CONCEPTUAL FRAME

That 'What is education?' was always the first and foremost query in the minds of many people in the past, but, today, even in the remotest corner of the hill areas of the state of Manipur such query as to the meaning and use of education is never raised by any body. Instead queries as to where, how and when best kind of education can be provided to their children are very often raised by many parents. This is a clear indication of the fact that the people in general have very clear conception as to the meaning and use of education and that they have the proper consciousness and awareness as to the need of education for them. The same fact is nicely put by Rochunga Pudaite in the introduction of his book, 'The Education of the Hmar People', as, "However backward education among the Hmar people might have been in the past or may be at present time, one thing is certain: the people feel with assurance that their tribe (one of the leading tribes from amongst the Chin-Kuki-Hizo tribes) is on the path of progress and educational advancement. 'He is only an undergraduate' is a common expression considered quite sufficient to explain almost any failure of all but the best educated persons. Every growing child is now imbued with the idea that success in life comes with education."¹

It appears now that the complexity of this present world is well construed in its proper perspective by all the people, irrespective of literate or illiterate and that every one seems to be able to look to education for the solution of his problems in this complexed world. It is accepted and agreed on all hands that education is, indeed, the only and bare means of solution of all problems in one's life. Today, every one takes for granted that without education there is no chance of success in one's life. The challenges of life can no longer be met efficiently without having the required education. This is so due to the fact that the world in which we live is not like the world in that our forefathers lived. It is now the world of automation and atomic age. In the life of human beings, so many scientific technologies involved. Hence without some kind of teaching and training or enlightenment, it is well nigh impossible to meet any situation. Therefore, education is looked on by all as the best instrument with which they can attempt to solve their problems. When every one looks on education as a medium of solution for all their problems, it becomes clear that it is taken in the meaning of its 'formal' form, in which three factors immediately and directly involved - the teacher, the taught and the subject-matter.

In this humble endeavour to conduct a research on the topic, 'Development of Education in the Hill Areas of India', etc.
term, 'Education' will be used in the sense of 'Formal' which means all the modern education organisations - wherein teachers appointed, students admitted, school house constructed, course comprising of text books prescribed and teaching conducted in a stipulated period of time. The term, 'Development' in its dictionary meaning according to Webster's New World Dictionary, means a step or stage in growth, advancement, etc. So this term is found quite preferable as the growth of education takes place in steps or stages. And the phrase, 'Hill Areas of Manipur' will be used to refer to the five hill districts of the present Manipur. In our attempt to trace the development of education in the hill areas of Manipur, emphasis will be laid on the contributions of the following agencies:

1. Governmental,
2. Christian Missionaries and
3. Private bodies
towards the development of modern education as prevalent in our country.

Whatever our endeavour it is, it would not be out of place to draw our attention a little first to the views of some foremost world renowned educationists as to the meaning of education. According to one of the most applauded theorists of modern education, A.N. Whitehead, "The purpose of education is to stimulate..."
guide their self development”\(^2\). And another famous educationist of modern education, John Dewey said in his book, “Democracy and Education” \(’\)Education is life and life itself is development.\(’\) Education is thus a fostering, a nurturing, a cultivating process. When we have the outcome of the process in mind, we speak of education as shaping, forming, moulding activity - that is, a shaping into a standard form of social activity\(^3\).

In the recent past, hardly three scores of years ago, in the hill areas of Manipur, where the society was pre-literate and primitive, when modern education was first introduced, almost all the elders opposed tooth and nail as elsewhere in India the introduction of modern education as they had an apprehension and suspicion that anything foreign to their religious, cultural, socio-economic and political life will spoil their society and will bring about evil into their society and never expect anything good from outsiders, may be, Government or missionaries. In those days the elder groups did not find any use of schooling; but considered it as loss of time, perversion from what is good and right and a device of thwarting them from their normal ways of life and making them to lose the sense of manual labour. Thus


