CHAPTER - V

SOCIO-POLITICAL IMPACT ON EDUCATION

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Education is considered as the birthright of every citizen in a civilized society. The world is fast moving towards a new education order. Most countries, developed and developing are busy reforming their educational system so as to be able to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Education is the key to every development. Education plays a vital role for all kinds of development.

No doubt, Manipur State has been making rapid progress since the introduction of free and compulsory education with the attainment of independence of India.

Today, there are numerous schools in the hills as well as in the plain of Manipur. Every child is now imbued with the idea that success in life comes with education. Parents, whether rich or poor look for the best schools for their children. It appears now that
the complexity of this world is well explained in its proper perspective by all the people irrespective of whether literate or illiterate and that everyone seems to be able to look to education for solutions of his problems in this complexed world. Education is looked on by all as the only means with which one can attempt to solve any problem in life.

The great concern of the Government as well as the people as a whole in Manipur is not only for the non-enrolled children and the illiterate adults but for the need to improve the quality of prevailing schools education which forms the foundation for building a strong educational edifice as well as for the raising the quality of life of the people. Though the whole state of Manipur has been covered with a net work of present education system, the existing schools of Manipur, specially the Government schools are not fulfilling the great longings and disires of the people. Comparatively, the performance of the private(mission) schools at the State Boards Examination is better than that of the Government schools. But the system prevailing in the state as a whole is such that, there are too many hindrances in running the schools or the institutions.
The present political situation is the main hindrance to the progress of education in the state. The prevailing situation has given rise to the formation of several powerful students' unions with links to the underground groups. Normal life has been affected quite often due to bandhs, strikes, rallies, etc. Whenever any group of people are dissatisfied with the Government or in any eventuality, people resort to such anti-social elements. Very often, the educational institutions are the worst affected. Students themselves take active part in violence when their demands are not met. More or less, they act as a convenient handle for political parties to serve their vested interests. Many of the students are politically motivated, they are not interested in studies, rather they pay attention to politics with the objective of propagating and attaining their goal in that field. Such students take leading role in organizing bandhs, strikes, etc.

For example on September 29, '97 students of Nambol L. Sanoi College burnt the college boys common room in protest against the Government’s alleged apathy
to the college. The students union accused the Government saying, the Government is playing delaying tactics and is ignoring the students demands for opening of core classes for Physics and Zoology which is approved by the College Development Council and other concerned authorities.

On one occasion the students boycotted classes to back All Manipur Students Union for observing 'Eclipse Month'. Students of several schools and colleges boycotted classes on September 29, '97.

CORRUPTION

According to Websters Dictionary, corruption means, 'Corrupting influence as bribery' or 'A linguistic or orthographic change in a test word etc. to an incorrect form'.

In this investigation, corruption includes corrupting influences such as bribery and also exploitation or oppression. In Manipur, corruption has become very common in every walk of life. No one seems to consider it as something against the law of the
land. Nothing can be done without corruption. It makes poor people totally hopeless and helpless. This also encourages people to unrest and violence.

For example, there are many poor but bright and brilliant students who earned their degree with hard work and sincere effort. But in job seeking, they are deprived of their due share for being unable to offer bribe to the appointing authority. Many students become frustrated and become helpless. As a result, they join the underground for means of livelihood and access to easy and quick money.

At present, the chaos, the turmoil and the political unrest are due to bribery not only in the job seeking matter but everywhere you turn, you see bribery involved from getting urgent medical treatment, to getting legitimate grievances in civic life redressed and even in earning one's bread. A wage earner such as cycle-rickshaw puller in order to get a licence, has to grease the palm of someone or the other. Corruption seems to be a colossal problem facing the common man where he cannot enjoy his legitimate right to live.
STUDENTS UNIONS

The situation in Manipur has given rise to formation of several powerful students' organisations such as Students Unions. They are used as powerful pressure groups on the society. There are many Politicians who encourage the formation of various activist groups among the students and use them as their mouth piece. It has also been proved that students have become Politically more forceful in making their demands and have become a powerful body. Politicians as well as many other groups of people or organisations including insurgents seek their support in one way or the other.

