A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF EDUCATED UNEMPLOYED
YOUTH OF KOHIMA TOWN OF NAGALAND

Abstract

1. Introduction: The study of the 'educated unemployed youth' demands a precise
definition of the three conceptual terms: a) youth, b) educated and, c) unemployment.
a) Youth: It is difficult to accurately assign lower and upper age limits for youth,
because this varies from scholar to scholar, from time to time, and from society to
society. However the youth age has been bracketed to be between 15 - 34 years as in
accordance with Census Operations and the practice of the Government of India.
b) Educated: All those who have completed at least eleven years of schooling and
are matriculate and above are considered to be educated (Ahamad, 1973).
c) Unemployment: An unemployed person is one who having potentialities and
willingness to earn, but unable to find a remunerative work, a condition of
involuntary idleness.

The comprehensive working definition of an 'educated unemployed youth' for
the present study is therefore identified as anyone between the age group of 15-34
years from matriculate to the post-graduate level, who is capable of working, willing
to work, and is making an effort to find work but could not find any remunerative job.

2. **The Problem:** Nagaland is a state having a weak industrial sector and an underdeveloped agriculture, bulk of the educated population being depended on the small size service-sector available. In all these years, we could see the educational institutions continuously producing educated youths but employment opportunities are limited in relation to supply of labour. There is no balance between the supply of workers and the demand for their services. Thus, open unemployment occurs because able and willing educated persons are in search of work, but there is no work for them and they remain unemployed. Therefore it has been rightly observed that: “Unemployment is a great evil, it is a poison, and it pollutes the society and wrecks the political fibre of a country. It creates devils, it turns good man into bad, and it changes an honest worker into a criminal. It encourages dishonesty, patronizes corruption, glorifies falsehood, points out the dark side of human character and makes one blind to its good side. It is difficult to expect truth; nobility and honesty from a person who cannot have two square meals a day, and cannot provide a morsel of food or a dose of medicine to his sick wife or ailing children. A half-clad and half-fed man is a diseased man and a diseased man infects the nation, the fire of hunger consumes all the noble virtues of a father, duties of a son or a husband” (Mamoria, 1954).
Even though considerable studies have been done on the Naga society, the problem of educated unemployment remains a neglected topic of study, though it has become the first rate state problem. This study has been attempted to answer a number of sociological questions related to educated unemployed youth such as - the aspirations, preferences and expectations of jobs, the multi-social problems of unemployed youth, and the social consequences of unemployment, etc.

3. **Objectives of the Study**: The research study has been conducted with the following aims and objectives:

   i) To study in Kohima Town the magnitude and trend of educated unemployment and employment opportunities for educated youth.

   ii) To examine the social and educational background of educated unemployed youth.

   iii) To explore the aspirations, nature and kind of job preferred by the unemployed.

   iv) To highlight the problems and find the social consequences of educated unemployed youth, and

   v) To examine various governmental measures, policies for educated unemployed youth.
4. **Data Collection and Research Tools:** A questionnaire, which consists of 128 questions, is the main research tool for collection of primary data. The questionnaire is divided into 6 sections, consists 104 close-ended questionnaires and 24 open-ended questionnaires. The universe of the study is Kohima, the capital town of the state, which has 15 wards under its civic jurisdiction.

The selection of research samples is sorted out by purposively selected sampling technique on the basis of a) academic discipline and b) educational qualification. Accordingly 240 total respondents of 16 each [that is, matric = 1, pre-university = 3 (1 each from arts, science and commerce), graduates = 6 (1 each from arts, science, commerce, law and 1 each from engineering, medicine), post-graduates = 6 (1 each from arts, science, commerce, law, engineering, medicine)] from the 15 wards/sectors that constitutes the urban area of the town under the civic jurisdiction of the Kohima Town Committee (KTC) is selected. However, out of 240 total respondents, only 193 respondents with required criteria could be available and distributed with questionnaire by the assistance of a helper in his/her respective ward. But the final completely filled-in questionnaire stands at 191, as 2 questionnaires could not be collected.

