten Block of Gateway School

Source: Primary Survey (2021-22)

Figure 4. 6: Parents Meeting for the New Academic Session (2022-23) at Gateway School

Table 4. 6: Physical Resources of the School

District	Churachandpur
Cluster	Rengkai Govt. H/S
School Type	Co-educational
Management	Unrecognized
Year of Establishment	2016
Medium of Instruction	English/Manipuri/Hindi/Local Dialect
Year of Recognition (Upper Primary)	NA
Year of Recognition (Secondary)	NA
Location	Rural
Type of Building	Pucca
Number of Classroom	9
Other Rooms	3 (including HM room)
Number of Girls' toilets	0
Number of Boys' toilets	1 (two rooms-shared)
Boundary Walls	Barbed Wire Fencing
Computer Lab	Yes (3 desktop and 1 Laptop)
Library	No
Area for Playground	No
CWSN Toilet	No
Drinking Water Availability	Yes
Handwash Facility	Yes
Reading corner	Yes

Source: Compiled by the Author from UDISE+ (September 2019)

Students Enrolment

Most of the students enrolled in the school are from the neighboring villages. However, there are a good number of students coming from beyond 3 km. However, conveyance is not a challenge as the school is connected to an all-weathered road. The school has 191 students between class I-VIII excluding the kindergarten section which has 89 students as

per data recorded in UDISE+. The school has 12 teachers in total with 5 male and 7 female teachers (Table 4.6).

Table 4. 7: Number of Students and Teachers 2019

Class	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	TOTAL
No. of Students	28	26	24	25	24	22	19	23	0	0	191
Total No. of Teachers	Male: 5				Female: 7						12

Source: UDISE+ (September 2019)

Enrolment of Students by Social Category

In terms of social category, all the students enrolled in the school belong to ST community. The reason for this scenario is due to the homogenous population in the district, where the community comprises of different tribes under the Kuki nomenclature.

Table 4. 8: Enrolment by Social Category

UDISE CODE: 14 03 01 08 702																								School Name: GATE WAY SCHOOL		
Enrolment (By Social Category)																								Note : Gen = General,G.Tot = Grand Total		
	Pre-Pr		I		II		III		IV		V		VI		VII		VIII		IX		X		XI		XII		Total		
	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	All
Gen																													
SC																													
ST	37	52	11	17	12	14	10	14	12	13	12	12	10	12	8	11	10	13									122	158	280
OBC																													
Total	37	52	11	17	12	14	10	14	12	13	12	12	10	12	8	11	10	13									122	158	280
G.Tot	89		28		26		24		25		24		22		19		23										280		280

Source: UDISE+ (September 2019)

iii) Kumbipukhri Govt. High School: Koite

The school lies 50 meters from the NH-150 and is easily accessible. Connected with an all-weathered road, the school is convenient for all students to access. The school has ten classrooms, and 4 other rooms including the staff room meant for different purposes.

It is an old school established way back in 1952. The upper Primary section got recognition after nine years in 1961, but the secondary section got recognition only in the year 2016. The school infrastructures are old and need major repairs. The toilets are dysfunctional making it hard for the students and teachers to relief themselves in times of emergency. During the school visit it was found that the classrooms are also not up to the mark and

requires renovation. The headmaster room has 2 almirahs a table and a chair. Properties of the school are old and worn out and requires urgent replacement. The school does not have sufficient space for the children to play outdoor games like Volleyball, Basketball and Football. Although the school has a reading corner and a library, it is not properly maintained and not utilized. The school doesn't have a proper railing and is not differently-abled friendly. Besides, attendance of the school was very low during the time of the field visit.

Figure 4. 7: Kumbipukhri High School, Koite Village

Source: Primary Survey (2021-22)

Table 4. 9: Physical Resources of the School

District	Churachandpur
Cluster	Rengkai Govt. H/S
School Type	Co-educational
Management	Department of Education
Year of Establishment	1952
Medium of Instruction	English/Manipuri/Hindi/Local Dialect
Year of Recognition (Upper Primary)	1961
Year of Recognition (Secondary)	2016
Location	Rural
Type of Building	Pucca
Number of Classroom	10
Other Rooms	4
Number of Girls' toilets	0
Number of Boys' toilets	1 (not functional)

Boundary Walls	No
Computer Lab	No
Library	Yes (not maintained properly)
Area for Playground	No
CWSN Toilet	No
Drinking Water Availability	Yes
Handwash Facility	Yes
Reading corner	Yes

Source: Compiled by the Author from UDISE+ (September 2019)

Students Enrolment

The school has 261 students between class I-IX (235 till elementary level) as per the UDISE+ record. The school has 16 teachers in total with 7 male and 9 female teachers (Table 4.9). Most of the students are from the poor and marginalised section of the society in terms of socio-economic status, and many are children of one parent or otherwise without parents living with their grandparents.

Table 4. 10: Number of Students and Teachers in 2019

Class	I	II	III	IV		V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	TOTAL
No. of Students	12	22	29	25		35	35	38	39	26	0	261
Total No. of Teachers		Male: 7		Female: 9							16	

Source: UDISE+ (September 2019)

Enrolment of Students by Social Category

In terms of social category, all the students enrolled in the school belong to ST community. The reason for this scenario is due to the homogenous population in the district, where the community comprises of different tribes under the Kuki nomenclature.

Table 4. 11: Enrolment by Social Category

UDISE CODE: 14 03 01 09 201																									School Name: KUMBIPUKHRI H/S		
Enrolment (By Social Category)																								Note : Gen = General, G.Tot = Grand Total			
	Pre-Pr		I		II		III		IV		V		VI		VII		VIII		IX		X		XI		XII		Total		
	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	All
Gen							1	1		1																	2	1	3
SC																													
ST			10	2	12	10	19	8	17	8	12	22	20	15	16	22	17	22	11	15							134	124	258
OBC																													
Total			10	2	12	10	20	9	17	8	13	22	20	15	16	22	17	22	11	15							136	125	261
G.Tot			12		22		29		25		35		35		38		39		26								261		261

Source: UDISE+ (September 2019)

iv) Gandhi Memorial High School: Molnom

All the previous Schools under study including the present school are easily accessible. There are no challenges in terms of physical access. It is a walking distance for most of the students living in the vicinity. The school is located close to the NH-150 and is connected to an all-weathered road. The school main building is a single one-storey pucca building while other blocks are one-floor pucca building with a well-built main gate. It has ten classrooms, and five other rooms meant for different purposes.

In addition, the school also has a library but lack proper maintenance. Two rooms in the building requires major repair while the rest are still in good shape. During the school visit it was found that the school have toilets both for boys and girls, but not properly maintained. The classrooms have proper benches and desks to write upon, and whiteboard to supplement the teaching-learning process. The school also has enough space for the children to play (Volleyball/Basketball) although the space is not sufficient for a football field. The school doesn't have a proper railing and is not differently-abled friendly. The medium of instruction in the school is both English and the local dialect (Thadou-Kuki). Figure 8: Gandhi Memorial Govt. High School, Molnom West

Figure 4. 8: Gandhi Memorial Govt. High School, Molnom West

Source*: National Integration Tour - Gandhi Memorial School, Molnom, Churachandpur

Table 4. 12: Physical Resources of the School

District	Churachandpur

Cluster	Rengkai Govt. H/S
School Type	Co-educational
Management	Department of Education
Year of Establishment	1963
Medium of Instruction	English /Local Dialect
Availability of Ramps	Yes
Year of Recognition (Secondary)	2016
Location	Rural
Type of Building	Pucca
Number of Classroom	10 (2 Rooms need major repair)
Other Rooms	5
Number of Girls' toilets	1
Number of Boys' toilets	1
Boundary Walls	Yes (Pucca but broken)
Computer Lab	No
Library	Yes
Area for Playground	Yes
CWSN Toilet	No
Drinking Water Availability	Yes
Handwash Facility	Yes
Reading corner	NO

Source: Compiled by the Author from UDISE+ (September 2019)

Students Enrolment

The school has 1000 students between class I-IX. While at the elementary level, i.e., class I-VIII, there are 677 as per the school record. The school has 16 teachers in total with 7 male and 9 female teachers (Table 4.12).

Table 4. 13: Number of Students and Teachers 2019

Class	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	TOTAL
No. of Students	31	33	64	64	96	113	114	162	173	150	1000
Total No. of Teachers	**Male: 9**		**Female: 7**								**16**

Source: UDISE+ (September 2019)

Enrolment by Social Category Wise

Table 4.13 clearly shows that besides ST there are no other social category groups enrolled in the school. As reiterated earlier in the section, this is because of the school lies amongst homogenous social groups, which is also the case with other schools in the block under study as well.

Table 4. 14: Enrolment by Social Category

UDISE CODE: 14 03 01 09 301																									School Name: GANDHI MEMORIAL GOVT. H/S		
Enrolment (By Social Category)																								Note : Gen = General,G.Tot = Grand Total			
	Pre-Pr		I		II		III		IV		V		VI		VII		VIII		IX		X		XI		XII		Total		
	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	All
Gen																													
SC																													
ST			19	12	16	17	31	33	28	36	42	54	55	58	47	67	72	90	96	77	62	88					468	532	1000
OBC																													
Total			19	12	16	17	31	33	28	36	42	54	55	58	47	67	72	90	96	77	62	88					468	532	1000
G.Tot		31		33		64		64		96		113		114		162		173		150							1000		1000

Source: UDISE+ (September 2019)

4.4 Profile of the Parents Respondents

In this study, out of the total 80 respondents, 20 respondents were parents, another 20 were teachers along with 40 students. Out of the 20 parents, 4 were members of the School Management Committee (SMC). It must be noted that most of the children of the respondents are either studying in a government school or in a private school under study. Since parents of the child play a very significant role in deciding the future of the child, i.e., ensuring that no social barriers come in the way of the child's access to school and education as a whole. They also play critical role in motivating the child to participate in the school and in the classroom. Hence, they were chosen to know about their perception on the education of their boys and girls.

