

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

Growth and Development of Elementary Education in the Hill Districts of Manipur with Special Reference to Senapati and Chandel Districts

Kimthianbiak Neihisial

Assistant Professor, Department of Education, R.K. Mahavidyalaya, Kailashahar, Unakoti, Tripura, India

Abstract:

Elementary education is an essential foundation for development of every citizen and nation as a whole. It occupies a very important place in the entire structure of education. Elementary education in India means eight years of formal schooling starting from the age of six years (i.e., 6-14 years of age). It is the most crucial period in which the whole life of an individual is built. At this stage the young and impressionable minds of children are moulded to become active and beneficial members of the society. The present paper is an attempt to find out the growth and development of elementary education in the hill districts of Manipur with special reference to Senapati and Chandel districts. Christian missionaries had rendered major contribution for the introduction and spreading of modern education in the hill districts of Manipur. The study also observed that there was a slow pace but upward trend of growth and development of elementary education in the entire hill districts of Manipur. Comparing the two districts under study, Senapati district showed greater pace in the growth and development of elementary schools than their Chandel district counterparts.

Keywords: *Elementary education, development, growth, hill districts*

1. Introduction

Provision of free and compulsory education to all children until they complete the age of 14 years is a Directive Principle of State Policy. Recognizing the need for literate population and provision of elementary education as a crucial input for nation building, the policy of the government has been to provide free and compulsory education to all children at least up to the elementary stage (Aggarwal, 2002). Besides, the National Policy on Education (NPE, 1986) and the Programme of Action (POA), 1992 emphasized three aspects in relation to elementary education; (i) Universal Access and Enrollment of all children, (ii) Universal Retention of all children up to 14 years of age and (iii) Universal achievement and a substantial improvement in the quality of education to enable all children to achieve essential minimum levels of learning (MHRD, 1988).

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, which represents the consequential legislation envisaged under Article 21-A, means that every child in the age group of 6 to 14 years has a right to full time elementary education of satisfactory and equitable quality in a formal school which satisfies certain essential norms and standards (MHRD, 2009). With this Act, India has moved forward to a rights based framework that casts a legal obligation on the Central and State Governments to implement this fundamental child right as enshrined in the Article 21A of the Constitution, in accordance with the provisions of the RTE Act.

In Manipur, the seed of elementary education was sown between 1872-1886. Pioneers like Major General W.F. Nuthal, Sir James Johnstone, Rev. William Pettigrew and His Highness Maharaja Chandrakirti Singh, contributed towards the growth and development of elementary education (Devi, 2006). In 1872, Major General W.F. Nuthal, the then Political Agent opened a school at Imphal, but the school did not function properly due to want of local co-operation or encouragement (Devi, 1989). In 1885, a Middle English School was opened by the then Political Agent, Sir James Johnstone with the permission of Maharaja Sir Chandrakirti Singh (The Imperial Gazetteer of India, 1908). The school was named after him as Johnstone Middle English School and the same has developed now into a Higher Secondary School in Imphal. Gradually, primary schools were also established at Sekmai, Phojing, Tera, Thangmeiband and Moirang in the valley by 1895-96. But till the first decade of the last century, no tangible progress in education could be seen as the general public looked upon the English and anything associated with it with suspicion and hatred. Besides, the English and their education system were regarded as something impure that would defile their sacred being. As a result, the progress of education in this state was very slow (Devi, 2001).

Manipur is an isolated hill-girt state of India situated in its north-eastern region. The state is geographically divided into two regions- the hill and the valley. The hill comprises of five districts viz; Chandel, Churachandpur, Senapati, Tamenglong and Ukhrul, whereas the valley comprises of four districts viz; Bishenpur, Imphal East, Imphal West and Thoubal. The hill region is occupied by tribal communities belonging to Nagas and Kuki-Chin-Mizo tribes. The valley region is predominantly occupied by the plain people known as Meiteis, besides few other minorities and tribal groups.

2. Objective of the Study

The main objective of the present study is to find out the growth and development of elementary education in the hill districts of Manipur with special reference to Senapati and Chandel districts.

3. Methodology

The present study employed historical and descriptive research methods to find out the growth and development of elementary education in the hill districts of Manipur. Elementary education refers to both Primary and Upper Primary levels of education. In the present study Primary School comprises of Pre-Primary, Primary and Junior Basic schools while Upper Primary comprises of Middle, Junior and Senior Basic schools. Data for the present study were collected from secondary sources such as Census records, Directorate of Education (S), DISE data, books, publications, etc.