Secondary data has been carefully collected from all available records which includes review of relevant literature, journals and magazines, newspapers, the Census Reports, the Employment Exchanges, the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, the Annual Administrative Reports, etc.
5. **Chapterization**: The study is divided into eight chapters that are as follows:

**Chapter I Introduction**: This chapter introduces the problem of the study, attempts to study unemployment and highlights the various kinds of unemployment. It also consists of the various discussions like educated unemployment, youth, universe of the study, the objectives and the methodology - sampling frame adopted for the study.

**Chapter II Unemployment - Magnitude and Trend**: This chapter attempts to work out the broad magnitude and trend of educated unemployment in Nagaland as revealed by the employment exchange statistics. The study focuses on a decadal ten period of 1991-2000. It reveals the increased percentage of job seekers on the Live Register, the yearly expansion of unemployment in the state, the high proportion of educated unemployed against the total unemployed, the probability of an unemployed person to get a job, and the sex-wise distributed proportion of educated unemployed youth. This chapter also makes an intensive study on the steep trend of educated unemployment in the capital district - Kohima.

**Chapter III Socio-Economic Background**: The personal characteristics of the respondents such as - sex composition, faculty, age structure and marital status, occupational status of the father, educational attainment of parents, father's income and family's total income, type and size of family, etc. are studied and recorded accordingly in this chapter.
Chapter IV Aspirations, Preferences and Expectations: This chapter discusses the aspirations of the educated job seekers, which are reflected in their preferences for particular jobs. It discusses about the job expectations of the educated unemployed youth in proportion with their preferences for occupations. The chapter also studies about the criteria for satisfactory jobs, and preferred job locations.

Chapter V Employment Opportunities: This chapter briefly discusses about the literacy growth and the job/occupational structure in the state. And in relation, it discusses about the perspective of job market and the available job opportunities. The chapter discusses in detail about the extent of concern of the educated unemployed youth regarding unemployment.

Chapter VI Problems and Social Consequences of Unemployed Youth: This chapter studies about the specific problems faced by an educated youth due to unemployment. It studies the multi-social problems that beset the unemployed youth and its related social consequences in the society. This chapter also discusses the attitudes of the unemployed youth in response to their unemployment towards various social aspects viz. the job, present educational system, method of selection, government, their family, their peer groups, political-infrastructure, self-employment, Employment Exchange, etc.

Chapter VII Opinions on Self-Employment: This chapter discusses how the educated unemployed youth perceive self-employed jobs and their personal assessment on various self-employment projects. It also discusses the various employment
promoting programmes, which are directed specifically at the educated youth and also directed at the people in general.

**Chapter VIII Conclusion**: This chapter is a brief discussion of the findings of the study.

Appropriate statistical tables have supported all the discussions. There are fifty-two tables in the study.

6. **Salient Findings of the Study**: The study finds that most of the educated unemployed youth in the sample come from middle class families with stable income above Rs 5,000 per month. Most of the respondents' fathers are mainly clerical workers and administrators who have matriculated, while most of the mothers are housewives and illiterates. The sample has 54.97 percent registered educated unemployed youth in the Employment Exchanges, while 45.03 per cent have not registered.

The sample contains 36.65 per cent female, and 63.35 per cent male unemployed youth, where 23.04 per cent respondents are from the arts faculty, 21.99 per cent represents science faculty, 21.47 per cent from the commerce faculty, 9.95 per cent from law, 8.38 per cent from the engineering and 7.33 per cent sample from the medicine stream. The mean age of the respondents is found to be 24.51 years consisting pre-dominantly of unmarried educated youth with 92.67 per cent. There are 96 per cent Christians with 71.73 per cent belonging to nuclear families while the
mean of the family size is 7.58 members. It is noted that the mode period of registration in Employment Exchange is more than 5 years.