Figure 10 and 11 shows the age and sex profile of the parents under study. All respondents in figure 10 were aged between 20 to 60 years. Out of 20 respondents, 10 were male, and another 10 were female. The maximum number of parents (Six) fell in the age group 40-50 years, while parents of the age group between 20-30 years and 50-60 years is minimum. On the other hand, figure 10 shows that respondents were equally divided 10 each in terms of sex.

Figure 4. 9: Age Profile of the Parents
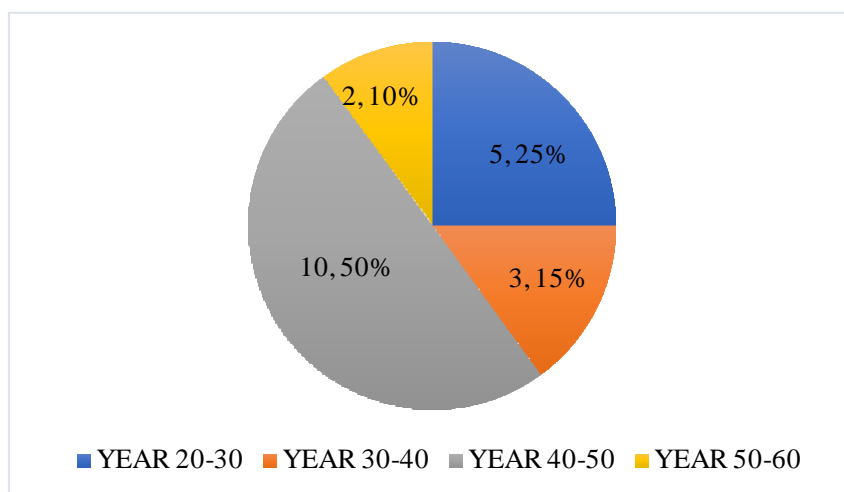
Source: Interview of the Parents (2021-22)

Figure 4. 10: Sex Profile of the Parents
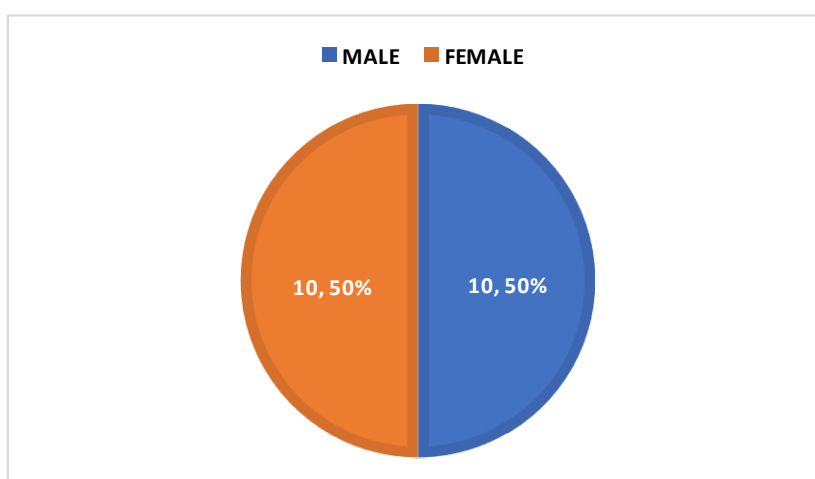
Source: Interview of the Parents (2021-22)

Figure 12 and 13 represents the social category and occupation of the parents under study. Since the area under study comprises of a homogenous tribe, hence all the respondents belong to schedule tribe. Although few other social category groups inhabit the area, none of the individual participated in the study as they are not the parents of the child from the school under study. It is found that most of the respondents are self-employed, 17 out of 20 as shown in figure 12. While 1 is unemployed, only 2 out of 20 respondents are government employed. This shows the state of poverty and socio-economic backwardness of the parents.

Figure 4. 11: Social Category of the Parents

	1
■ GENERAL	0
■ OBC	0
■ SC	0
■ ST	20
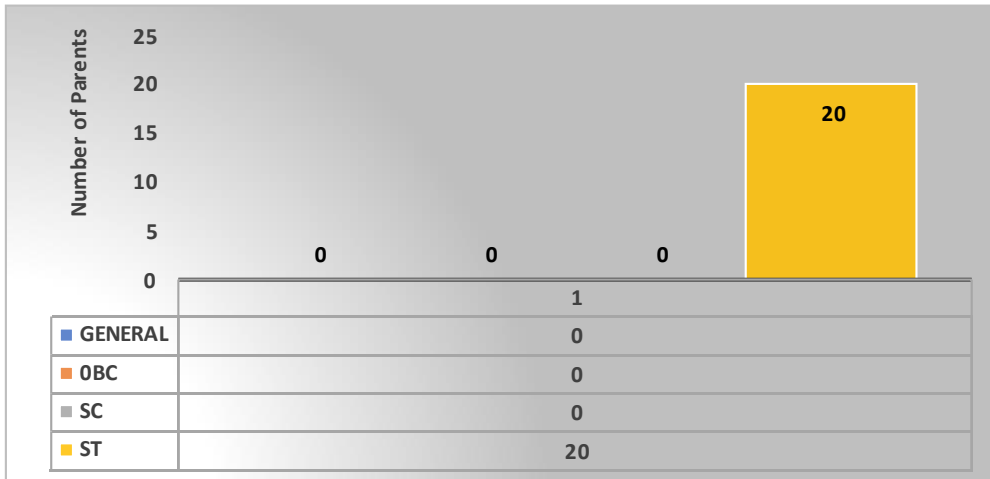
Source: Interview with the Parents

Figure 4. 12: Occupation of the parents
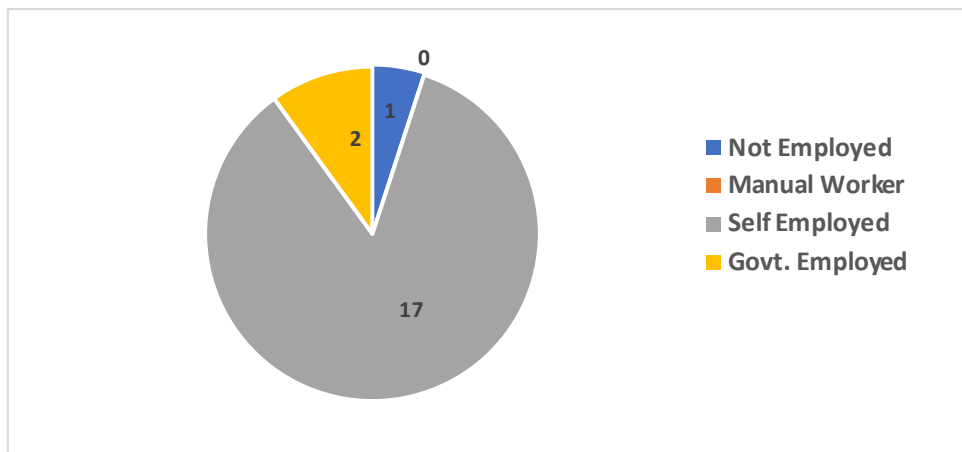
Source: Interview with the Parents

Furthermore, figure 14 shows the educational qualifications of the respondents, parents of the child studying in the school under research. It can be seen that most of the parents are high school pass out or otherwise just completed elementary education. 13 respondents out of 20 have completed their secondary education. Only 2 respondent claims to have completed graduation and these two are the government employee as shown in figure 13. Another 2 have higher secondary education while 3 have primary education. The overall educational status of the respondents shows that majority of the parents under study are educated.

Figure 4. 13: Educational Qualification of the Parents
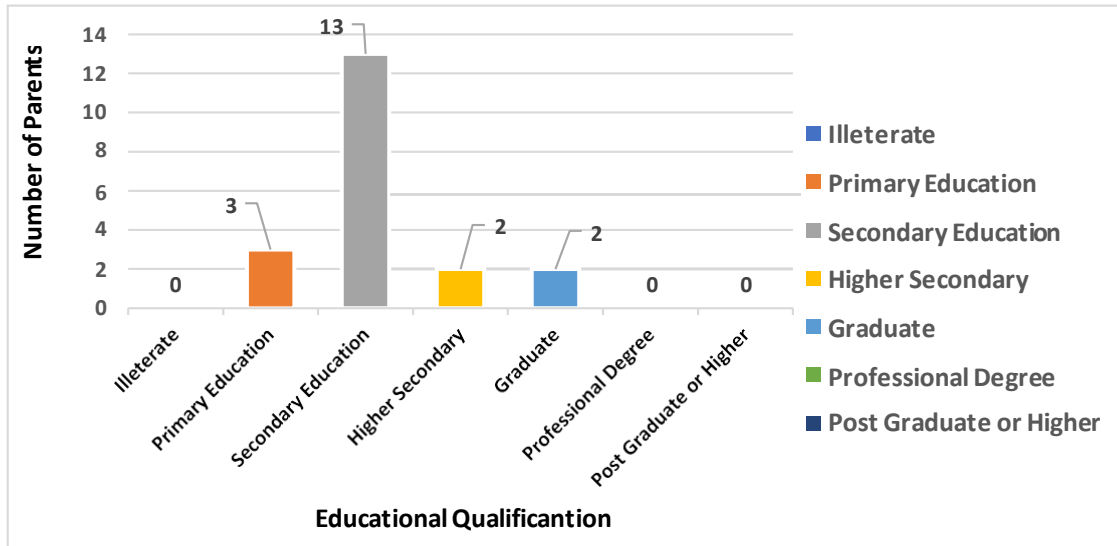
Source: Interview with the Parents

4.5 Profile of the Teachers Respondent

Figure 15 and 16 shows the gender and social category profile of the teachers' respondent. Out of 20 respondents, 11 teachers were male, and 9 were female. The following figure shows that all 20 teachers belonged to the Scheduled Tribe category although they belong to different tribes within the Kuki nomenclature.