4. Growth and Development of Elementary Education

4.1. Hill Districts of Manipur

The Christian missionaries played an important and pioneering role for the introduction and spreading of modern (English) education in the hill areas of Manipur. The name of William Pettigrew may be mentioned for having made this important contribution. Being rejected in the valley to preach the gospel, Pettigrew found his way to the hills which was a blessing in disguise for the hill areas (Guite, 1991). He subsequently reached Ukhrul in 1895 and by the next year he started one ME School there. However, it may be noted that the first school on the basis of modern education in the entire hill districts of Manipur was started by the government authority at Mao Thana in Senapati district in the year 1893 (Roy, 1973). In 1896, the government authority established another lower primary school at Ukhrul district. The year 1896-1897 witnessed a remarkable landmark in the development of education because the government created a post of inspector to do all the necessary surveillance over the development of education in the hills as well as in the valley (Dimlangah & Singh, 2011).

Until the first decade of the twentieth century, there could not be any worthwhile achievements in the spreading of modern education in the hill areas of Manipur as the need of education was not felt or neither a necessity. Their main problem was to seek food, if they could get sufficient food for one year then, they wanted nothing more. Hence, they were very much pre-occupied with their daily work in their agricultural pursuit, toiling from dawn to dusk every day.

The first high school in the hill districts of Manipur was established at Pherzawl village in Churachandpur district in the year 1951. However, Ukhrul high school may be counted as the first full-fledged government high school as it got converted into government high school with effect from 4th March, 1952. Mao Maram high school in Senapati district also got government recognition by getting Grant-in-Aid in the year 1951-1952 (Guite, 1991). Pherzawl high school produced its first batch in the year 1954 and created a history of its own by producing a record of 100% pass percentage in the year 1956 (Pulamte, 2009).

Prior to the integration of Manipur into the Indian Union, the hill areas of Manipur remained in its primitive way of life and traditional culture. However, with the integration of the state with the Indian Union after independence, there was a rapid progress in the field of education in the hill areas of Manipur. The number of elementary (i.e. primary and upper primary) institutions in the hill areas of Manipur, including all management types (i.e. Government, Private and Christian Mission Schools) rose from 140 to 1007 during the decade 1951 to 1961. There were 2262 elementary school teachers along with 40125 students enrolled in 1961. Further, the growth and expansion of elementary education continued in the hill areas during 1971, where the number of elementary institutions increased to 1473 and, along with it the number of teachers and students increased to 3882 and 74440 respectively (Guite, 1991).

With the attainment of full-fledged statehood on the 1st January, 1972, the responsibility of management and control of government, aided and unaided private schools in the five hill districts of Manipur was given to the Hill District Council under Manipur Hill Area District Council Act, 1971 (Singh, 2001).

In 1980, the department of education in Manipur was bifurcated into two Directorates as Directorate of Education (School) and Directorate of Education (University of Education). This bifurcation of the department of education into two Directorates has made a great impetus in the development of education in the hill districts. In the year 1981, the number of elementary schools in the hill districts was 1686 along with 5197 teachers and 72675 students (Guite, 1991).

The growth and development of elementary education in the hill districts can be traced through some parameters like literacy rate, number of elementary institutions, number of student's enrollment, number of teachers, etc. The tables below depict the growth and expansion of elementary education in the hill districts of Manipur.

Districts/Years	1981	1991	2001	2011
Chandel	34.23	46.68	56.20	71.11
Churachandpur	44.85	58.17	70.60	82.78
Senapati	31.03	46.04	59.80	74.13
Tamenglong	36.38	50.16	59.30	70.05
Ukhrul	41.99	62.54	73.10	81.35
Hill Total	37.71	52.72	63.80	75.88
Manipur	41.35	59.89	70.50	79.21

Table 1: Literacy rate in the hill districts of Manipur (1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011)

- Sources: (i) *Statistical Handbook of Manipur 1985. Directorate of Economics and Statistics Government of Manipur, Imphal (1981)*
(ii) *Statistical Handbook of Manipur 2002. Directorate of Economics and Statistics Government of Manipur, Imphal (1991)*
(iii) *Office of the Registrar General, Census of India (2001 & 2011)*

There was a remarkable progress in the literacy rate in all the five hill districts of Manipur during the decades 1981 till 2011 (Table 1). Churachandpur district and Ukhrul districts outshone their counterparts in respect of literacy rate in all the decades. During the decades 1981 and 1991, Senapati district recorded the lowest literacy rate among all the hill districts. However, Senapati district saw a massive improvement in the literacy rate during the period 1991-2001, thus, surpassing Chandel and Tamenglong districts in 2011. Despite a remarkable improvement in the literacy rate among the hill districts over the past decades, their overall literacy rate is still behind the state's total.

