

Have Conflicts Affected Education? An Assessment from Manipur

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ABSTRACT Study on educational attainment in conflict zone is relatively a new subject in the academic circle. India's north-eastern most state of Manipur is riven by a series of conflict for long and at the same time, education sector seems to be performing well. Past studies in the field gave a mixed result on the causal relation of the two. Keeping the conflicting result in mind, this study tried to explore causal relationship between the two and found that the conflict has a short run effect on education, not in the long run. But, no reverse causality was evident. Further, to understand how education sector is kept unaffected in the midst of the conflict in Manipur, using 107 household survey this paper found that the education sector is protected mainly by a two-pronged strategies: the private tuition and sending children outside the state, backed by the government and public supports.

JEL Classification code: C87; D74; I26; O15

INTRODUCTION

Though conflict has been one of the greatest threats to the modern world, its place in the academic field is relatively a new one. Brendan O'Malley's research entitled, '*Education under Attack*' published in 2007 is considered as the first ever detail study of its kind (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] 2010: 8). Most of the conflicts in the world, at present, are found to be intra-national, occurring within the borders of the states, primarily ethnically-driven over self-determination, greater autonomy, economic opportunity and political dominance (Yilmaz 2008). Nevertheless, not much research has been done on the linkages of education in the conflict-ridden areas of India, especially the Manipur (Karam and Somokanta 2016: 1), even the Kashmir for that matter (Shah 2017). The academic research involving field study from these conflict zones is a herculean task and its output often turns out to be spurious (Shah 2017). In the recent past, analysis of education in the fragile states has gained a significant attention within the community of academia and policy makers, probably due to the former's critical role in developing human capital, knowledge, productivity and reconstruction of the society (Gates and Strand 2012).

Manipur, merged with Indian union in 1949, has long been mired by a series of conflict. Geo-

graphically, the state is divided into two parts—the valley and hills. The valley, comprising one-tenth of the geographical area, is inhabited by around 65 percent of the state's population, especially the *Meiteis* and is ringed by the latter with nine-tenth of the state's area where around 35 percent of the tribal population (33 recognized and other non-recognized tribes) reside. These tribes are broadly categorised into two as—the *Naga* and *Kuki*. The Meitei, being a majority community, dominates political and administrative powers, and its mother tongue, the Meiteilon/Manipuri, is used as lingua-franca in the state.

Due to discontent over forceful annexation of the kingdom in 1949 by India, several *Meitei* organizations with separatist leanings emerged in the 1950s (CDPS 2015; Singh 2010a). Though the armed movements for secession from India had started since then, it became conspicuous in the 1960s and intensified in the 1970s. Anger against Delhi was further compounded by the delay in granting statehood in 1972. Consequently, insurgency related fatalities, economic blockades (restricting vehicular movements on the three National Highways transporting essential goods and services to Manipur) and *bandh* (forceful closures of the market/commercial establishments and government offices) increased significantly since then. However, in the 1990s, following the upsurge of Naga ethnicity-based

autonomy movement within the state and its counter movements, the secessionist movement got embroiled in internal feuds (Singha 2017: 1). For instances, in 1985, the state had witnessed 10 days of state-wide *bandh*, increased to 94 days in 2006, and thereafter, declined sharply, including the insurgency related fatalities. Though it dropped drastically after 2006-07, the simmering movements for greater autonomy within the state, socio-economic and political movements continued and no sign of respite from the unrest is visible till today. Manipur witnessed 18 days of economic blockades in 1985 and rose to 135 days each in 2010 and 2017 (SATP 2017; Singha 2017, 2013). In this manner, the entire state is engulfed with conflicts and violent movements, vying for different demands.

On the other side, despite the state's disarray law and order conditions mentioned above, performance of the education sector has been very impressive, maintained a higher standard than that of the national level throughout post-merger period. For instances, the literacy rate in the state was hardly 36 percent in 1961 and shot up to 80 percent in 2011. During the same periods, at the national level, it was 28 and 74 percent respectively. The drop-out rate in 1988-89, for the I-V standard children, was registered at 70.37 percent, but it drastically decreased to 28.65 percent in 1999-00 (GoM 2003-04). During the same period, at the national level, it was 47.93 percent and 40.29 percent respectively. In 2014, Out of School (OoS) rate in Manipur was registered at 1.7 percent vis-à-vis 3.0 percent of the all India level. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for the 18-23 age group was recorded at 39 percent in Manipur, compared to 24 percent in the country (GoM 2003-04; GoI 2015). In term of the higher education, if not provided a detail statistics at this stage, Manipur is identified as one of the most advanced states in the North-eastern Region of India [NER] (Kengoo 2012). At the school level, the overall learning outcomes in the state has been very impressive and maintained a higher standard vis-à-vis national level (ASER 2006-14).