Figure 4. 14: Gender profile of Teacher
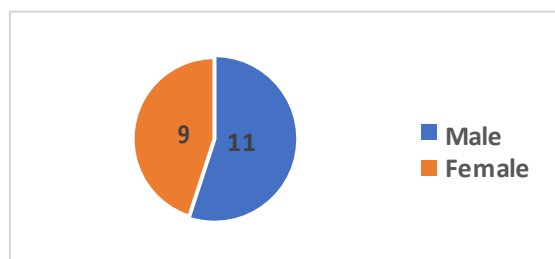
Source: Interview with the Teachers

Figure 4. 15: Social Category of the Teachers

	1
■ GENERAL	0
■ OBC	0
■ SC	0
□ ST	20
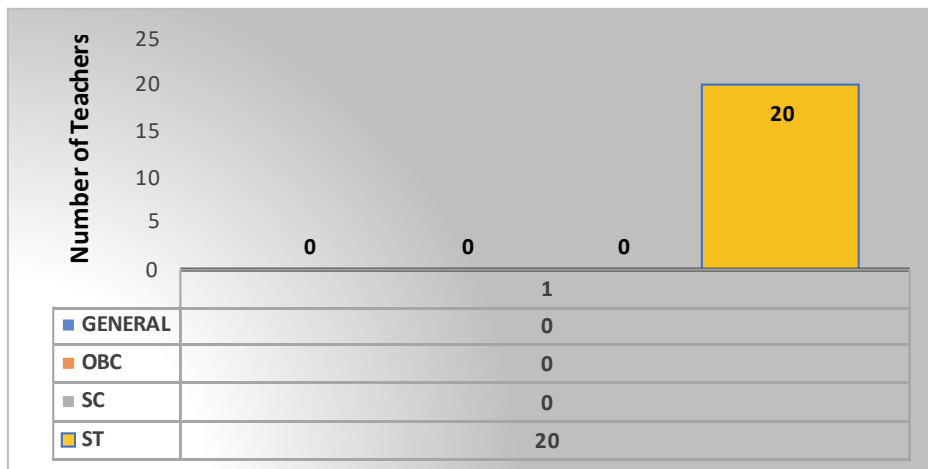
Source: Interview with the Teachers

Figure 17 and 18 shows the education qualification and the teaching experiences of teachers under study. Out of 20 3 have B. Ed degree (professional course) while 4 are graduates in M.A, 9 of them have B.A degree and 2 with higher secondary as the highest degree. Teaching experiences of the teachers range from fresh (1 year) to more than five years of experiences. Figure 17 clearly delineates the number of years of experience.

Figure 4. 16: Educational Qualification of the Respondent

	Hr. Sec	B.A	M.A	B.Ed	M.Ed
■ Series1	4	7	4	3	0
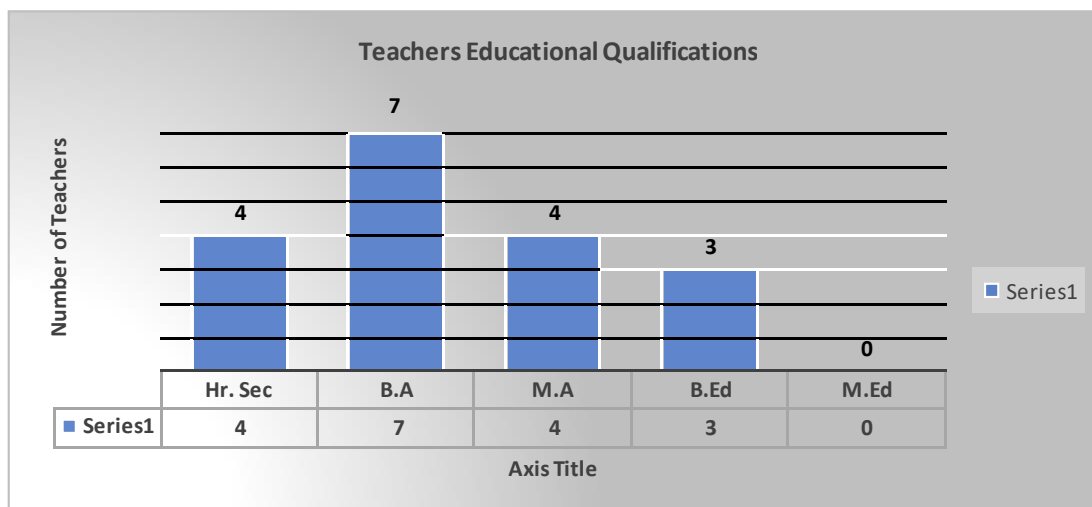
Source: Interview with the Teachers

Figure 4. 17: Teaching Experiences of the Teachers
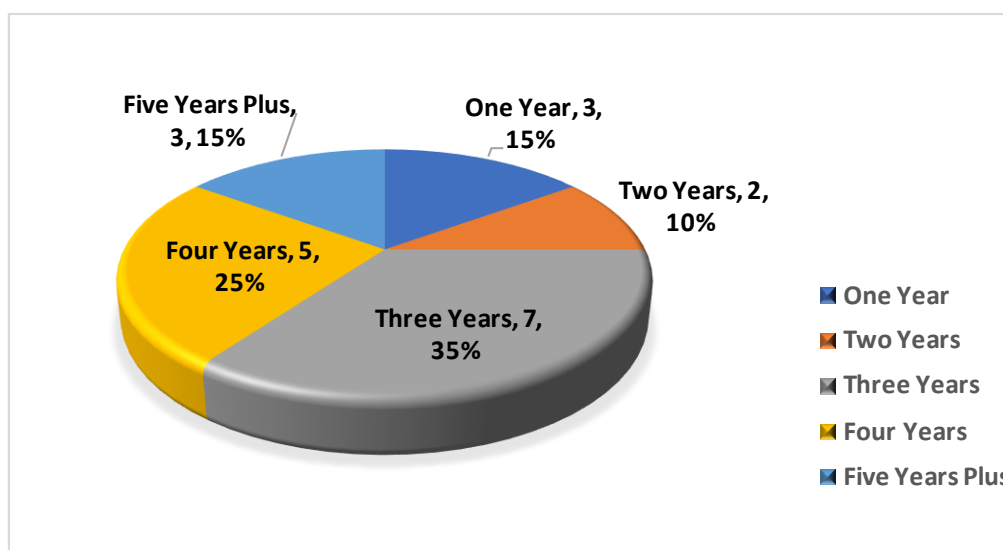
Source: Interview with the Teachers

SECTION II: DATA ANALYSIS

4.6 Narratives of the Respondents

In this section the discussions will be based on the narratives of the respondents from the empirical data collected during the field research, and through informal conversation the researcher had with the parents and teachers at several occasions. The intent is to understand their narratives on factors that determine social access and participation of the child in education. The discussions brought much light on the awareness of education pertaining to social access and participation among the parents and teachers.

i) Parents

Parents play vital role in shaping the life of a child. The future of the child depends much on the upbringing by the parents. In this study, parents' perception is taken into account as it occupies a critical place in enabling educational access of the child by fighting all odds to ensure quality education for the child. Since the objective of this narrative is to understand the determining factors which are responsible for enabling access and participation of a child, parents were interviewed to reflect on these issues.

a) *Choice of Schools*

When it comes to deciding the schooling for the child, most of the respondent admitted that decisions are taken by both the parents (husband and wife). However, in case of single parents, decisions are taken by them. The study has also found that all the parents including parents sending their child to government schools, prefer private schools to government as there is quality teaching and English is emphasized in private schools. They opined that due to poverty and their inability to afford private schools, they are left with no choice but opt for government school as the last resort. When asked why they show apathy towards government schools, parents lamented that government schools are in bad shape (infrastructure, teaching, care for the child), and that nobody cares about quality education and the schools are here for the sake of existing with no intend to uplift the poor and the downtrodden of which they are here to serve.

b) *Family Access to Education*

Further studies to understand the status of access to education reveals that, despite poverty of the parents, all school-going children are put to school by any means. Every child is given equal preference when it comes to education. There is no distinction between a boy and a girl child when it comes to access in education. This is a reflection of gender parity in the society. Further, every family under study took keen interest in the education of the child. All the respondents 20 out of 20 says that they took initiative to ensure their child's regular attendance to school. When asked about participation of the child in the classroom most of the parents felt that it is very important. The reason they cited was that participation in the classroom gives them the motivation to learn, gives them self-confidence, enhances their knowledge and even allows them to learn to discipline themselves. Here participation encompasses not mere enrolment of the child to the class as per their appropriate age; it includes active engagement of the child in the whole learning process inside the classroom.