Years	No. of Schools		No. of Enrollment		No. of Teachers	
	Primary	Upper Primary	Primary	Upper Primary	Primary	Upper Primary
1987-88	1434	232	93910	15162	3197	2205
1997-98	1267	280	65170	36950	3373	2615
2007-08	1365	366	86165	53024	4135	3095
2013-14	1744	375	87176	50760	7932	3050

Table 2: Showing the distribution of elementary schools, enrollment and teachers in the hill districts of Manipur during 1987-88, 1987-89, 2007-08 and 2013-14

- Sources: (i) *Directorate of Education (S), Government of Manipur, Statistical and Planning Section (1987-88 & 1997-98)*
(ii) *District Report Card, DISE Data on Elementary Education (2007-08 & 2013-14)*

Distribution of elementary schools, enrollment and teachers during different years in the hill districts of Manipur is shown in Table 2. Although the number of primary schools in these areas declined from 1434 during 1987-88 to 1267 during 1997-98, the recent years saw a remarkable improvement in the number of primary schools. With regards to the number of upper primary schools, there was a gradual increment with the advancing years and decades.

While the periods 1987-88 and 1997-98 marked a huge decline in the number of enrollment at primary schools, the number of enrollment at upper primary schools saw a remarkable increase during the same periods in the hill districts of Manipur (Table 2). Thus, it is assumed that upgradation of primary to upper primary schools was responsible for decline of enrollment at primary schools and increment of the same at upper primary schools during these periods. It is also observed that the number of enrollment at primary schools continued to increase with the increasing decades and years, but, the same at upper primary schools declined during the recent years.

Table 2 further reveals that there was an upward direction regarding the number of teachers at primary schools in Manipur's hill districts during the given periods. The growth rate tends to increase with the increasing years and decades. However, the number of teachers at upper primary schools did not show improvement during the recent years.

4.2. Senapati District

Senapati district was earlier known as Manipur North district which came into existence from 14th November, 1969 with its headquarter at Karong. Later, the district headquarter was shifted to Senapati on 13th December, 1976. The district came to be known as Senapati district with effect from 15th July, 1983. The district is endowed with kaleidoscopic landscape of blue hills, green valleys, serpentine streams and rivers flowing through mountains and deep gorges. The district is about 61 kms. away from Imphal city which is the state's capital.

The first school in Senapati district was established at Mao Thana, near Mao Gate in 1893 which was also the first school among the entire hill districts of Manipur (Roy, 1973). At the beginning, the hill tribes were reluctant to send their children to school but students' enrollment gradually increased due to the persistent efforts of the Christian missionaries as well as the state government. Gradually, new schools were established at different parts of the district. As days went by, circumstances, ideas and concepts had been changed and parents started taking interest in the education of their children. In the year 1951-52, Mao Maram high school in Senapati district became a government recognised high school (Guite, 1991).

The table below reflects the number of elementary schools, number of student enrollment and number of elementary school teachers in Senapati district.

Years	No. of Schools		No. of Enrollment		No. of Teachers	
	Primary	Upper Primary	Primary	Upper Primary	Primary	Upper Primary
1987-88	380	67	14505	1354	874	619
1997-98	363	87	19887	15506	995	895
2007-08	413	106	29668	17136	1378	984
2013-14	594	110	31636	14803	2622	852

Table 3: Showing the distribution of elementary schools, student's enrollment and teachers in Senapati district during 1987-88, 1997-98, 2007-08 and 2013-14

- Sources: (i) *Directorate of Education (S), Government of Manipur, Imphal (1987-88 & 1997-98)*

(ii) District Report Card, DISE Data on Elementary Education (2007-08 & 2013-14)

As seen in Table 3, there was a slight decline in the number of primary schools in Senapati district during 1997-98. Thereafter, the number continued to increase with the advancing years. Although, the number of upper primary schools in the district increased along with the increasing years and decades, the growth rate was not satisfactory. Thus, there were 67 upper primary schools during 1987-88 which rose to 110 after almost 3 decades in 2013-14.

