CHAPTER – IV

DEVELOPMENT OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN UKHRUL AND TAMENGLONG DISTRICTS OF MANIPUR

4.0 Introduction

Primary education is the first stage of the entire super structure of educational set up in India. The term ‘primary education’ is understood as a basic stage of education which is either a self contained phase (of various length in various countries) or which forms a part of a longer cycle of general education. It is a stage when a child starts a formal education in some institutions.

Formal schooling begins with primary education. The first five years of education are crucial for pupils since the basic three R’s are fundamental in sciences, social studies and other vital subjects’ experiences are provided. Universal and compulsory primary education as envisaged in the constitution of India emphasizes the fact that all citizens of the country should be educated compulsorily up to a minimum level of education. Primary school lays the foundation for further education and hence this should be considered as the most important aspect of schooling, and deserves maximum encouragement. Primary education plays a very important role not only in the socialisation of a child but also in his physical and mental growth. After entering into the primary school, the children get their first lesson in discipline and hard work. The formative stage in the primary schools helps the child in the later stage.¹
In order to promote primary education in the country, Education Commission 1964-66 made an all India survey of primary education and tried to translate the constitutional directive into action through its recommendation. The objectives were three folds; universal provision, universal enrolment and universal retention.\(^2\)

National Policy on Education 1986, lay stress on shifting from enrolment perse to enrolment as well as retention, formulation of strategies based on Micro planning to ensure children’s retention at school, a substantial improvement of primary schools and provision of support services,\(^3\) adoption of a child-centred and activity-based process of learning at the primary stage, restructuring of teachers education, exclusion of corporal punishment, school timings as well as vacations adjusted to the convenience of children, provision of essential facilities in primary schools.\(^3\)

The Revised National Policy on Education 1992, also mainly emphasised on early childhood care and education through the integrated Child Development Programme.\(^4\)

Fundamental Rights 2002 (Eighty-sixth Amendment Act, 2002 inserted Article 21-A in the Constitution of India) provides free and compulsory education of all children in the age group of six to fourteen years as a Fundamental Right in such a manner as the State may, by law, determine.\(^5\)

RTE Act, 2009, stated that every child has a right to full time elementary education of satisfactory and equitable quality in a formal school which satisfies certain essential norms and standards.\(^6\)
4.1 Development of primary education in Manipur

In Manipur, the seed of primary education was sown between 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 Manipur.

In 1885, the first Middle English School was established in Manipur by James Johnstone with the permission of Maharaja Chandrakirti Singh. In 1892, one Lower Primary School was established at Sekmai and Mao in 1893 for the hill people and for the valley at Tera Keithel in 1895. An attempt was made by the government to establish a school at Thangmeiband in Imphal, but it was not able to materialise. In 1894 William Pettigrew, an American Baptist Missionary established one Lower Primary School at Moirangkhom which was also known as Pettigrew school. Thus, in 1894 two schools were established, one at Moirangkhom and another at Phoijong. In 1895, one more school was added at Moirang which increased to eight.7

In 1896, William Pettigrew established another Lower Primary English school at Ukhrul which was situated forty-eight miles northeast from Imphal. At the beginning, the hill tribes are reluctant to send their children to school but due to his persuasion and relentless effort the school began with 21 boys and increased gradually. In 1899, a girls’ school was established at Moirangkhom for the first time in the state with 12 girls on the roll in the school. During 1906, the total Number of schools was 61, with sixty Lower Primary schools and one Middle English School.8
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 madrasahs, 3 sanskrit tols 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.

The trend of development of primary education did not make much progress in Manipur before 1972. But after the attainment of statehood in 1972 some progress of primary school has taken place in the state. Primary school in the hill areas of Manipur are under the control of the respective hill district councils. The development of primary education in the hill areas is still below average. Despite the concerted effort made by the government of Manipur, the progress of primary education has been hampered due to various problems prevalent in the hill areas of the state, like rural underdevelopment, rough hill terrains, no proper road approachable to the villages, scattered villages far and wide, frequent insurgent activities in the hill areas under study, low level of literacy among the hill masses. School condition is almost neglected by the state government. Therefore, special emphasis should be given to the removal of various problems on primary education in the hill areas of Manipur.

The introduction of free and compulsory education in the field of primary education after the Indian independence gave a strong impetus towards the progress of primary education in Manipur. The trend of development of primary schools, students enrolment and number of teachers can be seen in the following chart and graphs.
The above graph showed that the number of primary schools in the state had been increasing till 1990–91. However, it went down during 2000-01 due to unavailability of students in the schools.