Table 4. 15: Family Choice of School and Access to School

Who decides the schooling of the child	Husband (7)	Wife (2)	Both (11)
School Preference	Private (20)	Govt. (0)	Both (0)
Medium of instruction preference	English (15)	Local (0)	Both (5)
How do you choose school	Self (10)	Others (5)	Both (5)
Are all school-going children in school?	Yes (20)	No (0)	NA
Are both boys and girls given equal preferences?	Yes (20)	No (0)	NA
Do you ensure your child's regular attendance to school	Yes (20)	No (0)	NA
Do you consider participation of the child important?	Yes (20)	No (0)	NA

Source: Primary Survey (2021-22)

c) Hurdles in Access to Education: Socio-economic Factors

Ensuring a child access to education always comes with a price. The scenario is evident and manifested in the private schools. There are several factors that a family has to undergo to have an access to school even in government schools, more so in private schools. This is so because no education is free perse. Children coming to government school too have to pay for their fare and buy stationaries for themselves, and even repair uniforms if they are torn and need repairs. Hence, the concept of 'free education' for that matter does not exist in practice. The challenges are more in the case of private schools where everything is self-managed. And as the cost of education is skyrocketing each passing year, the burden of the parents has increased manifold.

From the empirical assessment it was found that the most common hurdle faced by the family in ensuring access to education is the financial constrain. Since most parents are non-salaried, paying of monthly tuition fees on a regular basis becomes very challenging. One of the parents under study lamented:

"Jingsoun jansoun kihol thu tedin lekahsim hi ahah behseh jeng in mivaichate a ding vang ahipoi."

61

"For those of us who live from hand to mouth every day, education is not meant for the poor like us as it is extremely difficult." (Raw translation)

In addition to financial constraints, lack of awareness on the provisions of RTE is cited as one major reason for their inability to claim their rights—the Right to Free and Compulsory Elementary Education. When they are not aware of their rights, they become toothless and are compelled to spent money regardless of their difficulties and problems they encounter in their lives. Furthermore, social activities (sports, music concerts, get-together, etc.) rampant in the society is also another hurdle in ensuring the child's participation in the school as all the attention is captured by these programmes. They even go to the extent of shunning classes to attend these unsolicited programmes. Besides, constant motivation and encouragement to the child, health issues and conveyance are some of the reasons cited that posed hurdles towards ensuring access and participation of the child in the school and classroom. Hence, educating the parents on these critical issues that will benefit them must be brought to their knowledge.

When asked about the steps that could be taken to resolve these issues many of the parents gave interesting strategy to solve their problem. Most of them want the school fees to be reduced (in the private schools), and this reduction of fees can be done at the time of admission, where the old students may only be charged renewal fees unlike the fresh candidate who has to pay for everything during the time of admission. While the government must implement in truth and spirit the RTE provisions and enhance the physical infrastructures of all government schools and revive the same to accommodate the ones who needed most—the poor and the marginalized.

ii) Teachers

Teachers play a critical role in the lives of their students. They are the architect of the child's future as they anchor the lives of the students very closely. Teachers have the potent credentials to unlock the child's future, and therefore teachers must take their responsibilities very seriously even beyond the call of duty. They must be physically and not just mentally involved in the life of their students. They must have concern and love for their students and work hand-in-hand with the parents to establish a cordial ambiance for the child to construct his own future.

a) Awareness on RTE

During the study it was found that although most of them know RTE, half of the teachers were not aware of the basic provisions like 25 per cent reservation for the poor and economically weaker sections in private institutions. Their basic knowledge about RTE pertains to having separate toilets for both boys and girls and that education is free for those between the age of 6-14 years. And despite learning the importance of RTE, many of the teachers when asked confessed that they have never take any step to bring about awareness on the provisions of the act. The apathy of the government schools is taken for granted and left to its own accord to right the wrongs.

b) Social Barriers

Often the road to school access and participation of the child in the learning process is taken likely. It is taken for granted that enrolment of the child is sufficient to take care of participation and meaningful access thereof. However, this is not the case as studies have revealed. The present study has unraveled the perception of the teachers with regards to social barriers that come in the way of the child's access and participation in education. According to them influence of bad companion, family's financial constrain (poverty), social stigmas, lack of basic skills, falling into relationships (love affairs), influence on drugs, class discrimination (family background/have and have nots), lack of proper infrastructures in the school, lack of motivation, etc., are also potent hindrances from having access to school and participation in the classroom. They also cited that lack of parents' involvement in the day-to-day affairs of the child after having been enrolled in the school as a critical factor. Teachers also perceived that the thought of being incapable, shyness and fear of comments from peers by the students are keeping them captive from active engagement (participation) in the classroom.

c) Steps to Ensure Participation

Participation as emphasized earlier in the chapter does not confine to mere appropriate-age enrolment of the child in the class. It means laying fertile ground for the child to actively engage in the learning process inside the class. When asked the steps that could be taken to enhance their participation, most of them agreed to make the class livelier and engaging by opening the floor for discussion and sharing of ideas. Another step could be to deploy reward and punish tactics to encourage them and give them new

lease of hope, and at the same time discourage them from engaging in bad manners through appropriate punishment. Because reward and acknowledgement play a vital role in the formative years of the child's life creating a positive impact. Having said that, it was observed during the course of the class observation that, students are hesitant to share their views and ideas when asked by the teachers. This is because the culture and family background the child belongs to act as a hindrance that needs to be broken. Replicating things that the child is never exposed to throws in a lot of challenges, thus lacking participation in the class.

d) Steps to ensure participation of the poor and disadvantaged groups

The rise in number of the poor and disadvantaged group who are out of school is alarming. The enrolment has also fallen as per the 16th round of ASER report 2020. Perhaps, in conjunction with this bringing those dropouts into the fold should be one of primary responsibility of the teachers who are in one way or the other attached to the child. Hence, it was felt that the teacher's perception to address this lacuna must also be taken into account. During the course of study, it was found that most of the teachers felt the pain to see poor and disadvantaged students being out of school. They suggested that government should regulate the RTE and bring in new lease of life to the act. And this regulation must be through government agencies, NGO's and with the active participation of the local community. Private schools must be made to accommodate the percentage of students as per the provisions and then reimbursed on time. Also, education being a basic right for every human being access to the same must be easy and free. Further any sort of discriminatory practices by the teachers in the class that can intimidate the child must be erased. Teachers must deploy ways and means to engage the child in the learning pedagogy. Imparting of the lessons can be done using vernaculars and English simultaneously. Furthermore, parents must be made aware of the importance and need for education and the future prospects as well.

e) Role of SMCs

When it comes to ensuring social access and participation of the child to school, the involvement of the community cannot be sidelined. This can be done through the active role of SMCs. Despite the challenges faced to organized Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with the members of SMC, effort was made to informally interact with two of the members to understand and unfold the issues related to the subject. Members of the

SMC revealed that no meeting has never been convened by the school heads. They opined that they also don't feel the need to join the meeting as decisions are taken unilaterally and their voices are never heard.

On the other hand, interaction with one of the school head who is also the head of SMC, refuted that member of the committee do not take the meeting seriously, and they regard coming to the meeting as waste of time and resources. In fact, it was found that in both the government school under study, SMCs exist only for namesake and no substantial contribution has ever been made. Most of the information and decisions taken are disseminated through WhatsApp, including the closure of school because of the pandemic. However, the critical role of SMC cannot be sidelined. For a meaningful access and participation of the child in the whole educational discourse, SMC must be revived and allowed to play an its roles.

vi) School Heads

School heads play critical roles in the administration and functioning of the schools. They play the role of a father to the teachers and students alike. Hence, the leadership role of school heads cannot be taken for granted. Their experiences and educational qualifications also matter in dealing with the daily affairs of the school they are in charge of. Interaction with the school heads was conducted to understand their perspectives and the roles they take through the school to ascertain access and participation in the school and classroom in countering the barriers effectively.

a) School initiatives

All the schools under study (both government and private) does not provide conveyance to those students coming from more than a distance of 3 km. The students are left to provide for themselves accommodation, if need be, by staying in rented houses for bare minimum prices. In terms of physical provisions all the schools do not have separate toilet for both boys and girls. Toilets in the government schools are in bad shape, and those of the private have more than one room but located in the same house and are separately shared. Portable water is provided in all the schools except for one school. With regards to reservation of 25 per cent for those economically weaker sections of the society at the entry level (Class I) all the school under study provides reservation. However, in terms of mid-day meal, only the government schools do provide mid-day

meal, but seldom. During the investigation it was found that the share for the mid-day meal is rationed and given to the students' time to time. While in the private schools no mid-day meal whatsoever is provided in the school. The reason cited for non-provision are—not enough funds (for the private schools), regular cooking of meal is a challenge as we are not sure the number of students that will turn up, and moreover the funds for the same does not come on time. Nevertheless, when enquired, all the school heads are of the opinion that provision of mid-day meal will enhance participation of the child in the school besides providing the nutritional needs of the child. As the field visit collided with the pandemic, the researcher does not observe provision of mid-day meal nor the rationing of the food items to the students mentioned above.