in trying to discourage those of them who would like to go to school, they used the following expressions 'Schooling is nothing but laziness', 'Schooling will make you lacking behind your contemporaries in efficiency of working', 'No need of learning being idle' etc. Thus generally, those who happened to have been educated defying such adverse advice from the older groups are only those who were stubborn to the disciplines of their parents and had ardent love for education. Such was the situation in the recent past in the field of education, but now reverse is the case. All the elder groups, the experienced hands in the society have now been taking initiative in the field of education in finding facilities, establishing schools, encouraging and campaigning admissions and thus the common expressions often heard from the present elders are completely the reverse of what were heard from the recent past elders, such as, - 'Don't be foolish, go to school straightway, without education man is no better now than a beast', 'Go to school and learn wholeheartedly, then you can become a man', and when words of admonition, exhortations and advice are found insufficient, many elders used even rods and drove children towards school. At present situation, the trend of transition from the old conception to the new conception of education is unmistakingly discernible among the hill tribes of Manipur.

All these facts clearly show that the conception of education has undergone complete change with the hill races, too.
They no longer find the school house as the house of learning idleness, instead they have found the relevances of modern education to the real situations of their life. Hence, the hill people, in general, the elder groups in particular have become more enthusiastic in having good facilities of education even than the young students. The real state of affairs in the present system of education, sometimes, seems to belie the hopes and aspirations of the elder groups, because our universities have produced many degree holders who have not been able to come upto their expectations in the practical field. Any way, what may come or what may go, there is no confusion in the concept of education in the minds of the people, today, the whole hill areas of Manipur have been covered with a network of the present education system. Thus the development of education is commendable in the hill areas of Manipur too.

REVIEW OF LITERATURES

The present work on the 'Development of Education in the Hill Areas of Manipur' would be the first of its kind for the state of Manipur as such a study to cover the whole hill areas of the state without giving any cut off period right from the memorable time till date is attempted. Hence ready made materials in the forms of books and research works of the past which are directly relevant to the present study are extremely rare. In the midst of such difficulty some earlier works, in the form of manuscripts, books, some periodicals, journals, seminar
reports etc, were seen and found relevant in some way or the other, directly or indirectly with the present work.

For direct reference, the book entitled, "The Education of the Hmar People" by Rochunga Pudaite (1963) is available, but this too deals with the education of a particular tribe from amongst the 29 (twentynine) recognised tribes of the state of Manipur. However, Pudaite's work is commendable and highly enlightening as it deals with the socio-cultural economic and political background in their historical perspective, which are, in general, common with that of other consanguine tribes. He further, dwells at length in his study on the impact of British education on their life, which are in no way different from that of other tribes. The study aims at understanding of the historical background of the tribe in all the aspects-social, economic, cultural, political and religious, the changes effected upon them by the British education being described and suggesting a suitable programme for the future. The approach is not revolutionary. It is an attempt to understand the problems of education in order to gain a clear insight and a sense of direction for the future.4 Some other books directly dealing with some affairs are: 'The Mighty works of God' by F.S. Downs, 'The Baptist Church in Manipur', by R.R. Lolly, 'Church Growth Among the Hill Tribes' by Prim Suantak Vaiphei, 'British Policy Towards Manipur, 1819-1919' by Lal Dena 'Western Education in Manipur' Vol.1

Mangoljao Singh (1967), the Quarterly 'Journal of the Manipur State Kala Academy', 'An Introduction to Tribal Language and Culture of Manipur (7 Tribes) edited by K.B. Singh (1976), History of Manipur by J. Roy (1958), 'An Introduction to Manipur' by Laienza-yum Iboingchol Singh (1963), 'Origin and Culture of Hagas' by R. R. Shimray (1983), have been all directly dealing with the affairs in the education in Manipur from their view-points and findings. They are of tremendous help in one way or the other in certain areas of study of this nature.


A study of the same nature was carried out by A. Chakravarty as entitled, 'History of Education in Assam, 1826-1919', under Gauhati University, revealing a complex educational system developed in the multi-tribal and multi-linguistic province. Another work of R. Devi is found highlighting the same nature of
study in the title, 'Education in Assam during Nineteenth century, which amply revealed that during the period under study the educational system was in the formative stage, the people were rural-orientated, about eighty-five per cent living in villages failed to accept the modern educational pattern as their own, their tradition and conservatism stood in the way of availing the educational opportunities and hence the progress of education became very slow in that period.