Every tribe in Manipur whether major or minor has a Student Union of that tribe. Besides, each District and each village also have Students Union which serve as the watch dogs of the society. The All Manipur Students Union (AMSU) is the strongest student body which works in the interest of the Meitei Community at large. Whereas the All Tribal Students Union, Manipur has been all for the interest of the tribal people in Manipur. To a great extent, these students' bodies can
shake the government as well as decisions taken by other organisations safeguarding the interest of their own. For example, during the last 1989 Parliamentary elections, the All Tribal Students Union Manipur (ATSUM) Action Committee's hand-bill for publicity had the following slogans:—

1. Don't loot Tribal Development fund for dirty C.M. welfare scheme.
2. Don't oppose constitutional obligation of tribals.
3. Sixth schedule is our political right.
4. No sixth Schedule; no Council election.
5. Drop anti tribal policy.
6. We are no longer satisfied with duplicate autonomy.
7. Sixth Schedule for Tribals.
8. C.M. Welfare scheme robs Tribal Development funds.
9. No sixth schedule; no rest.
10. Don't delay Public interest.¹

¹. A Hand-bill issued by ATSUM Action Committee, Churachandpur.
Student radicals have been described as aggressive rebels against parental authority, who disperse familial conflicts on to society, at large. Students radicalism has been interpreted as the result of unconscious and irrational devices from rebellion produced oedipal conflicts involving emotional and financial dependence on, and competition with parents.\footnote{Barrie Stacey; Political Socialisation in western Society: An Analysis from a life-span perspective, New Delhi: 1988 pp. 78-80.}

Most of the Students Unions seem to have direct link with the underground. Once the Students Union starts demanding something they are so persuasive and uncontrollable.

For example, AMSU which is the Apex body of the Valley students' Union recently decided to have a month long "Eclipse Month" starting from September 21 to October 15 to protest what it called illegal merger of the then independent Manipur into the Indian dominion, which is totally against the will of the Government of Manipur. Not only that, they proposed to organise provocative topics of debates and seminars in connection with the "Eclipse Month" observation.
In a Press release issued on September 12, 1997, the Police Department accused under-ground elements of trying to mislead the young students into becoming insurgents, it also stated that the whole move was anti-national and illegal and invited police action. There was also reports of Congress Working Committee considering banning the Union. The state Police force also went all out to arrest AMSU volunteers and leaders in its attempt to foil the observation. At least five active members were arrested by the police. Over 1000 went into hiding in a drive carried out by the police. Section 28-A/153-A/177/120-B of IPC and 7th criminal law Amendment Act were applied on the students. However, the Gauhati High Court passed a ruling directing the state Police Department. And the Government of Manipur against taking any more action against the Students Union to peacefully organise any seminar and debates. The judgement was passed by Justice W.A. Shishak on a petition filed by AMSU President W. Ratan Kumar.\(^3\) Given below are some of the main Students Unions in Manipur:

\(^3\) Merger issue, North East Sun. November 1-4. 1997 Vol. 3 No. 7. P. 16
1. All Manipur Students Union (AMSU)
2. All Tribal Students Union, Manipur (ATSUM)
3. Mao Students Union.
4. Poumei Students Union.
5. Maram Students Union.
6. Tangkhul Katamnao Saklong (TKS)
7. Chin Students Union (CSA)
8. Gangte Students Union.
15. Vaiphei Students Association.

All these Students Unions engaged themselves actively for the interest of their Communities. Over and above, the activities of these Students Unions the Education of the boys & Girls in Manipur are hampered by the organisational methods employed by these unions such as strikes, burning of buildings and records,
violence, etc. The very means employed to express their grievances are counterproductive and seriously affect the educational process and time schedule of studentship. As referred to already, even capable students are unable to complete their course within the time frame fixed by the Education Department and TDC can be anything but a "Three year degree Course" and it may well be a "four year or five year degree course" for the students whose academic years are extended due to the postponement of examinations as a result of strikes.

ETHNIC VIOLENCE

The ethnic violence in Manipur has brought great disaster in the life of the people. Initially, the ethnic clash was between the Nagas and the Kukis which broke out in 1992 and is still continuing. It has claimed hundreds of innocent lives. Many villagers have been uprooted, houses burnt down and many rendered homeless. Appeals have been made from various sections of the society to end the violence and bring back peace and normalcy in the strife-torn hills. Security forces have been deployed to put an end to the clash but all efforts could not bring peace as yet.
While the people have suffered so much due to this ethnic violence, a fresh violence broke out again between the Paites and the Kukis in Churachandpur District by the middle of 1997. It has claimed about 160 lives, with the same tragic results. Many educational institutions in Churachandpur have closed down due to this violence.