b) **Social access to School/classroom**

During the study it was found that although schools give special consideration to those children with special needs (CWSN), the physical infrastructures are not differently abled friendly. Although there are no differently abled (physical) students, CWSN students are given preferential treatment by not pressurizing them through assignments and homework. But the school provides fee consideration to those economically weaker section by waiving off their tuition fees (private school), but have to pay the admission fees. Tuition fees of those students with more than 2 siblings are also considered (half taken). In terms of special provisions to the girl child in the school, all the schools do not have special provisions as the school considers both boys and girls on equal terms. This is a reflection of the society's egalitarian approach to treating both boys and girls.

c) **Participation of the child in the classroom**

The schools adopt active engagements through interactions, storytelling method of teaching to keep the students on their toes in the class. The teachers through Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (assignments and tests) keep track of the student's participation in the class. For those weak students special counselling is conducted, and detained after school for special classes. Sports week, literary meet, vacation bible schools (VBS) are some of the co-curricular activities provided in the private schools to ensure participation of the child in the learning process. With regards to CWSN students, no tangible initiatives are taken to keep track of their participation unlike those students. Further, to address the lack of participation of the child in the classroom the

school must take regular attendance, and communicate with the parents if the student is absent for more than two days without any information. According to the school heads, the school administration must be strict in ensuring regular classes are conducted and that the teachers are doing their job faithfully. Besides, the school must encourage and reward those deserving students, and give extra effort to those who are weak and require special attention. Ensuring of this discipline will eventually address the lack of participation of the child in the classroom.

vii) Students

Most of the students under study belong to a poor family. The occupation of the parents and their educational qualifications have been provided for reference (figure 4 & 5).

It is interesting to note that there are few physical hurdles the children face when coming to school. However, once they have reached and are inside the school and classroom nothing stops them from participating in the class. Majority of the students claim to have no barriers when it comes to participating in the class. They are assured that the teachers are loving and caring. The minor punishment that they received when they are not discipline is well taken and that does not hinder them from participating in the class. The infrastructure in the classrooms is sufficient for them to sit and write and doe their chores, and hence does not pose any hindrances from participating in the class. The classwork and group activity in the class gives taught them to work in team although few prefer doing task alone than in groups, nevertheless they still participate since is a group work mandated by the teacher.

4.7. Link of Theoretical framework with Findings

As mentioned in Chapter I, it is often the lack of capabilities available to the poor and the disadvantaged section of the society, coupled with the lack of freedom of choices that stems from poverty which has narrowed their life's choices that is critical for their liberation out of perpetual poverty. When education becomes a commodity that is hard for layman to access, the deprivation imprisons their cognitive minds from making strides to liberate themselves from the clutch of several circumstances that has held them to the vicious cycle of poverty and misery. Since, education can enhance capabilities through instrument, empowerment and redistributive role as argued by Sen, education will enable the poor tribals to make and take critical decisions for themselves while being stable to decide for their future. It will also empower them to stand for

themselves and not just be a tool to be manipulated by the majority in the society. They can raise their voice which is critical for their upliftment. Also, as education plays a redistributive role as asserted by Sen, education will enable the poor tribals to not just satiate themselves with their present status-quo, but rather ingrained in them the critical need to change the course of their future by striving hard to achieve their goals for social mobility.

Hence, education is a critical tool that is inevitable for the poor to emancipate themselves from all social maladies. Because without capability enhancement, any form of progress that could transform their socio-economic status will be compromised leaving no room for progress and redemption form their present status-quo. Here in the study, acknowledging the social barriers and finding solutions to these problems is a great stepping stone for the tribal poor.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss how social access and participation in the school and classroom is being ensured. It analyses the factors that acts as determinants access and participation through the lenses of parents, teachers, school heads and students themselves. I also touched upon the challenges and hurdles encountered by the said stakeholders in order to. In the previous chapter we have analysed through empirical evidences on what access and participation in elementary school is like, and what are the determinants and challenges encountered in the process of trying to ensure the same.

The study employed qualitative method—interviews and questionnaires (open-ended), informal interactions and classroom observations. Choice of schools was done through purposive sampling……… From the study it has been observed that access to school is dependent upon several social factors, which have been highlighted in detail in the previous chapter. In addition, those children from the poor socio-economic background faces hardships and difficulties in access to education and lack of enthusiasm to participation in the classroom discourse. The study also unfolded the decisive role of parents in deciding who is accessing which school as they are the head of the family. During the school visit it was observed that there is gender parity in the classrooms and amongst the teachers teaching in the schools under study.

5.2 Discussions

5.2.1 Determinants of Access and Participation

Research Question: What are different social factors that determine schooling access and participation of children?

Research Objectives: To examine different factors that determine children's access and participation in school in the context of Churachandpur district of Manipur.

There are several factors that a family has to undergo and surmount to have an access to school both in the government and in private schools. These are social factors that still determines the fate of the child if he/she will get an education that they are entitled

for being born as a human. Education which is meant to be free and compulsory is not so in reality, not even in some of the government schools, which had been mentioned in the earlier chapter. Privatization of government schools where minimal fees are paid for maintenance have become a trending norm. Although the intention is to improve the quality of education, this has however exposed the failure of the whole system of education—the failure of the state in its mandate. From the study it has emerged that there is no education that is free. Children coming to government school beyond a walking distance have to pay for their fare and provide stationaries for themselves, and even buy uniforms in case they need replacements, etc. The challenges are more in the case of private schools where everything is borne by the family. And as there is hike in the cost of education each passing year, it has become an added burden to provide education to the child. From the study different perspectives of social factors emerged as a determinant in ensuring access and participation of the child in the school and classroom—parents, teachers, school heads, the students themselves.

Perspectives of the Parents

From the empirical assessment it was found that the most common hurdle faced by the parents in ensuring access to education is the financial constrain. Financial hardships pose the biggest hurdle. In addition, lack of awareness on the importance and prospects of education, and provisions of RTE as the second hurdle. Further, parents lamented that the various social activities like (sports, music concerts, get-together, etc.) rampant in the society is also another hurdle in ensuring the child's participation in the school. Besides, lack of constant motivation and encouragement to the child, their health problems sometimes act as a hindrance to participate in the class. Despite all-weathered road connectivity, conveyance to the school is still a hurdle for those coming from distance as it poses financial burden to the family.

Perspective of theTeachers

From the study it has emerged that influence of bad companion, family's financial constrain (poverty), social stigmas (bad comments), lack of basic skills (incapability), falling into relationships (love affairs), influence on drugs, class discrimination (family background), lack of proper infrastructures, and lack of motivation, etc. Lack of parents' involvement in the day-to-day affairs of the child's life after having been enrolled in the school as a critical factor. Teachers also perceived that the thought of

being incapable, shyness and fear of comments from peers by the students are keeping them captive from active engagement (participation) in the classroom.

Perspective of the School heads

During the study it was found that although schools give special consideration to those children with special needs (CWSN). Special attention is given to them by taking extra classes to ensure that they participate in the learning process with the rest of the students. In addition, the school provides fee consideration to those economically weaker section by waiving off their tuition fees (private school) after payment of their admission fees. Tuition fees of those students with more than 2 siblings are also considered (half payment). However, there is no special provisions to the girl child with regards to access and participation in the school and classroom. In all the school under study both boys and girls are treated equally. This is a reflection of the society's egalitarian approach towards ensuring gender parity. Further, co-curricular activities such as sports week, literary meet, vacation bible schools (VBS) provided in the schools encourages participation of the child not just in the classroom but in the whole learning process which enhances their capabilities in many different ways.

Perspective of the Students

From the study it was found that there are only few physical hurdles the children face when coming to school. At times barking dogs and snakes do intimidate the child on their way to school as they have to pass through the neighbourhoods and bushes on the roads. Although not majorly, few students have highlighted calling of names, intimidation, verbal abuse, and silent bullying do happen to them in the school. However, those behaviour although not acceptable does not pose a big threat to the child's participation in the classroom.

5.2 Students Facing Problem with Regards to Access and Participation

Research Question: Who are the children facing the problem of access and participation at the elementary level?

Research Objective: To study the background of students facing the issue of social access and participation at the elementary level.

Case profile 1:

Dyna (Name Changed), a 13-year-old girl, was enrolled in The Heritage Academy, a private school in Naa'ang village which is 1 km away from her home. She is in 7th standard. She lives in their house with her elder brother and 2 younger sisters aged 18, 12 and 10 respectively who are also studying. She completed her primary education from her native village which is 50 km away from her present house. Her father is a farmer, and her mother is a home maker who stays in her native village. She is here with her siblings to study, and her parents would come and visit them time to time.

5.2.2. Problems with regards to access and participation

When interacting with Dyna, the investigator found that she use to cook and do the household chores although she would be assisted by her siblings' time to time. Being the eldest girl, the responsibility of cleaning and cooking was her responsibility. She said that, it was her responsibility even when she would go to her native home. Hence, regular household chores and taking care of the family needs became very challenging.

Dyna although does not face economic hurdles, she is facing social barriers to access education. Because of the poor condition of her house, she has a number of assigned duties like fetching water, cooking and cleaning, which gives her less time to concentrate in her studies. Eventually her performance and grades were found to be lower than her peers. Above all, she could also not actively participate in the classroom as she would be exhausted by the time she reaches school, and eventually she falters in her studies and assignments.