Conceptual Framework

In this paper, the term "conflict" encompasses all forms of movement that affect day-to-day business and public life in Manipur, for instances, the armed movement for secession, political

violence, socio-cultural revivalist movements, students' movements, ethnic movements, etc. While the term "education or educational attainment" is interchangeably used with the "educational development/growth" and it encompasses quantitative as well as qualitative indicators like the children's educational attainments and various measures of the State's educational indicators. Since realising educational attainment is a long term perspective, this paper confines to analysis of the school level education.

While conceptualising linkages between the education and conflict, few studies (Phillips 2013; Singha 2012; HSR 2012) found that the conflicts and unrests, which are created by different sections in the society, are the results of the development discourses, bolstered by education. Without which, societies become quiescent, perform below the optimum level (Brahm 2003). Therefore, conflict may be considered as an inevitable dynamics in the modern world, a key catalyst for social change (Dupuy 2008), and no community in this world is free from the conflict, at least in the initial stage of its development trajectory (Singha 2013). But, their productive transformation towards social progress can, as a rule, only succeed when particular ability of the individuals and collectives to manage and resolve conflicts peacefully and constructively, in addition to the reliability of the corresponding societal, institutional, and more importantly, the legal framework conditions are properly channelized (Seitz 2004). The kind of conflict resolution arrived at through sustainable dialogue in a society can be achieved after attaining a certain level of education (UNESCO 2011; 2010; Amamio 2004). According to Dupuy (2008), even if the education creates some sort of conflicts in the initial stage of a society's development trajectory, it gets resolved at the end when education advances constantly and reaches a certain threshold level. Brahm (2003) termed it as an inverted U shaped conflict path, which states as education advances constantly from the traditional stage of a society to an advanced one (modernisation), conflict also escalates and after a certain threshold level (conflict stalemate) it deescalates. This is what Horowitz (1985: 96) referred to as modernisation and competition effect of conflict. According to Zartman (2001), when conflict reaches its stalemate, the parties find themselves locked in and the current deadlock is so painful to both of them (two conflict-

ing groups) from where they cannot escalate to victory. As such both of them seek an alternative policy or way out. But, when and how fast the conflict reaches to its stalemate and how long it will remain in the state of stalemate are determined by the institutional efforts, level of education and maturity of the people in the society (Singha 2013; Brahm 2003).

Literature Review

Despite a number of measures and programmes initiated for conflict resolution, anticipation of the UNESCO for a peaceful world after the Cold War or at least halving conflict incidence by 2015 has been shattered by the ever increasing conflicts all over the world (Dupuy 2008; Amamio 2004). In this context, an international conference the “*World Conference on Education for All*”, held in 1990 at Jomtien, Thailand, emphasised the challenges in providing basic education during the period of armed conflicts in the conflict ridden-areas. The very conference witnessed an evidence of declining primary school enrolments in the conflict regions (Tawil 2001: 1). A research study conducted by UNESCO also found that the armed conflict often leaves an unfortunate legacy for the affected generations, smaller shares of the population with formal schooling, fewer average years of education and decreased literacy rates (2010: 2). Another research study by Bird (2006) revealed that access to formal schooling may often be jeopardised by armed conflicts and further expounded that civil wars have a negative impact on educational attainment, particularly the children and the girls. According to Patricia (2010), relatively a minor shock on educational access can lead to a significant and long-lasting detrimental effect on individual human capital formation in terms of educational attainment, health outcomes and labour market opportunities. In some extreme cases, children are often used by the rebel groups as civilian shields to protect military forces (Levy and Parker 2000), which was recently witnessed in Kashmir (India). Poirier (2011) has also reported that the conflicts, especially the civil wars, have affected educational performances of the Sub-Saharan countries badly, and the rate of school drop-outs including secondary school have been very sensitive during the conflict periods. The very idea was endorsed by Williams (2017), that the civil

wars and genocide in the 1990s devastated the school education system in Rwanda.