Hawal Kishore Ambasht's 'A critical study of Tribal Education (with special reference to Ranchi District)', was dealing with the education of the three major tribes in the District of the state of Bihar - the Oraons, the Kharias, and the Sundas. He did the study of the cultural setting of the three tribes at length as the bedrock of the relativity of education and culture with clear insight.

He observed that there is a very close relationship between education and culture and these two factors are highly responsible for making people civilised and progressive in the world. Further he said, "The content of education should always be related to the culture of the people receiving it. It is, therefore, necessary to delineate the various stands of culture in the area where the study has been made. These tribal cultures are changing very fast and this is all the more significant from the point of view of education, for it also has a role in changing the pattern."
addition to these, the content of education would also change. 5.

In this book a critical study on the education of the tribals in India with special reference to the Ranchi District of Bihar was made by N.K. Ambasht. Here it is worth noting that in this study the socio-cultural and economic backgrounds of the three leading tribes - Oraon, Kharia and Munda, were given in a picturesque description, which are just typical of most tribals all over the country. Most of the tribals in India, without exception, are of agricultural-based economic background, their mainstay had been agriculture since the time immemorial and all other activities are only of secondary and ancillary in nature.

Hence, all the cultures of the tribals had been agriculturist-oriented and agricultural-based. They all developed a culture which consists of festivals and ceremonies, all of them being performed relating to their agricultural activities. All of their cultural and social institutions were thus caused to exist with the motive of improving their efficiency in producing more foodstuffs. N.K. Ambasht dealt with at length the traces of historical, cultural and social backgrounds of the three major tribes of the Ranchi District of Bihar, and the close relationship.

between those backgrounds and education. According to him, for accelerating the speed of development of education, it is required to plan the policy of education knowing all their cultural backgrounds and relating them to the system of education.

He made a critical observation on how far the roles of the cultural and social institutions were relative to the system of education, and the system of education, according to Ambasht, had to be framed knowing fully well the close relationships between education and culture, which is highly illuminating and enlightening for the problem of our present study.

Another work by H.K. Das Gupta - 'Problems of Tribal Education and the Santals' (1953), deals at length with the problems of the following three objectives - (i) How to uplift the Tribal people of India so as to bring them on a par in every respect with the advanced non-tribal people of the country, (ii) how to bring about integration (psychological, social, cultural and economic) of the tribal with the rest of the people of India without destroying the special cultural pattern, good traits, the esthetic sense and artistic skill which they still possess and (iii) what type of education is to be devised and imparted to them which may solve the various problems of tribal life that require immediate solution for their well being as well as that of the whole country. In this book, the author has analysed many serious problems in the life of a typical tribal people, such as,
the Santals who are not only the largest tribal group in West Bengal but also constitute one of the largest tribal groups in India, and also has attempted to show how to solve these problems by means of a right type of education. Hence, the book is highly enlightening for the work of the same nature.

And a collection of thematic papers by a group of social scientists from all over India edited by H.S. Gore, I.P. Desai and Suma Chitnis under the title, 'Papers in the Sociology of Education in India' (1967), on behalf of the Coordinating Committee for Studies in the Sociology of Education in India, is of immense help and amply illuminating for having a clear insight of the same nature of problems. The special problems of the tribals in respect of education were dealt with illustriously at some length, the policy of education held out by the Government to the backward tribals, containing the scheme of provisions like Ashram, residential schools, scholarship grant, women education etc. was discussed, which are all highly enlightening for the purpose of the present work.

Another work highly commendable and immensely relevant is found with Dr. H.D. Shipman's 'Education and Modernization', (1971) published by Faber and Faber, 3 Queen Square, London, in which illustrious discussion was done by him about the education in the pre-literate, Traditional societies with special reference
to England and Japan by examining the process of modernisation in two highly industrialised countries. The discussion has been made as wide as possible by using relevant information from other academic disciplines, such as economics and anthropology but pointing out the role of education in the process as the consequence or the key factor, resulting in the emergence of new social order.