Though the violence broke out only in 1992 between the Nagas and Kukis, the political turmoil has been smouldering since 1990. The ethnic conflict in Manipur has its roots in politics. Had it not been for the selfish motives of the politicians, this ugly scene would have not taken place. Politicians both in the ruling as well as opposition parties in one way or the other are favouring militant groups of their own choice in order to consolidate their own position. On the other hand, the Government both at the Centre and the State with the aid of the security forces are encouraging or siding with one group in order to neutralise the other groups.\(^4\)

Now, the situation in Manipur is beyond control and one cannot predict what is going to happen in the future. Everyday, we are passing through many new

experiences/eventualities. People are filled with fear and insecurity, and have lost all hope and confidence in the Government and the leaders. As a result of the on-going ethnic clashes, students in the hill areas are suffering too much. Most of the schools are burnt down during these clashes. They are learning their lessons in private houses or ordinary shed with no infrastructure of any kind. For example, Keihap Aimol High School building was burnt recently. They hired classrooms of a private school in the neighbourhood to teach 120 students of the school. The National Students Union India (NSUI) charged that no officials bothered to pay a visit to the school, not to talk of constructing a new building. Another school in Henglep Sub-division-Tokpa Kabui Junior High School was also burnt in the ethnic clashes. And Island JB School was also burnt during these clashes.  

Due to this ethnic clashes, many students in the hill are deprived of proper academic atmosphere. There is no free movement of the people from place to place. No Nagas can go to the Kukis areas and no Kukis can go to the Naga Villages. Now, again, due to Paite-Kuki  

clashes, Churachandpur has become the worst affected District in the state. Due to the fear of free movement from one place to another, many teachers remain absent from duties. Seeing the continuing ethnic clashes, the Government of course makes an arrangement for the Government employees reordering the posting of the employees. Inspite of that, many teachers remain absent from the school. Not only that, there is a system of "Proxy teacher" in Manipur where the teacher appointee engages someone else to teach in his/her place by giving a fraction of his/her salary. Most of whom are not at all fit to teach. This kind of practice further mars the standard of education.

Many School Inspectors have taken undue advantage of this situation and neglect their responsibilities and Government teachers are found absent from their post. Recently on Oct. 31, 1997, the office of the Zonal Education Officer Sador Hills Kangpokpi has withheld the pay and allowances of ten teachers of the Bishnulal Junior High School for the month of October 1997 for irregularities in their duties. When a team of
Students Union visited this School, they found the school closed before time at 1.30 P.M. itself. Besides, the teachers signed the attendance one day ahead. 

These facts reviewed here, present the state of education in Manipur because of the prevailing overall politico-socio and other conditions. Great damage has been already done to education in this state that to bring back to normalcy will be an uphill task.

Some recommendations in this regard to improve the present status of education will be discussed hereunder.

IMPACT OF MODERN MEDIA

Today, we see the world unrest, whether it is the unrest of the individual human heart, or of the social, political or even religious situation. The world is in confusion and man kind has lost its sense of purpose and meaning in life and denied the worth of human personality and the other values that make life worthwhile. 

We are living in a generation of all kinds of evil such as immorality, violence which are brought about through modern mass media e.g Cable T.V., Cinema, Video cassettes etc. Parents and intellectuals of the society need to be aware of the great evil influence these things have upon the growing younger generation, so that every possible effort is made to control it. How much do our parents know the great evil influence over the minds of this growing children these media have. We should not be simply carried away by modern high-tech life and lose vital human values. Sociologists are loud in decrying the bane of these mass media upon the alarming rise in delinquency and a variety of social evils. Most of the homes have become mini cinema halls. With varieties of programmes, on the Television ever since cable T.V. was introduced in North East India, Hollywood vogue has invaded our homes like anybody's business. It has become a curse more than anything.  

Moral value has come down to the level of carpet, the rate of immorality at the age group of 12 to 14 has alarmingly increased. In some of the youth camps when

8. Peimila Makan; Our Home and the lure of Holy Wood net work.
counselling young people, it is found out that the rate of fornication ranges between 85% to 90%. The young people of the age group 13,14 will be minimum 80% in the whole of Manipur. When interviewed, most of the young people blamed cable T.V., movies as the main source of learning immorality. This evil influence has affected their young lives seriously. Even into the remote villages this evil culture has spread.

Some of the prominent programmes of the Cable T.V. are MASH, L.A. Law, Anything but love, Doggie Howser M.D. Dynasty, etc.