On the other side, a study by Seitz (2004) explored that formal education system contributes to exacerbating and escalating societal conflicts. Besides production and reproduction of socio-economic disparities, education promotes teaching of identity and citizenship concepts. As a result, cultural plurality of society is often denied and then it leads to intolerance towards the others, either intentionally or unintentionally (Bush and Saltarelli 2000). At present, *Jihadi Terrorism* all over the world is an outcome of the greater effort made by “*Madrassa*” system of education. For instance, the very system of education in the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan provides ideological ends that might have strong implications for the reinforcement of conflicts (Boyden et al. 2002). Education may also be a driver of conflict by fuelling grievances, xenophobia and other antagonisms, but it cannot be the way of contributing to conflict resolution and peace building (Smith 2010). Education gives awareness, opens up mind and expands people’s horizon, informs about their rights and enables them to raise their voices as a citizen and emboldens them to fight for their entitlements (Singha 2013).

However, Krueger and Maleèkova (2003: 119) found that an increase in the citizen’s educational attainment meaningfully reduces conflicts in the society. A study by Shemyakina (2011), in Tajikistan, found that civil conflicts basically affect children’s educational attainment, especially those who directly exposed on it, not all. Though the reason was not clearly stated, his study further explored that armed conflict made a large significant negative effect on the enrolment of the girls, but a little or no effect on enrolment of the boys. The similar argument was also echoed by Oyelere and Wharton (2013) that the children who live in the conflict-ridden zone have lesser probability of being enrolled in the school vis-à-vis those living elsewhere. However, their study did not find any evidence on enrolment gaps at the primary level when appropriate measures are taken, but found a lower probability of enrolment at the secondary level. Another study report published by HSR (2012) also revealed that there is no significant difference on educational performance between the areas that have been affected and unaffected by the conflicts.

Till today, the impact of conflict on education and vice-versa is a highly debated upon (Lindquist 2012; Barrera and Ibanez 2004). Models on testing causality failed to establish inter-linkage between the young people's education and armed conflict (Boyden 2006). A cross-country study by Gates and Strand (2012), using panel data, could not find any causal effect between the two, and none of their estimates were found to be statistically significant. Based on the field-work conducted in three countries— Guatemala, Nepal and Liberia, the study further highlighted that education is only a part of the peace-building process, cannot by itself resolve the root causes of a conflict. Therefore, finding a causal relationship between the two is still inconclusive.

As of the protection of the educational sector in the conflict zones, using panel data collected from thirty-one African countries, an analysis was made by the UNESCO that education per se, has no significant influence on the frequency of intra-state conflicts; but potentially reduces the frequency of conflicts if proper measures are taken (Agbor 2011). Collier and Hoefler (2002) recommended that a high enrolment rate of males in secondary school can reduce conflict risk to a great extent. While Karam and Somokanta (2016) explored that emergence of private tuition culture and educational outmigration can easily protect education sector from the conflicts and bring quality education in the conflict-ridden state of Manipur. In Colombia too, using a cross-sectional survey, it was estimated that school enrolment decreases homicide rates (Barrera and Ibanez 2004).

Research Questions

Since the merger the state of Manipur has been witnessing a constant rise both in education sector and conflict incidences. However, unlike the education sector, growth of conflict incidences has not been very smooth and steady. For instances, number of days called for *bandh* in the state had gone down drastically after 2006. The insurgency related fatalities in the state had also witnessed a declining trend since 2007-08, but the number of economic blockade has been rising constantly over the years. On the other hand, education sector has been growing constantly and steadily. From the literatures discussed above, it is not clear as to whether the

growth of education is really related with the conflict in the state. To simplify, the study puts two basic research questions: 1) has the conflict affected education sector in the state or the other way around?, and 2) what has made the education sector performing well in Manipur despite its turbulent law and order situation in the last six to seven decades?

METHODOLOGY

The paper employs both primary and secondary data. The secondary data were mainly retrieved from the official website of the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, the National Sample Survey Organisation, Annual ASER Reports published by PRATHAM, etc. Based on the availability (due to the paucity of data), thirty-one years (1985-2015) annual data for the indicators related to education and conflict have been collected. Since the concept of development is a relative term, educational parameters of Manipur used in this paper are often, if not all, compared with the all India level.