There is an alarming rise of unemployment among the educated youth in Nagaland. The total number of job seekers on the Live Register, which is 22,069 in 1991, has risen to 37,090 in 2000 (i.e. in a decade) at an increased percentage of 68.06 per cent taking 1991 as the base. The number of educated unemployed (matriculation plus) has increased from 10,534 in 1991 to 22,119 in 2000 at the increased rate of 109.98 per cent. The study reveals that in 10 years the percentage share of educated against the total unemployed constitutes always above 50 per cent (except in 1991 - 47.73 per cent) and stands at 59.64 per cent in 2000. And obviously, the highest numbers of educated unemployed are below graduate category standing at 85.67 per cent in 2000.

In spite of the increasing trend of unemployment, the number of vacancies notified and placement made has declined. Therefore, the probability of an unemployed person to get a job in the state is very low. In 2000, as against 37,090 registered job seekers, only 339 vacancies are notified and 73 placements are made through the Exchange, thus indicating 508 persons for a single job. It clearly indicates the seriousness of the problem where 98 persons for one job in 1991 have increased to 508 persons for one job in 2000.

In Kohima District, the number of job seekers on the Live Register, which is 12,064 in 1991, has increased at the rate of 43.37 per cent to 17,296 in 2000. While the number of educated unemployed has increased at the rate of 100.39 per cent from
6,333 in 1991 to 12,690 in 2000. The study finds out that the percentage share of educated against the total unemployed in the district has steeply increased to above 70.00 per cent from 1997 onwards. The educated unemployed in the district constitutes 60.78 per cent matriculates, 23.46 per cent pre-university, 14.59 per cent graduates, and only 1.17 per cent post-graduates in 2000. The study depicts that from 1991-2000, educated unemployed males constitutes the larger proportion than females in the district. Once again, the probability of an unemployed person to get a job is very low.

The study has revealed that more than half of the educated as well as the total registered job seekers on the Live Register of the state have always concentrated in the capital district itself in this decadal study, that is, 1991 to 2000.

The aspirations of the educated unemployed youth are reflected in their preferences and desires for particular jobs. These educated unemployed prefers government jobs to private and self-employed jobs, for the government jobs promised stability and security of tenure with assured levels of wages and salaries along with guaranteed retirement benefits. Most of them do not like the hard manual work, but they want sedentary jobs and are inclined towards the desk job. Their first preferred choice is relatively for white-collar jobs. However, in case of no other alternatives, majority of them are ready for even manual jobs. Therefore, the final aspiration of the educated unemployed youth is found to consist in getting any job in order to earn a livelihood.
The desire to 'acquire more knowledge' emerged as the primary reason for seeking education with all the faculties, for all occupational groups and also for all income groups. The study showed a great discrepancy between the occupational preferences and the occupational expectations. The difference between the two ranges a low of -33.51 percent and a high of +12.04 percent. For instance, 48.69 percent of the educated unemployed youth preferred to be administrative officials, but only 15.18 percent expected to get it resulting a wide discrepancy of -33.51 percent.

The location of job is not the primary consideration for preference when there is scope for interesting work and security, higher salary. Yet preference for urban locations is slightly greater than rural areas. The study reveals that 88.48 percent of the educated unemployed youth regard achievement criteria (education, hard work and ability) to be the most important factor for getting satisfactory jobs.

The study reveals that the future of the educated youth is expected to be very bleak in view of the shrinking employment opportunities. The proportion of the main workers to total population in the state is decreasing resulting to increase of unemployment among the educated. There is no balance between the number of students produced and the number of jobs available. The study reveals that most unemployed youth have remained without any remunerative job for 3 years and they blame the government for not getting a job. The average frequency of job attempts by these educated youth is twice and most respondents perceive that it will take another 5 more years for them to get any job. The perspective of job market looks gloomy, though many educated youth remains hopeful. And as a result the educated
unemployed youth in the state are worried, very much worried about the prospect of employment.