**METHODOLOGY**

In regards to the methodology employed in this present study, both the methods of primary and secondary sources would find optimum use and the writer himself being a tribal, his own experiences would also be utilised to a very great extent as a source of information. For collection of materials, any book and any piece of literature published either by the government or private individuals have been utilised as they are found relevant to the present topic and analysis of the materials found relevant is made. And secondly, for primary information, some prominent elders of the various tribes, writers, church leaders, social workers, political leaders and literatures are consulted and interviewed as they are found to be good informants in the fields and areas of their involvement each. In regards to the statistical informations, as far as
possible the official data available with the concerned Department are used as the most reliable source.

PLAN

This work is planned for focussing a true and clear picture of the Development of education in the Hill Areas of Manipur from the traditional education to modern education till upto the year of 1985, by giving all the traditional, cultural, socio-economic and religious backgrounds and for future guidance and reference to the development plannings of education for the state and especially for the study area.

For the purpose of carrying out the plan, the work will consist of nine segments as the following:

In Chapter one, the whole purpose of the work will be introduced under the following sub-headings: Conceptual frame, Review of relevant literatures, the methodology being employed and the plan of the work.

In Chapter two, under the heading of the Study Area, the following sub-headings: The Land, The People, and The Economy of the State of Manipur and also of the Hill Area will be
specifically dealt with. The Hill Area will mean throughout the work only the five Revenue Districts of the Hill Area of Manipur, viz., Ukhrul District in the east, Tamenglong District in the west, Churachandpur District in the south, Senapati District in the north and Chandel District in the south-east. Hence the Sadar District is combined with the Senapati District in all the official records it can not be dealt with as a separate District.

The Sadar District has a separate District Council but it is yet to be made as a full-fledged District. In regards to the land, the whole geographical position of Manipur in the Union of the Indian Republic will be specified and out of the state how much area of land is termed as the hill area will also be shown. And in regards to the people, the whole tribal population of the state and their ethnic groups will be traced along with their cultural affinities and differences, so that analysis can be made in relation to the development of education with them. Further, the economy of the whole state will be studied in general first and then of the hill area under study so that the relation between the economy and the development of education can be closely studied.

In Chapter three, account of the people's socio-cultural and religious backgrounds will be attempted at length under the
sub-headings - Historical evolution, Social and Cultural backgrounds of the various tribes and the religious backgrounds along with their present religious structure. The whole hill area of the state of Manipur can be divided into two regions culturally and ethnically as the Nagas and the Chin-Kuki-Mizo or Zonis (Non-Nagas) and the area occupied by them can be dealt with separately.

In Chapter four, the early or ancient education as prevalent with the tribals will be traced and evaluated in terms of the meaning or sense of 'informal education'. In this chapter too, there will be two sub-headings as 'The Traditional Education-I and Traditional Education-II.

In this chapter, attempt will be made on the value of the social institutions of the tribals - in terms of education like Morung among the Nagas and Ham or Zaul bunk among the Chin-Kuki-Mizo groups. And in connection with this, the administrative system prevalent with the tribals will also be studied.

In the Fifth Chapter, how modern education was first introduced and where the first schools were established will be traced through the help of some official records of the Government and of the Missions and through oral interviews of some prominent elders of the concerned area. Two sub-headings
as First Phase of modern education till 1949 and Second Phase of modern education upto to 1985.

Attempt will be made on the assessment of the contributions of the following agencies of modern education (1) the government, (2) the Christian missionaries and (3) Private bodies, giving a descriptive account in Chapter six and seven.

On the present state of affairs in the field of education as it is today will be attempted with the support of some statistics, making critical assessment of the so far distribution of the facilities of education in districtwise will be attempted and critical appraisal of the development measures taken up by the Government and other agencies in the field of education under the study area will be made.

And in the IXth Chapter, rounding up of the whole assessments and findings will be made and conclusions will be made along with some possible suggestions for future plans and directions for developing education in the hill areas of Manipur.