Growth in education sector may be enhanced by a number of factors directly or indirectly, which include culture, politics, social, economic, geographical condition, infrastructure, etc. Same is true for the conflict incidences, which may be linked to many unobserved factors and these may, in turn, be the sources and consequences of the former. To proceed further for a statistical analysis, a number of variables like the insurgency related fatalities, economic blockades in the highways and forceful closures (*bandh*) of the market and business establishments are used as proxy of the "conflict". Using thirty-one years (1985-2015) data of these three components, a conflict index (CI) is constructed. Similarly, using the same time period, four educational indicators- literacy rate, Gross Enrolment Ratio (I-V std.), percentage of enrolment in private school (6-14 age) and percentage of III std. students who can do at least I std. subtraction (mathematics), have been used as proxy of the "educational attainment". Using these four indicators, an education index (EI) is constructed. For constructing dimensional index, we first fix the minimum and maximum values of the individual indicators and then arrived at the composite index (index) with the help of the following formula: $\text{Index} = (\text{Actual} - \text{Minimum}) / (\text{Maximum} - \text{Minimum})$

To answer the first research question or to know causal direction of the two— education (EI) and conflict (CI), using E-views software, *Granger Causality* test is done (Granger 1969), of course, most of the past studies in this regard used a large data set. As of the primary data, using semi-structured schedule, 107 families (35 rural and 72 urban households) were interviewed during the month of April and May 2013 from the two districts of Manipur— Thoubal (one of the developed valley districts) and Senapati (one of the backward hill districts in the hill). The collected primary data were analysed by employing descriptive statistics to assess the strategies adopted by the respondents in maintaining steady growth of the education sector in the state. To provide evidence of the sector's importance taken by the State and the public, the average annual expenditure per student and monthly per capita expenditure on education have also been used.

OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

Conflicts in Manipur

As mentioned above, due to discontent over the forceful annexation of the kingdom in 1949 several Meitei organizations with separatist leanings emerged in the 1950s (CDPS 2015; Singh 2010a). Though *Hijam Irabot* had sown the seed of freedom movement (freedom from British and internal oppression) in the early 1930s, the armed movement against the India for secession kicked off in the 1960s and intensified in the 1970s and the 1980s when many like-minded groups emerged. Thousands of lives lost and economy of the state has been pushed in the back seat by these long drawn insurgency movements and protracted conflicts in the state, especially in the valley. With the intensification of insurgency movement for secession from India, Manipur was declared as “disturbed area” in 1980 and the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) was imposed subsequently. Despite this powerful Act and deployment of large number of security forces, much larger than that of the required number, not much respite from the armed-conflict was visible (Singha 2017: 57). It rather led to the mounting of insurgency related fatalities in the state. For instances, number of insurgency related fatalities recorded at 46 in 1985 and rose

to 485 in 2008, but reduced slowly thereafter (SATP 2017).

However, dimension of the conflict slowly shifted from the 1990s with the rise of Naga ethnicity-based autonomy movement within the state and its counter movements by other groups. This demand for a separate state within the state led to ethnic cleansing in 1992, continued till 1997 to drive the Kuki ethnic group out of the four hill districts dominated by the former (Kipgen 2013). It has been the ever greatest displacement and intervention in the demographic equation in Manipur. In reality, it costed both the groups dearly and loomed large over Manipur as turf war began anew following demand for an ‘alternative arrangement or *Kuki-homeland/Zalengam*’ perpetuated by the Kukis (Kipgen 2013; Kom 2015). However, some other tribes (for example the Paite, Hmar, Simte, etc), who did not merged either with the Naga or the Kuki fold, were found to be grappling between the two. To protect themselves from the two (Naga and Kuki ethnic groups), the Paite tribe initiated the unification of seven tribes (Gangte, Hmar, Paite, Simte, Sukte/Tedim Chin, Vaiphei and Zou) living in the south-western hills of the state and adopted ‘Zomi’ as their common identity. Eventually, their armed wing, the Zomi Revolutionary Army (ZRA) was formed in 1997 and started the movement for ‘Zogam/Zomiland’. After the Kuki-Naga conflict, the second dreaded ethnic conflict that took place in Manipur was the ‘Kuki-Paite’ clash in 1997 and 1998. The Kuki militants attacked Paites on the charge that the latter did not support the former during the Naga-Kuki ethnic conflict and the Paites did not adopt Thadou language (Thadou tribe is the majority in Kuki ethnic group) as link language (Shashikumar 2007; Singh 2010a). Nevertheless, the covert turf war, besides two ethnic clashes (Kuki-Naga and Kuki-Paite), is the conflict between the Meitei and the Naga. It came to the forefront in June 2001 when Delhi decided to extend the Naga insurgent group's ceasefire agreement in to the Manipuri territory, beyond Nagaland. In this manner, communities have been polarized into four broad ethnic groups—Meitei, Kuki, Naga and Zomi. All of them have been at the loggerheads, fighting for vying demands, ranging from the complete secession to internal autonomy, ethnic identity to political dominance.