Case profile 2:

Helun (Name Changed), a 15-year-old boy, was enrolled in Kumbipukhri High School, a government school in Koite village which is few 300 meters away from his home where he resides with his grandmother who is a widow aged 67. He is in the 8th standard. He is the eldest amongst the 4 siblings. His native village is in Henglep, one of the remotest places in Manipur 60 km away from his present home. His parents are both farmers, and stays at their native village. He is here taking care of her grandmother while he is studying at the same time.

5.2.3. Problems with regards to access and participation

When interacting with Helun, the investigator found that he uses to cook food for himself and for his grandmother and do the household chores all alone—cleaning, cooking, washing, etc. Regular household chores and taking care of his grandmother and his studies became very challenging. His parents never come to visit him, he would instead go and visit them during holidays. While in his absence, his grandmother would manage on her won.

Helun was quiet and shy with shabby clothes in the class, and having noticed that the investigator had a face-to-face interaction with the boy. Although finances do not come in the way of Helun's access to school, his participation in the classroom was minimal. He is introvert and does not open up easily. He hardly speaks and has a sense of inferiority complex because of the hardships he faces. The daily household chores like fetching water, cooking and cleaning, allows him no time to concentrate in his studies. Meaningful participation in the school is not possible for him, and he is left to fend for himself. He said he was excited to come back to school after the pandemic, but the thought of doing my household duty and studies kills all my enthusiasm to come to school. Hence, with this state of life there is no room for him to enhance his capability as he is devoid of quality education through his passive participation in the class.

5.3 Affirmative Actions that could be taken to address these problems

Research Question: *What are the different actions that must be taken to tackle the problem of access and participation of children at the elementary level?*

Research Objective: *To find out various actions that could be employed to achieve universal access and improve participation of children at the elementary level.*

- School may be reduced (in the private schools), and this reeducation of fees can be done at the time of admission, where the old students may only be charged renewal fees unlike the fresh candidate who has to pay for everything during the time of admission.
- Ensure that classes are livelier and engaging by opening the floor for discussion and sharing of ideas between student and teachers to encourage classroom participation.

- Employment of reward and punish tactics to encourage participation of the child in the classroom may be encouraged to give them new lease of hope, and at the same time, discourage them from engaging in bad manners through appropriate punishment.

- Government may regulate the RTE through government agencies, NGO's and along with the active participation of the local community through SMCs.

- Private schools may be made to accommodate the percentage of students as per the RTE provisions and then reimbursement of the expenses incurred be done on time.

- Any sort of discriminatory practices by the teachers in the class that can intimidate the child from participation may be eradicated.

- Imparting of the lessons may be done using vernaculars and English simultaneously.

- Importance and the need for education and its future prospects may be made know to the parents.

- The teachers through Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (assignments and tests) may also keep track of the student's participation in the class, whereas special counselling for the weak students may also be envisaged.

- Co-curricular activities may be encouraged in the schools to ensure participation of the child in the learning process.

- School must take regular attendance, and may communicate with the parents in case of the student's absenteeism for more than two days without any information.

5.4. Conclusion

From the study it is quite evident that articulation of good principles to achieve in paper, is often in stark contrast to what is taking place at the ground level. Universalization of elementary education is one major challenge that the Indian education system continues to be riddled with. One reason could be because of India's heterogeneous composition and its diversity in terms of topography, caste, class, and region that has problems unique to the place. Besides the many efforts taken by the respective state government problems continues to remain and will do so as long as education is pursued.

Additionally, fulfilment of RTE provisions in truth and spirit is definitely an uphill task. One reason for unfulfilled target could be that problems and barriers are context-specific and demands a solution that is apt to the context. In the case of Manipur, the attitudes of government towards education in rural hill districts of Manipur are also not satisfactory. There are several internal loopholes that demands micro-focused attention as the schemes and programmes do not reach in time and the concerned department officers who have been given responsibility are neglecting their duty (Kengoo, 2011, p. 9). Hence, there is a critical need to orient the primary stakeholders— school heads, teachers and parents to spearhead the implementation of RTE and universalization of the same in their own capacity.

Despite increased public investment on education, private schools (Juneja, 2011; Govinda and Bandyopadhyay, 2011) are increasing in number and popularity in many areas. This scenario still continues to be the trend even in Manipur, and has even led to privatisation of government schools in the hill districts as government schools could not compete the private counterparts, albeit not for profit motive but with the intent to make the schools functional (Jajo, 2013). The 16th round of ASER report (Rural) has also found how there is a declining enrolment in the public schools in the state.

The various social factors that act as determinants in access to education and participation of the child can take root when equality of access to education and equal treatment in the school are ensured, so that no one is left behind irrespective of who they are. And as educated and economically self-sufficient members of society can contribute to the progress, well-beings and development of the wider society of which they are a part (Sagar, 2005: pp.79-80), all social barriers with regards to access and participation must be addressed. And most important, equitable access to education will enhance the capability of the individual and enable them to make the right choice for themselves while in the process contributing to the welfare of the society at large.

In the midst of all these CWSN students are often neglected. All the schools under study are not prepared to welcome physically challenged student as the infrastructures are not student friendly. Challenges with regards to access and participation also includes CWSN students, and hence schools must be morally, physically be prepared to welcome into their fold. The bottom line is that proper awareness campaign followed by an

administrative intent, backed with the political will and spirited implementation of the provision mentioned above may enable us to surpass the odds in our education system that has crippled us for a very long time. In addition, the role of stakeholders like the civil society (NGOs, Student Organizations, Churches, Youth Clubs, etc.) can play a vital role in righting the wrongs. Since these civil society is active and engaging, and as the same time members comprises of the local people who are well verse with the intricate problems they can be instrumental in addressing the social barriers in relation to access and participation of the child in the school and classroom.

Haokip, T (2013) rightly observed, "The hill people are now willing to make sacrifices to earn education despite many difficulties because of the prospects that education can ensure." To realise this dream, reorienting the SMCs, parents and teachers of their roles and responsibilities will cement meaningful access and participation. And to enhance their capability in terms of being able to take decisions for themselves, and uplift their status quo the poor parents are willing to take all the pain and risks. In the mist of all this the implementation of 'School *Fagathansi* Mission' (let us revive the schools') mission in Manipur by the state government in all the 60 Assembly constituencies is a right move. The intention of the mission is to give a new thrust to all government schools by improving the physical and manpower infrastructure, and the learning outcome of the students in a phased manner. This initiative is in conjunction with NEP 2020 that intends to ensure inclusive and equitable education for all can change the rugged destiny of the government schools in Manipur.

5.5. Limitations and Future Scope of Study

- The researcher limited the number of villages to just four schools located in four different villages in Tuibong Block, Manipur, due to the time constraints and hurdles due to the pandemic.

- The schools are selected within the vicinity of 5 km and amongst the Thadou-Kuki speaking community alone within Tuibong block as they comprise of the largest population, while there are more than 15 sub-tribes within Kuki-Chin-Mizo nomenclature in the district.

- The study is limited to understanding social factors that act as determinants in ensuring access and participation of the child to school and classroom through the lenses of the various stakeholders—teachers, parents, school heads and the students themselves. The researcher believes that there is various context-specific barriers that still act as a hurdle in ensuring Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) in the district.

5.6. Policy Implication

The research under study is critical for policy makers and implementers as it unravels the in-depth problems faced by the poor and marginalized students. Often it is taken for granted that ignoring government schools and opting for private schools is a sign of financial health. In fact, opting for private school is more often than not, done out of compulsion and not of choice. The investigator through informal interaction with the parents was shocked to learn that even government employees wish to send their children to government schools had government school been functional as it should be. Hence, the following points may be imperative to the policy makers, implementers and planners. Government must work hand-in-hand with the local human resource and capitalize on this privilege to address the problems that are context-specific. Since the civil society is active (as mentioned above), government must utilize the local resource to engineer potential solution to the perpetual problem emerging from within. Suggested affirmative actions listed above can be of great help to invent the much-needed solution to deter those social barriers that has acted as a hindrance to meaningful access and participation of the child in the whole educational discourse. Earmarking this and emphatically following the above directives may enable us to see the light of the day for the government schools.

REFERENCES:

Angom, Sangeeta. (2008). *Good Practices of Mid-Day Meal Scheme in Manipur.* National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA), New Delhi-16.

ASER. (2019). *Annual Status of Educational Report (Rural) 'Early Years'.* ASER Centre, Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi.

Bandhyopadhyay, M. (2012). Gender and School Participation Evidences from Empirical Research in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. *Niepa Ocassional Paper 41.*

Bandhyopadhyay, M. (2012). Social Disparity in Elementary Education- Seminar, October, 2012, pp: 21-25.

Burman, JJ. Roy. (2012). Problem of Education among the Tangkhul Nagas of Ukhrul Manipur. In S.N. Chaudhury (Ed.), *Tribal Education: Implications for Development* (pp.175-183). New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.

Chakrabarti, M. (2012). Right to Education and Midday Meal Programme at Primary Stage. *Education India Journal: A Quarterly Refereed Journal of Dialogues on Education.* Vol. I, No. 2.

Chugh, S. (2020). Right to Education and Universal Participation of Children Living in Slums Issues, Gaps and Challenges. *Niepa Occasional Paper 54.*

Cohen, Louis., Lawrence Manion and Keith Morrison. (2017). *Research Methods in Education.* London: Routledge.

CREATE. (2009). *Educational Access in India.* Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity.

Debbarma, Khumtiya. (2011). *Challenges in Implementation of Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009.* A Critical Analysis of India with Special Focus on Karnataka. Fiscal policy Institute. NLSIU, Bangalore.