1. 'MASH' with all its humorous episodes is a promoter of drugs.

2. In Anything but love the heroin, Hannah explains the encounter with her lover who died in the middle of their love making, which only drives her to sexual madness.

3. L.A. Law glamorize' safe sex (promoting condom use).
4. 'Doogie Howser' Message to young minds in the minds of new sexual culture is explicitly portrayed in the star's un-inhabited social contact with an older woman who happens to be his mother's boss.

5. MTV is the most violent and sexually explicit network of television. MTV has brought down entire generations, their thinks, talks, dresses and buys.  

These Audio visual aids where properly made use of and because they involve both hearing and sight of the viewers have great potential as a means of educating the common men, can see and simultaneously hear about something the retention in our memory about that things is very great and long lasting. In widening of the knowledge of students exposing them to the latest in Science, Technology, Arts and Culture we can give to students what cannot be given in the classroom or laboratories ordinarily.

Even in remote villages in this state, if the students (or even the public) are shown only these programmes and not the 'serial' and others of the

baser sort, it will be big leap for ward in improving the quality of education and enlightenment of our society.

Feature films produced in different languages about different cultures informs us of those cultures. We can also gain or increase our knowledge about the cultures of America, Britain, Rome, China, Japan so on and so forth, not by visiting the places but by seeing the films based on their respective cultures, caste, creed and languages, but by seeing the different regional films, the knowledge about the people and culture is increased and will go a long way to bring about integration of all our peoples and bring about a sense of oneness or of belonging to the same country.

Instead of this positive outlook for the well being of the people, exploitation of society is permitted. In most of the films or serials produced are vulgar based on certain formulae, the basic elements of which are promiscuous sex, rape, drinking, smoking dancing, murder, stealing and fighting.10

Most of the children who are fed on such movies and are addicted to it end up as drop outs from schools and do not come up in life. They go after fun and parties, spend lots of money indulging in sex and drugs. Many promising young lives are lost for ever. Most of the drug addicts and alcoholics are the products of bad movies or T.V.

In the long run, the future citizens and administrators coming from such a background bring down great curse to the nation and the socio-political system is damaged. For instance in Manipur, (as elsewhere) boys and girls even in their teens elope even while they are in their high school standards. Their unrestrained life produces unwed mothers, abortions and divorces. These are a great burden on society, releasing criminals into the society. Children from such parents and growing in an atmosphere of strife, filth and unlove become the scum of the society.
LACK OF POLITICAL WILL OF PEOPLE WHO GOVERN

"Democracy"—the Government of the people for the people and by the people has become a far cry in our present day politics. It is more appropriate to redefine it as the Government of the politician, for the politician and by the politician at any rate in this State. It is not the welfare of the people that he is really interested in. Once he gets elected, it is power and lucre.

The common people are found quite active in politics. They show great interest in public meetings, political discussions and elections. The business men on the other hand also participate through financial contribution to the political parties. The political parties have grandiose election manifestos on which they canvass support.

The candidates take the advantage of expressing their party ideologies programmes and try to convince the voters by tactfully exposing their mental calibre and abilities. Sometimes many innocent voters are
carried away with their deceitful promises and sweet and kind words. But there is no firm commitment to what they say prior to election. Before the election, they shed crocodile's tears for the poor and down trodden just to tap their vote bank.

Once they are elected, they leave the poor high and dry. The poor villagers have stood in queue for hours together to meet the minister and sometimes they are not even permitted to meet him. Even as such, the benefits will go to the coteries or relatives of the politician only. They run the administration which by its corruption crushes the very electorate which voted them to power.

Therefore, our politicians who are our leaders are indeed responsible for the present state of confusions in the state. All the backwardness and undeveloped conditions of the District is due to the corruption of the politicians. On paper, many schemes and projects are prepared, grants are allotted but very few if at all are ever completed for the benefit of the people and prosperity and growth of the state. Fund has to go to
their own pockets. There is no will in the politicians to govern justly. On top of all this, the underground outfits also grab their share of public funds.

Today, we cannot see any improvement in education, medical facilities, road and communication, telecommunication, marketing system, agriculture and no industry worth its name in Ukhrul or any other District.

This is the main reason why Education in this state is in such a sorry state. This is the adverse impact of the Socio-Political system. It is high time that our political leaders have strong determination to do what they have promised. They should execute their powers for the welfare of the people.