Due to the socio-economic and geo-political factors, often than not, hills (tribes) and valley

(Meitei) enter into conflict. As a medium of the democratic movement and to put pressure on the State or the majority community (Meitei), the hill-based/tribal organisations, generally, resort to economic blockades on the three National Highways (NH 2, NH 37 and 102 that connect Imphal to Dimapur/Nagaland, Imphal to Silchar/Assam and Imphal to Moreh, bordering Myanmar respectively). For instance, Manipur witnessed 123 days economic blockade in 2011, cut-off the state from the rest of the world, spear-headed by the Kuki ethnic group demanding for creation of Sadar Hill district and its counter blockade by the Nagas against its creation. Against the Kuki ethnic group's demand, the Naga frontal organisation the United Naga Council (UNC) called-on 4 months (130 days) economic blockade, ended on 19th March 2017. In the valley, besides movement for secession, the fights/movements for economic interest, social cause and political opportunity, cultural and religious revivalism have been ravelling the state for long. The *Bandh* and the general strikes have been the medium of protest in the valley. Since the valley area of Manipur is ringed by the hills, unrests and conflicts happened in the valley have little impact in the hills, while the economic blockades (blocking the NHs) in the hills lead mainly to the shortage of essential commodities in the valley where majority of the state's population reside.

Education in Manipur

Despite being a landlocked, the state's education sector has progressed to a great extent since its merger with India. The number of educational institutions (all levels from school to university) has increased from 538 in 1950-51 to over 4222 by the end of 2004-05, and of these, 4089 were schools, 62 colleges and 2 universities (GoM 2015-16). Literacy rate in the state has increased manifold from 12.57 percent in 1951 to 80 percent in 2011, at the tune of 3.13 percent of compound annual growth rate (CAGR). Drop-out rate for the class I-V has also decreased drastically from 81 percent in 1988-89 to around 7 percent in 2014-15, reduced at the tune of 12.5 percent of CAGR (Singha 2017). Performance of women's education, especially in the rural and hill areas has been very impressive, performed much better than that of the national level.

As of the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for the children of class I-V, the state performed well, registered at 91 percent in 2015-16. The "out of school" (children 6-14 age) rate has also gone down from 5.6 percent in 2006 to 1.5 percent in 2016. In the all India level, during the same period, it was 6.6 percent and 3.2 percent respectively (ASER 2014; DISE 2014-15). In terms of enrolment rate in the private schools, in 2006, it was around 58 percent (age 6-14) in Manipur compared to 19 percent of all India level. In 2015, it increased to 74 percent compared to 31 percent of the national level (ASER 2014-15).

Coming to the learning outcomes or educational attainments, the state of Manipur has exhibited its best, not only in the NER but also at the national level. As per annual ASER reports from 2006 to 2015, the performance of the state has been very impressive. For instance, in 2006, children of class III who can read at least standard I text book was 52 percent compared to 48 percent of the all India level. It increased to 71 percent in 2008 and slightly reduced in 2015. In terms of arithmetic performance, the percentage of class III children who can do at least class I level subtraction was 75 percent in 2006 and rose to 80 percent in the following year (ASER 2014). Female literacy rate and the percentage of attaining higher education level in rural areas of Manipur is also found to be very encouraging. For example, about 43 and 32 percent of males and females respectively attained higher education in the rural areas of Manipur in 2009-10 (Singha 2013).

Causality Test

In this section, we employ statistical tools to verify the theoretical claims. Before we proceed further, to understand growth trend, two indices—EI and CI, have been presented in the Table 1. Of course, as discussed in the methodology section, both the indices have been constructed by using four and three components respectively to make these two variables comparable.