Devi, Monica. (2021). "Admission of Children Belonging to Economically Weaker Section in the Private Schools Through RTE in Manipur." *Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Research & Review* (AJMRR). Vol. 2, No.2.

DPEP. (1994). India District Primary Education Programme Sixteenth Joint Review Mission (14th November - 2nd December 2002). NEUPA Document centre.

Dreze, J and Kingdon, G G. (1999). *School Participation in Rural India*. The Development Economics Discussion Paper Series August 1999. The Suntory Centre, Houghton Street.

Economic Survey Manipur 2020-21: Directorate of Economics & Statistics Government of Manipur Lamphelpat.

Garg, Mukesh and N, Shingla. (2012). Right to Education in India: Challenges and Accessibility. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Management and Social Sciences.* Vol. 1, No.3. pp.191-202.

Govinda, R. and Bandhyopadhyay, M. (2008). *Access to Primary Education in India: Country Analytical Review*. Consortium for Research in Educational Access, Transition and Equity (CREATE) Publication.

Govinda, R. and Bandhyopadhyay, M. (2008). *Achieving Universal Elementary Education in India Expanding Access with Equity.* (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/252053106_Access_to_Elementary _Education_in_India. Accessed on 15/09/2021).

Govinda, R. and Bandhyopadhyay, M. (2010). Educational Access in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh - India Country Research Summary. Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE).

Govinda, R. and Bandhyopadhyay, M. (2010). Social Exclusion and School Participation in India: Expanding Access with Equity. Springer publication. Access on 25/09/21 https://www.academia.edu/3823535/Social_exclusion_and_school_participati on_in_India_Expanding_access_with_equity).

Heguner. (2012). In Pursuit of Equity: The Capability Approach and Education. *Public Policy and Administration Research.* Vol.2, No.5. p. 22-28.

IGNOU. (2017). Unit-6 Universalisation of Primary Education. (https://egyankosh.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/7920/1/Unit-6.pdf. Accessed on 23/09/21).

In North-Eastern States What SEMIS Data Reveal. *Niepa Occasional Paper 41.*

Juneja, Nalini. (2010). *Access to What? Access, Diversity and Participation in India's Schools.* Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity. Create Pathways to Access. Research Monograph No.32.

Juneja, Nalini. (2013). RTE and the Issue Relating to Quality of Education. *Journal of the National Human Rights Commission,* Vol. 12. pp. 201-224.

Juneja, Nalini. (2014). Understanding the RTE Act. In Santosh Sharma (Ed.). *What is RTE? Some ways of Making Education Accessible. A Handbook for Teachers*. NCERT, New Delhi

Kaushal, M. (2012). Implementation of Right to Education in India: Issues and Concerns. *Journal of Management & Public Policy.* Vol. 4, No. 1. pp. 42-48.

Kaushal, Savita. (2014). Managing the School. In Santosh Sharma (Ed.). *What is RTE? Some ways of Making Education Accessible. A Handbook for Teachers*. NCERT, New Delhi.

Lee, Sharon E. (2013). Education as a Human Right in the 21st Century. *Democracy and Education.* Vol. 21, No. 1.

Lewin, Keith M. (2015). *Educational Access, Equity, and Development: Planning to Make Rights Realities*. Fundamentals of Educational Planning 98. Paris: UNESCO-IIEP.

MOE. Ministry of Education. Government of India. (https://www.education.gov.in/en/directive_principles_of_state_policy_article-45. Accessed on 8/10/21).

NEP. (2020). *National Education Policy*. Ministry of Education, Government of India.

Orend, B. (2002). Human rights: Concept and context. Peterborough, Canada: Broadview Press.

Pareira, Melvil., Ankita Gupta and Shaunna Rodrigues. (2016). *Growing up in a Conflict Zone: Children surviving conflict in Manipur*. North Eastern Social Research Centre; Guwahati, Assam.

Ramachandran, V. (Ed.). (2004). Gender and social equity in primary education: Hierarchies of access. New Delhi: Sage

Ringmiso, S. Nixon. (2013). *Status and Problems of Primary Education in Ukhrul and Tamenglong Districts of Manipur*. PhD Thesis submitted to Department of Education, North Eastern Hills University (NEHU), Shillong-793022.

Robeyns, I. (2017). *Wellbeing, Freedom and Social Justice: The Capability Approach Re-Examined.* Open Book Publishers.

RTE. (2009). *RTE Section Wise Rationale.* The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, Clarification on Provisions. (https://www.education.gov.in/en/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/upload_document/RTE_Section_wise_rationale_rev_0.pdf. Accessed on 07/07/2021).

Sedwal, M and Kamat, S. (2008). *Education and Social Equity: With a Special Focus on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Elementary Education.* Create Pathways to Access, Research Monograph No 19.

Seema S, Ojha. (2013). Implementing Right to Education: Issues and challenges. *Research Journal of Educational Sciences.* Vol. 1, No. 2. pp. 1-7.

Sheokand, Uma. (2016). A Critical Evaluation of RTE Act in Relation to its Impact on Teacher Teaching in Schools. *International Journal of Advance Research.* Vol.4, No. 8. pp. 1857-1863.

SSA. (2004). *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.* Manual for Planning and Appraisal. Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Department of Elementary Education & Literacy.

Thapa and Sarkar. (2019). Universal Elementary Education in India: Barriers and Persistent Challenges. *Social Change.* No. 49. p. 257-275. Sage Publication.

Zaidi. (2-13). Access To Secondary Education

Website/Online References:

ASER. (2020). Enrolment in private schools increasing in Manipur. 15th Round Report. (https://www.ifp.co.in/3435/enrolment-in-private-schools-increasing-in-manipur-15th-aser-2020. Accessed on 11/4/22).

ASER. (2021). Manipur witnesses decline in enrolment of students in government schools. 16th Round (Rural). (https://indianexpress.com/article/north-east-india/manipur/manipur-decline-enrolment-government-schools-aser-report-7628008/. Accessed on 3/4/22).

Bandyopadhyay. (2012). Social disparity in elementary education. https://www.india-seminar.com/2012/638/638_madhumita.htm

Government of Manipur. (2019). Orders. Department of Education. (https://manipureducation.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/School-Fagathansi.pdf accessed on 3/05/22).

Jajo, G. (2013). Privatization of Govt schools in the tribal districts of Manipur The untold story. Sangai Express dated: October 9 2013. (http://e-pao.net/epPageExtractor.asp?src=education.Privatization_of_Govt_schools_in_tribal_districts_of_Manipur_The_untold_story.html. Accessed on 5/2/22).

Manipur Sex Ratio (2011 Census). Retrieved from https://www.mapsofindia.com/census2011/manipur-sex-ratio.html, Accessed on 15/04/2022.

Sengupta, M. (2011). Access To Education and Its Issues. Times of India, December 7, 2011. (https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/educable/access-to-education-and-its-issues/. Accessed on 7/3/22)

Appendix:

1. Students Survey Questionnaire:

M.Phil. Research

A Study of Social Access and Participation at the Elementary Level in Manipur: A Case Study of Churachandpur District.

Questionnaire For Students

1. Basic Profile:

1.1 Name of the respondent: ……………………….

1.2 Age of the respondent: ………………………….

1.3 Class enrolled in: ……………………………….

1.4. Name of the School/Institute……………………

1.5 Gender:

i) Male ii) Female iii) Others

1.6 Religion:

i) Hindu ii) Muslim iii) Christian iv) Others (specify)………………

1.7 Social Group/category:

i) ST ii) SC iii) OBC iv) General

1.8 Place of residence: …………………………….

2. Family Background

2.1 Parents occupation

A. Mother		B. Father	
i. Not-employed		i. Not-employed	
ii. Manual Worker		ii. Manual Worker	
iii. Self-employed		iii. Self-employed	
iv. Govt. Employed		iv. Govt. Employed	

2.2 Parents Education:

A. Mother		B. Father	
i. Illiterate	☐	i. Not-employed	☐
ii. Primary education	☐	ii. Manual Worker	☐
iii. Secondary education	☐	iii. Self-employed	☐
iv. Higher secondary (+2)	☐	iv. Govt. Employed	☐
v. Graduate	☐	v. Graduate	☐
vi. Technical/Professional degree	☐	vi. Technical/Professional degree	☐
vii. Post graduate or higher	☐	vii. Post graduate or higer	☐

2.3 Education of Siblings:

	M/F A	Age B	Highest Level of Qualification C
1. Sibling 1	☐	☐	………………………
2. Sibling 2	☐	☐	………………………
3. Sibling 3	☐	☐	……………………….