Senapati district saw a remarkable progress with regards to student's enrollment at primary schools during the period between 1987-88 and 2013-14 (Table 3). A maximum increment was observed between the periods 1997-98 and 2007-08, during which the number of students rose from 19887 to 29668 respectively. The period 1997-98 saw a massive growth in student's enrollment at upper primary schools. The district had only 1354 upper primary students during 1987-88 which remarkably increased to 15506 during 1997-98. But, the recent years saw a decline in student's enrollment at upper primary level probably due to shifting of students to other places owing to the poor system of education in the district.

The number of teachers at primary schools in Senapati district continued to grow along with the advancing decades and years (Table 3). The growth was even greater as we moved up the decades and years. However, the progress of teachers at upper primary schools in the district was not impressive and thus, the number declined between the period 2007-08 and 2013-14.

4.3. Chandel District

Chandel district (formerly known as Tengnoupal district) came into existence on 13th May 1974. It is the border district of Manipur state neighbouring Myanmar on the south, Ukhrul district on the east, Churachandpur district on the south and west, and Thoubal district on the north. Chandel district is about 64 kms. away from the state capital, Imphal.

In the year 1950, one junior primary school was established at Miyapur village of Chandel district. Initially, the school was run by the village authority, but later, it was upgraded into a full-fledged Government Junior Primary School. The school was started with two teachers and three more teachers were appointed when the school was converted into Government school. Two teachers were appointed from the village itself and the other three were non-tribal teachers from plain areas. In 1956, another primary school, i.e. Chandel Christian Primary School was established at the heart of Chandel town, with a vision to promote education among the younger generations in the district (Singh, 2006).

The people in Chandel district were completely preoccupied in agricultural work. However, gradually they started showing interest in education under the influence of educated persons from the plain areas. Parents started insisting their children to go to school. Hence, the interest towards education grew and prevailed among the people and new schools were established in different parts of the district. However, the pace of growth and development of education was far from satisfactory.

The table below depicts the growth and expansion of elementary education in Chandel district.

Years	No. of Schools		No. of Enrollment		No. of Teachers	
	Primary	Upper Primary	Primary	Upper Primary	Primary	Upper Primary
1987-88	227	19	10825	1148	454	196
1997-98	202	27	9756	3340	509	185
2007-08	205	40	12897	7510	534	368
2013-14	263	43	11024	10752	1040	365

Table 4: Showing the distribution of elementary schools, student's enrollment and teachers in Chandel district during 1987-88, 1997-98, 2007-08 and 2013-14

Sources: (i) Directorate of Education (S), Government of Manipur, Imphal (1987-88 & 1997-98)

(ii) District Report Card, DISE Data on Elementary Education (2007-08 & 2013-14)

Table 4 reveals that the number of primary schools in Chandel district did not make much progress until the period 2013-14. The district had 227 primary schools during 1987-88 which declined to 202 during 1997-98 and remained almost the same after a decade in 2007-08. However, the period 2013-14 saw a remarkable growth having 263 primary schools. Unlike primary schools, the number of upper primary schools in Chandel district increased with the advancing decades and years. The greatest increment was observed between the periods 1997-98 and 2007-08.

While the number of student's enrollment at primary schools in Chandel district remained fluctuating during the given periods, the number of student's enrollment at upper primary schools in the district saw a remarkable progress during the same periods (Table 4). The enrollment of students made a massive increment between the periods 1997-98 and 2007-08 which continued till 2013-14.

Despite a gradual increment in the number of teachers at primary schools since 1987-88 in Chandel district, it was not until recently that saw a remarkable improvement (Table 4). The periods between 2007-08 and 2013-14 marked a rapid increment during which the number of teachers at primary schools rose from 534 to 1040 respectively. However, the progress in the number of teachers at upper primary schools in Chandel district was far from satisfactory. Apart from the period between 1987-99 and 2007-08, the district made no progress in the number of teachers at upper primary schools.