From the Table 1, it can be gauged that the index value of the CI had increased constantly and started declining after 2006. While the trend of EI seems to be growing constantly throughout the period of the study. Though the growth rate of the two have slowed down after 2006, pace of the CI was found to be relatively faster than that of the EI. It means, CI was growing

Table 1: Trend of education and conflict indices

Year	EI	CI
1985	0.07	0.04
1986	0.13	0.07
1987	0.22	0.11
1988	0.25	0.15
1989	0.34	0.05
1990	0.45	0.20
1991	0.53	0.21
1992	0.64	0.18
1993	0.62	0.43
1994	0.65	0.33
1995	0.59	0.35
1996	0.61	0.37
1997	0.59	0.59
1998	0.62	0.45
1999	0.57	0.32
2000	0.57	0.48
2001	0.60	0.38
2002	0.55	0.29
2003	0.57	0.30
2004	0.63	0.31
2005	0.69	0.60
2006	0.75	0.69
2007	0.82	0.53
2008	0.76	0.61
2009	0.91	0.57
2010	0.69	0.48
2011	0.84	0.37
2012	0.76	0.16
2013	0.73	0.20
2014	0.80	0.25
2015	0.96	0.53

Source: Author's estimation

faster till 2006 and declining faster thereafter compared to EI. This indicates that the growth rate of education in the state was not much affected by the protracted conflicts. Nevertheless, to estimate causal relations of the two (to estimate Granger causality), unit root test is done in Table 2. This indicates the stationarity of the two variables.

From the Table 2, it can be seen that the variables (CI and EI) are found to be stationary at the first difference. As per the procedure of the test, after confirming stationarity of the two time

Table 2: Unit root test

Variables	Status	ADF
EI	Level	-2.319789
	First Difference	-7.138684***
CI	Level	-2.387788
	First Difference	-5.872567***

*** stands for significant at 0.01 percent level

series data, the next step is to test for the co-integration of the variables, which is shown in Table 3 as "unrestricted co-integration rank test, (trace value), supported by the Annexure I, unrestricted co-integration rank test Max. Eigenvalue). This clearly reveals that the two variables (EI and CI) are not found to be statistically significant, which implies that the two variables are not co-integrated in the long run.

However, to continue the test and for understanding a short run causality between the two, we use the vector auto-regression model (VAR). The optimal lag p is determined by the VAR lag selection criterion, which is shown in Annexure II. Using this selection information criterion the optimal lag selected is 1 (p=1) and the final estimated result of VAR(1) model is given in the Table 4.

Table 4: VAR estimation result

	D(CI)	D(EI)
D(CI)-I	-0.113202 [-0.54262]	0.272584 [2.49068]**
D(EI)-I	0.275894 [0.82250]	-0.368753 [-2.09561]**
C	0.010066 [0.37402]	0.035985 [2.54874]
R-squared	0.033841	0.275488
Adj. R-squared	-0.040479	0.219756
F-statistic	0.455341	4.943104
Log likelihood	17.96367	36.67259

** Significant at 5% level

From the Table 4, it is found that the CI granger causes EI in the short run, but the reverse causality is not found. Though the conflict has

Table 3: Unrestricted Co-integration Rank Test (Trace)

Hypothesized No. of CE(s)	Eigenvalue	Trace statistic	0.05 Critical value	Prob.**
None	0.320061	14.38466	15.49471	0.0730
At most 1	0.104408	3.197837	3.841466	0.0737

Trace test indicates no co-integration at the 0.05 level

*denotes rejection of the hypothesis at the 0.05 level

**MacKinnon-Haug-Michelis (1999) p-values

short run impact on education it does not have reverse causality. In nutshell, conflict and civil unrest have at least some impact on education sector in Manipur in the short run, not at all in the long run. Whereas, education does not have any impact on conflict in the state.

Protection of Education from Conflicts

In this section, a modest attempt has been made to analyse the factor(s) which has/have made the education sector performed well, despite the state's turbulent law and order situation in the last six to seven decades. Due to the long drawn conflict and social unrest in the state, Manipuris have learnt how to cope with the situation and protect the education sector from the conflicts. Using primary and secondary data, the four main strategies adopted by the Manipuri to enhance educational attainment in the midst of conflict are discussed hereafter.