2.4 Monthly household income:

i) Less than 5000 ☐ ii) 5001-10000 ☐) 10001-25000 ☐

iv) 25000-50000 ☐ v) 50001 and above ☐

3. How far is your school from home?

_____

_____

4. How do you commute to school?

_____

_____

5. Do your school provide conveyance?

_____

_____

6. Is the road to your school accessible by foot during rainy season?

_____

_____

7. Do you face problems while coming to school? Can you cite the problems?

_____

_____

8. Do you have any siblings who could not go to school and why?

_____

_____

9. Why do you think your parents gave you preference over your sibling?

_____

_____

10. Are your parents able to meet your daily expenditures in the school?

_____

_____

11. Do your school provide Mid-day meal?

_____

_____

12. Does your school provide drinking water?

_____

_____

13. Are there toilets in the school?

_____

_____

14. Does your school have separate toilet for boys and girls?

_____

_____

15. Are there proper benches and tables in the class to sit and write on?

_____

_____

16. Do you take regular attendance in the class?

_____

_____

17. Do your teachers attend the classes regularly?

_____

_____

18. How are the students who break the rules in the class dealt with?

_____

_____

19. Do your teacher punish you for not doing your homework? And how?

_____

_____

20. Do your teacher collect absent fine for your absence?

_____

_____

21. Do your school collect monthly fees?

_____

_____

22. Do your teacher organise group task in the class?

_____

_____

23. Do you prefer working alone or in groups?

_____

_____

24. Do you feel shy when your teachers ask you questions in the class?

_____

_____

25. Do your teacher provide platform for interaction in the class?

_____

_____

26. Do your class teacher keep track of your attendance in the class?

_____

27. Have you ever been detained in the same class for failing in the exam?

_____

28. Are you and your parents aware of RTE?

_____

29. Do you face any discrimination in the class? and how did you deal with it?

_____

30. Do you observe difference in treatment between boys and girls in the class?

_____

31. Do you inform your parents regarding the ill treatment you encounter in the school?

_____

33. What are the barriers that keeps you from meaningful participation in the class?

2. Teacher Interview Questionnaire:

M.Phil. Research

A Study of Social Access and Participation at the Elementary Level in Manipur: A Case Study of Churachandpur District

<u>Questionaires for Teachers</u>

1. Name: …………………………………….
2. Gender: …………………………………...
3. Age: …………………………......................
4. Educational Qualification.…………………
5. Religion: ………………………………….
6. How long have you been teaching?

   _____

7. Are you aware of Right to Education (RTE)?

   _____

8. Are you aware of the 25% reservation for the poor and economically disadvantaged groups?

   _____

9. Have you taken any step in spreading awareness amongst the parents and students of such provisions?

   _____

10. Why do you think parents prefer to send their child to private schools despite the free and compulsory education in the government schools?

_____

_____

11. Who are the children likely to go to private schools than government schools?

_____

_____

12. As a teacher, how do you address the needs of the poor students in the class?

_____

_____

13. What according to you are the social barriers that keeps them from getting access to schools?

_____

_____

14. How do you keep track of the student progress and participation in the class?

_____

_____

15. How are the students' absentees dealt with in the class?

_____

_____

16. What is the reason for children's lack of participation despite their enrolment in the school?

_____

_____

_____

_____

17. What according to you are the steps that could be taken to ensure students full participation in the class?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

18. How are the students dealt with for failing to comply with the rules?

_____

_____

19. How are the students seat arrangement done in the class?

_____

_____

20. Are students' achievements acknowledged in the class? If yes, how?

_____

_____

_____

_____

21. What are the impediments in achieving universal access and participation of the child in the class?

_____

_____

_____

_____

22. How important is awareness on RTE, and why?

_____

_____

_____

_____

23. What according to you are the steps that could be taken to help ensure education to those poor and disadvantaged groups in the society?

_____

_____

_____

_____

24. What solution can teachers take to bring all eligible children to school irrespective of their family background?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Parents Survey Questionnaire:

M.Phil. Research

A Study of Social Access and Participation at the Elementary Level in Manipur: A Case Study of Churachandpur District

<u>Questionnaires For Parents</u>

1. Personal information

     1.1. Name:

     1.2. Age:

     1.3. Sex:

     1.3. Religion:

     1.4. Occupation:

     1.5. Single or dual parent:

2. Family background

     2.1. Who is the breadwinner in the family?

_____

_____

     2.2. How many children in the family?

_____

_____

     2.3. How many school-going children in the family?

_____

_____

3. Choice of Schools

     3.1. Who decides the schooling of the children in the family?

_____

_____

     3.2. What school does the family prefer (private/government), and why?

_____
_____

3.3. What medium of instruction do you prefer for your child in the school?

_____
_____

3.4. Do you self-evaluate or decide your school choice from peers and neighbours?

_____
_____

4. Family Access to Education

4.1. Are all school-going children in the school? If not why?

_____
_____

4.2. Is the family been able to admit every child to private schools?

_____
_____

4.3. Are both boys and girls given educational preferences in the family?

_____
_____

4.4. Do you ensure your child's regular attendance to school?

_____
_____

4.5. Do you consider your child's participation in the classroom important, and why?

_____
_____

5. Hurdles in Excessing Education?

5.1. Do you know that access to education is free and compulsory? How?

_____

_____

5.2. Are you aware of RTE and its provisions?

_____

_____

5.3. Do you ever claim for the 25% for your child in the private schools at the entry level (Class I) ?

_____

_____

5.4. What challenges do you encounter in ensuring your child's education?

_____

_____

_____

_____

5.5. What steps could be taken to solve the problem of educational access?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_

4. Interview Schedule for School Heads

M.Phil. Research

A Study of Social Access and Participation at the Elementary Level in Manipur: A Case Study of Churachandpur District.

QUESTIONAIRES FOR SCHOOL HEADS

1. Background Information:

    1.1. **Gender:** Male [   ]   Female [   ]

    1.2. **Age:** Under 40 [ ]   40-50 [ ]   50-60 [ ]   60+ [ ]

    1.3. Having Principal responsibilities in more than one school?

    Yes [ ]   No [ ]

    1.4. Highest level of formal education completed:

    [ ] Below Higher Secondary   [ ] Higher Secondary

    [ ] Graduate   [ ] Post Graduate

    [ ] Post Graduate and above   [ ] Others

2. School Initiative/Provision:

2.1. Does the school provide conveyance (School Bus) for the students coming beyond 3 km?

No

2.2. Does the school have adequate number of benches and desks to accommodate the students?

                  yes

2.3. Does the school have a proper separate toilets for both boys and girls? If not, why?

                  yes

2.4. Does the school provide portable water to the students? If not, why?

                  not all the
time

2.5. Does the school provide 25% reservation for those Economically Weaker Section (EWS) at the entry level, i.e., class I? (Private schools)

          yes

2.6. Does the school provide regular Mid-day meal to the students? If not, why?

                  no

2.7. Do you agree that Mid-day meal could ensure access and participation of the child in the school? If yes, how?

        yes. Love for the school and participation

95

3. Social Access to the classroom/school:

3.1. Are there any differently abled or Children with Special Needs (CWSN) in school? If yes, how is the school prepared to address the needs of these children?
Yes. Slow learners. 4 years and half. Dumb. Through visual.

3.2. Are the school infrastructures differently-abled friendly (railings/toilets/tactile paving)? If not, why?

No._

3.3. Does the school have any special provision for those families who are economically weak? If yes, how?

Yes. Fee Waiver. Pastors children and orphans.

3.4. Does the school provide any aid to those children with more than 2-3 siblings in the school? If not, why?

Yes

3.5. Does the school have special provision for a girl child in the school? If yes, how?

No. All are equally treated.

4. Participation of the child in the classroom/school:

4.1. How does the school ensure active participation of the child in the classroom?
Programmes. Nurture foundation (Co-curricular activities, weeklluy)

4.2. How does the school keep track of the teachers in ensuring participation of the child in the classroom?
Personal talk. Interact with them regarding their problems. Encouraged.

4.3. How does the school deal with the weak students (studies) to keep them from retention? (private)
Extra unpaid tuition to deal with the weak students. Most of the time

4. 4. Does the school encourage co-curricular activities to ensure participation of the child in the class? If yes, how?
Yes.

4.5. What initiatives are taken by the school to keep track of the participation of CWSN in the classroom/school? Or does the school have special teachers to address these needs?
_No.

4.6. What steps can be taken by the school to address lack of participation of the child in the classroom?

Look at their area of interests not just family background

Group task encouraged

Infrastructure must be developed

Borewell (to meet the water needs)

Drinking Water.

Total enrolled: 200 plus (ongoing can't tell)

Lockdown and loss of money

16 (prep-10)

2017 (10-20)

5. Focused Group Discussion with SMCs

M.Phil. Research

A Study of Social Access and Participation at the Elementary Level in Manipur: A Case Study of

Churachandpur District.

TOPIC:

"Role of School Management Committee (SMC) in Ensuring Social Access and Participation"

1. What is SMC?

2. Does your school have SMC?

3. Who are the members of the SMC in your school?

4. What are the roles and functions of the SMC in your school?

5. How often does the SMC meet in an academic year?

6. How does the SMC communicate the plans to the students and parents?

7. What steps does the SMC take to ensure access to education at the elementary level in your school?

8. What steps does the SMC take to ensure participation of all enrolled children in the classroom?

9. What are the steps taken by the SMC to bring those out of school children to school?

10. Has the SMC taken any steps in ensuring access and participation of poor and disadvantaged groups to school?

11. What are the challenges faced by SMC in fulfilling this initiative?

12. What steps or initiatives does the SMC take to address the boy girl enrolment disparity in the school?

13. How does the SMC deal with any sort of discrimination in the school?

14. Are members of the SMC aware of the RTE and its provisions?

15. Has your school implemented the 25% reservation policy of the economically disadvantaged group highlighted in the RTE?

16. What steps are taken by the SMC to ensure equitable access to education for all children in the school?

17. What preventive measures are in placed to ensure the child's completion of the elementary education?

18. In case of dropout, how does SMC take steps to bring the child back to school?

19. What according to the SMC is the biggest impediment to ensuring universalisation of RTE in the school?

20. What steps could be taken to address the problems related to universal access and participation of children at the elementary level in the school?