In correspondence to the growth of elementary education, the government of Manipur laid stress on various aspects in developing elementary education in the state including Senapati and Chandel districts. During the 5th Five Year Plan, the state government introduced special scheme for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students such as supply of free textbooks and uniforms,

attendance scholarships and financial assistance. The scheme of non-formal education for drop-outs, non-starters and late-starters was also taken up by the government under the 7th Five Year Plan, in order to achieve complete universalisation of elementary education (Devi, 2006) The National Programme of Nutritional support for primary education popularly known as Mid-Day Meal (MDM) was started in Senapati and Chandel districts in 1995 to provide food to all primary classes and later on extended to upper primary in 2008. The scheme was expected to promote higher enrollment and served as an economic assistance to poor parents.

The state of Manipur launched the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in 2004-05 with a new vision and mission in all the 9 districts of Manipur. The SSA in Manipur aimed at providing useful and relevant elementary education for all children in the age-group 6-14 years under the provisions of Article No. 45 of the Indian Constitution and 86th Constitutional Amendment Act, making elementary education a fundamental right and fundamental duty. Another aim of SSA was to bridge social, regional and gender gaps with the active participation of the community in the management of schools with the purpose of providing useful and relevant education (Sharma, 2013).

Under the scheme of SSA, students were enrolled without charging admission fees besides distributing free textbooks, uniforms and school bags to the students. School maintenance and teacher's grants were also provided under the SSA programme. New schools were established along with EGS (Education Guarantee Scheme) and AIE (Alternative Innovative School) centres to serve children from small and remote habitations.

Keeping in view the mandatory provisions of the Right to Children of Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, a School Management and Development Committees were appointed in all the elementary schools. However, when assessing the roles and responsibilities of the SMDC member for the development and management of the elementary schools, the involvement of the SMDC members in the hill districts especially Senapati and Chandel districts is a question of concern.

5. Conclusion

A significant progress of elementary education was observed among the entire hill districts of Manipur during the recent past decades. The number of elementary schools, teachers and students increased with the advancing years, even though the pace of growth and development was not so satisfactory. Hence, there is an upward trend of growth and development of elementary education in the hill districts of Manipur. Now, the question of concern lies in the quality of elementary education prevailing in these areas. Is there any qualitative development? It would be very upsetting to witness only quantitative expansion of elementary education without any qualitative improvement. Therefore it is the need of the hour, for the government, the educationists, teachers and parents to come together and ponder about the quality of education and solve the various problems and hindrances for the qualitative as well as quantitative development of elementary education among the hill districts of Manipur to achieve the goal of the state and the nation as a whole.

6. References

- i. Aggarwal, D.D. (2002). History and development of elementary education in India. New Delhi: Sarup & Sons.
- ii. Devi, J. (1989). Education in Manipur. Imphal: Rai Pravina Brothers.
- iii. Devi, J. (2006). Education in Manipur. Imphal: Rai Pravina Brothers.
- iv. Devi, M.S. (2001). Development of Education in Manipur. New Delhi: Rajesh Publications.
- v. Dimlalnghah & Singh, K.S. (2011). A frequent development of tribal's education in Manipur. Research Journal of Philosophy & Social Sciences, 37(2).
- vi. Guite, K.P. (1991). Development of education in the hill areas of Manipur. Unpublished PhD Thesis, Manipur University: Imphal.
- vii. Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD). (1988). National Policy on Education, 1986 (As modified in 1992). Department of Education, New Delhi: Government of India.
- viii. Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD). (2009). Right to Education, Elementary Education. Department of School Education and Literacy, New Delhi: Government of India.
- ix. Pulamte, J.H. (2009, November 24 & 25). Tribal education in Manipur: Problems and options. Paper Present at CAUCUS.
- x. Roy, J. (1973). History of Manipur. Calcutta.
- xi. Sharma, H.I. (2013). Universalisation of elementary education under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in Manipur. Voice of Research, 1(4), 14-17.
- xii. Singh, L.L. (2001). Universalization of elementary education in the hill districts of Manipur. In M. Horam (Ed.), Rising Manipur: Including other north eastern states (p. 204). New Delhi: Manas Publications.
- xiii. Singh, R.R. (2006). Tribal development in 21st Century: An experience from Manipur. New Delhi: Mittal Publications.
- xiv. The Imperial Gazetteer of India. (1908). Vol. XVII, Oxford: The Clarendon Press.