One, in Manipur, education sector is given special emphasis after the merger, be it in rural or urban, rich or poor. The per capita expenditure on education is found to be relatively higher than that of the national level. Manipur turned out to be the second highest state in India, in term of spending on education. In term of per capita education expenditure, Manipur spent a total of Rs 11,827 per student annually, next to Sikkim with Rs 14,230 (ASER 2014). The monthly per capita expenditure (MPCE) on education, as per the 55th National Sample Survey (NSS) round (1999-00), was found to be around 4 percent of the total expenditure made by an individual compared to 2 percent of the all India level. While, in urban area, the MPCE on education during the same period was 7 percent compared to 4 percent of the national level. In 2007-08 (64th

NSS round), the MPCE on education in rural areas of Manipur rose to 7.24 percent and 9.04 percent for the urban. It is also a stylised fact that the higher investment gives higher dividend. A case study conducted by Singh (2011) in the India's state of Haryana found a positive correlations between the expenditure on education and economic growth. Of course, at present, school education has become more of a private good. The share of children enrolled in private school in Manipur has been all time high since the 1990s, recorded at around 67 percent of the total children 6-14 age groups.

Two, violent conflict is destructive, might affect the level and distribution of the returns to education considerably. Moreover, students are homogenous, affected altogether when violent erupts irrespective of their economic background. With these apprehension in mind, many civil organisations, students' associations, Non-governmental organisations and local clubs have come up with an idea of safeguarding children's education in Manipur. For instances, in 2001, a Meitei outfit, the *Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup* (KYKL) launched "*Operation New Kangleipak*," to fight against the corruption in education sector and disruption of children's education in the state. It aimed to clean-up the internal dirt in the education system, to make the education free from corruption and malpractices. The very organization announced and appealed people of Manipur to refrain from calling bandhs (forceful closures) and general strikes, or to spare education sector from the ambit of the bandh, if at all unavoidable, like any other medical and emergency services. Although there have been mix-reactions against the actions and punishments meted out by the outfit to those corrupt officials and teachers of educational institutions, etc., the effort was appreciated from

Table 5: Availed private tuition and outmigration for study

Outmigration	Rural		Urban		Grand total
	After XII	Before XII	After XII	Before XII	
Yes	21 (24.4)	1 (1.2)	48 (55.8)	16 (18.6)	86 (100)
No	13 (61.90)	-	8 (38.10)	-	21 (100)
Total	35	-	72	-	107
Availed private tuition*	31 (88.6)	-	69 (95.8)	-	100 (93.5)
Not availed private tuition*	4 (11.4)	-	3 (4.2)	-	7 (6.5)

Note: Figures given in the parentheses are the percent of the total.

*At least one child in the family

Source: Field Survey

all sections of the society. This mission was also supported by the students' organizations, like the All Manipur Students' Union (AMSU). Similarly, recently, another students' union— Democratic Students' Alliance of Manipur (DESAM) has given strong warning against those who impose bandh in the state for their individual interest. This students' organization appealed to the civil society organizations to leave the students and educational institutions from any kind of agitation considering the career of the aspiring candidates. In this manner, children's education seems to be protected from the conflict and unrest situation in the state, if not always. Children can excel in their studies even in the conflict zone if they are protected from. For instance, recently, in Kashmir, 28 children broke all previous records by cracking India's best engineering entrance test, IIT-JEE Mains 2017, because they were kept away from the present unrest in the state and trained under the Indian Army's "Kashmir Super 40" programme.

Three, private tuition or coaching has become one of the most important strategies to cover syllabus and score good mark in the public exams. Despite the Imphal city (state capital) being an epicentre of conflict and civil movements, most of the good schools and coaching centres have now concentrated in and around it. According to Karam and Somokanta (2016: 54), in Manipur, most of the children and parents have opted for private tuitions, irrespective of their economic background. Home tutorial by paying more fees to the teachers is also one of the mechanisms to complete syllabus, which was not covered during the school due to bandhs, blockades and strikes. Unlike other parts of the country, private tuition centres start classes as early as 4.00 hour in the morning and the home tuitions are generally done in the evening. It is basically arranged in the odd hours to avoid agitation timing, strike and bandh (Karam and Somokanta 2016). Understandably, the agitations are generally staged in the working hour; say around 9.30 hr to 17.30 hour. In this environment, private tuition is emerged as one of the options left to Manipuris. The same was exhibited in Rwanda, after the civil war of 1990s, to cover course syllabus, double shifting of private tuition or coaching was introduced (Williams 2017). In Manipur, at present, around 94 percent of the school goers take private tuition or attend coaching centre to cover course syllabus

(refer Table 5). It was also supported by secondary data that around 41 percent of the rural children (age 6-14 years) depends on private tuition classes in Manipur compared to 23.3 percent of all India level. Also, in the country, the state of Manipur recorded the highest proportion of rural children enrolled in private schools, 67.3 percent in 2013 (ASER 2013).