The above graph indicated that the number of primary schools teachers increased continuously till 1990-91 but thereafter the number of teachers had been reduced every year till 2002. So, the study assumed that it may be due to non-replacement of retired teachers.
From the above graph it is seen that the enrolment of students in the state had been on the rise throughout the period.

4.2 Development of primary schools in Ukhrul and Tamenglong Districts

Christian organisation saw the seeds of education in Tamenglong district in the early part of the 20th century. First primary school was established at Sempang Village in 1925 by the Christian organisation. Later on primary schools were established by church and Christian organisation in the district. After the achievement of Indian Independence almost all the existing primary schools were taken by the state government. However, there was no tangible progress of primary education in the district before getting its statehood.

The American Baptist Missionaries were the first to introduced modern education in Ukhrul district. On February 19th 1897, Rev. William Pettegrew established the first Mission School at Ukhrul with 20 boys from Ukhrul and 11 boys from Hundung Village. His endless efforts in the fields of education and mission work made many people to realise the
importance of education in the district which enabled him to set up eight more primary schools by 1906 where the number of students rose to eighty.\(^{18}\) The progress in the growth of primary education had been far from satisfactory till 1947. After which primary education in the district steadily progressed but noticeable development came into being only after the attainment of its statehood in 1972.

The state government of Manipur put great efforts towards education after its statehood by opening many primary schools in the two districts.\(^{19}\) In 1989, the number of primary schools in Tamenglong district was 209 and it increased to 216 in 1999 whereas the number of primary schools in Ukhrul district was 210 and 224 in 1989 and 1999 respectively.

The development of primary schools in the subsequent years is shown in the following graph:

**Graph 4.4 Showing the number of primary school in the two districts**

![Graph 4.4](image)

Sources: (i) Statistical Abstract Manipur, 2000-01, 2005-06, 2008-9\(^{20}\)

(ii) Planning & Statistics Section Directorate of Education (S) Govt. of Manipur, 2010-11\(^{21}\)

Graph 2.4 showed that the trend of development in primary school in Ukhrul district is steadily increasing whereas in Tamenglong district the number of primary school is fluctuating time to time.
Graph 4.5 Showing the number of students enrolment in the two Districts.

Sources:  
(iii) Planning & Statistics Section Directorate of Education (S) Govt. of Manipur. 2010-11

The above graph indicated that the enrolment of students in Tamenglong is increasing rapidly whereas the enrolment of students in Ukhrul district was encouraging in the year 2000 but suddenly it went down to 13761 in the year 2005. Thereafter, the enrolment in the district is steadily progressing. In this regard it is assumed that the sudden decreasing of students’ enrolment may be due to establishment of many private schools in the district.

Graph 4.6 Showing the number of teachers in the two districts

Sources (i) Statistical Abstract Manipur, 2000-01, 2005-06, 2008-9
(ii) Planning & Statistics Section Directorate of Education (S) Govt. of Manipur. 2010-11
Rapid progress of Primary Education in the two districts was not possible due to the following reasons:

1. Apathy treatment towards the hill districts by the state government was one of the reasons for the slow development of primary education in Ukhrul and Tamenglong hill districts.

2. Inadequate financial assistance to the two districts is still one of the main reasons.

3. The two districts greatly suffer from improper transport and communication system.

4. Most of the schools are located far and wide.

5. Lack of Research and Publication on primary education in the two districts.

6. Non-availability of teachers’ quarter, lack of qualified teachers, etc. has greatly affected the development of primary education in the two districts.

7. Practising of frequent transfer of teachers creates problems to the students and the state which leads to lopsided development.

8. Unavailability of facilities such as library, computer set, Audio-visual aids etc. affected the development of primary education in the two districts.

9. Lacks of awareness towards children’s education by the parents since most of them are poor and illiterate.

10. Non-involvement of NGOs in educational development campaign in the two districts.

11. Inadequate provision of training measures for headmasters and teachers.
12. There are constant political disturbances in proper functioning of education system in the two districts.

13. Lack of dedication from the teachers.

Apart from the aforesaid points mention may be made that large number of primary school teachers are from the valley where most of them are being utilized in the valley. Besides, the state government does not give much importance towards primary level of education comparing to other stages of education.
References:

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