Four, besides the three strategies mentioned above, educational out-migration to other big-cities of the country, or even abroad, is found to be the most preferred option in Manipur. Table 5 gives detail account of the outmigration for the children's education.

By using cross tabulation of the primary survey given in Table 5, out of the 107 families, 86 of them sent their children (at least one in the family) out of the state for their studies, accounted for 80.37 percent of the total sample collected. Remaining 21 families did not send due to one or the other reason, accounted from 19.63 percent. Of the total sample-whose children sent out of the state for study, 74.42 percent of them are from the urban areas and remaining 25.58 percent from the rural area. Of the total rural sample (35 rural households), around 63 percent of them sent out to other states. As expected, urban families get more access to education, spending proportionately more expenditure on education and sending their children out of the state. Further, out of the total households sending outside the state, around 80 percent of the children were found to be sent after XII standard. The same was also supported by other studies in the past (Karam and Somokanta 2016; Singh 2011b). This indicates that the education sector, especially the school level has, by and large, been protected from the conflict and unrests in the state.

CONCLUSION

The mainstream narratives on conflict and education depict a low educational outcome in conflict-affected zones as being caused by the disruption and destruction of conflict. But, the present study explored a slightly different picture. Though the state of Manipur has been riven by conflicts vying for different demands, the growth of educational sector is found to be performing more or less well at the steady rate and much higher than that of the all India level. With the help of Granger causality test, this study

found that though conflict affects educational attainment in the short run, it does not have any impact in the long run. On the other side, education does have any impact on the conflict in the state. Despite protracted conflict and unrest in the state the educational outcome is found to be performing better, much higher than that of the national level. Though conflict has slowly started declining after 2006, the study could not verify the Brahm's inverted U shaped conflict path statistically and scientifically. But one thing is clear that the educational attainment does not have any linkage with the conflict in the long run. Education sector may be protected if appropriate measures are taken and regular classes are done, and these are the important factors for educational development. If, at all, the Brahm's inverted U shaped conflict path turns out to be true as conflict started downturn after 2006 with the constant increase in educational attainment, Manipuris must be very happy that the conflicts are going to end in the state very soon.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Since education is an important social capital, a concerted effort must be taken jointly by the State, NGOs and civil society groups to excel the education sector. The government must pass a bill, like the KYKL's dictate on the issue mentioned above, to protect education sector from the civil unrest and for providing necessary measures to the school goers. Instead of being too obsessed with the impact of conflicts on education, employment opportunity should be created for those educated youths who have returned home after getting education from outside. Otherwise, these educated people or youths may get frustrated. But, it does not mean that State should wash-off their hands on the issue of conflict resolution. The state of Manipur being a corridor to the East and South-east Asian countries, a lot of employment and economic opportunity may be created if the education sector is harnessed properly. For this, more emphasis must be given on the quality education and basic infrastructural development in the state.

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ANNEXURES

Annexure I: Unrestricted Co-integration Rank Test (Maximum Eigenvalue)

<i>Hypothesized No. of CE(s)</i>	<i>Eigenvalue</i>	<i>Max-Eigen 0.05</i>		
		<i>Trace Statistic</i>	<i>Critical Value</i>	<i>Prob.**</i>
None	0.320061	11.18682	14.26460	0.1451
At most 1	0.104408	3.197837	3.841466	0.0737

Max-eigenvalue test indicates no co-integration at the 0.05 level

*denotes rejection of the hypothesis at the 0.05 level

**MacKinnon-Haug-Michelis (1999) p-values

Annexure II: VAR Lag Selection Test

<i>Lag</i>	<i>LogL</i>	<i>LR</i>	<i>FPE</i>	<i>AIC</i>	<i>SC</i>	<i>HQ</i>
0	47.60091	NA	0.000132	-3.257208	-3.162050*	-3.228117
1	53.99864	11.42453*	0.000111*	-3.428475*	-3.143002	-3.341203*
2	56.48078	4.077794	0.000125	-3.320056	-2.844268	-3.174603

* indicates lag order selected by the criterion LR: sequential modified LR test statistic (each test at 5% level) FPE: Final prediction error AIC: Akaike information criterion SC: Schwarz information criterion HQ: Hannan-Quinn information criterion