As against the general findings of many scholars, this study finds that the educated unemployed are satisfied with the quality of the present education system. The youth opines that university courses still prepare the students for jobs and therefore it is not a waste to give higher education to the youth even though there are no jobs available. The youth are satisfied with the English medium of instruction.

The educated unemployed youth attitude towards the Employment Exchange seems to be critical, as it seems no useful task than that of a 'notice board'. Most youth are of the view that it is not necessary to get registered to secure employment. The very purpose of the Exchange got defeated when all the vacant jobs are not notified through it, and the Employees are not bound to select out of those send through it. The common youth have lost faith in the Exchange when unfair treatment is usually done in forwarding the names against the notified vacancies. In the view of the youth, they should be provided 'unemployment allowances' if they are registered with the Exchange.

The study reveals that the method of selection to various jobs is not appropriate as it is biased towards the rich and the bureaucrats. Corruption, nepotism, favouritism, etc. in the process of selection is unanimously accepted by the respondents. It is agreed by most respondents that 'money and influence' has unfortunately become the formula to procure a job. This practice and formula by procuring a job has become the norm of the day. The governmental departments are
blamed for improper notification of vacant jobs and for stagnation of development due to improper utilization of funds.

Educated unemployed youth, despite inexhaustible energy and undefeatable enthusiasm appears to be a burden on their families and society. He is desperate for any kind of job but finds no one to buy him. He feels like 'death sentence' or the poison to be put under throat when somebody asks him "what are you doing now-a-days?" He finds himself answerable to the aspirations and expectations of the family. He is answerable to the family who has invested on him its sweat earned money with a hope that he will emancipate the family from all socio-economic curses after his education. The educated unemployed not only appear to be the victim of familial and social expectations, but also find him guilty and face humiliation.

The educated unemployed youth are temperamentally frustrated, impatient, and restless. On account of unemployment he feels boredom and dullness, the feeling of self-contempt and self-distrust develops. He cannot keep self-respect and have the feeling that he is not well treated by his people. Unemployment has led to disorganization, disunity and discord among the family and it has disrupted peace with neighbours.

'Educated unemployed youth' is one of the vulnerable groups in society. The study reveals that unemployment among the educated has contributed to the spread of drugs and alcoholism, smuggling and drug-trafficking. Most of the respondents agreed that due to unemployment, the educated youth are taking to anti-social activities like bandits, highway robberies, extortion, etc. The unemployed youth has
become economically vulnerable; thereby they are increasingly getting into the trap of violence.

The agrarian occupation that supports more than 70 per cent of the total population has lost its status. The main reason for unwillingness (or secondary option) of the youth to work in farming sector is that it is not productive comparing to other jobs.

Youth-hood in the state is subject to insecurity; therefore unemployed youth are more inclined towards government jobs rather than self-employment. Youth feel that the implementation of the various self-employment schemes operating in the state is not fair, and by and large, a complete failure. It also appears that the educated youth do not want to take any entrepreneurial risk involved in the self-employment, no entrepreneurial zeal and skill, and at the same time they do not allow outsiders to invest freely.

Optimism, energy and enthusiasm, merit and mission, aspirations and attempts receive a distinct set back when the educated youth fail to find adequate opportunities. This gulf between expectations and harsh realities leads to mounting disillusionment and frustration, anger and guilt. In a nutshell, the educated unemployed youth experience the following problems:
a) The educated youth appears to be in 'lost of trust' of the family for being unemployed.
b) The unemployed youth develops a feeling of frustration and distress, self-contempt, guilt and loses self-confidence on the non-fulfillment of his family expectations.
c) The unemployed youth fails to adjust with his friends, his family and the society.
d) The unemployed youth is dejected by the society and loses respect and sympathy of the people.
e) The unemployed youth felt deprivation due to corruption, nepotism, favouritism and biased method of selection.
f) Due to overwhelming frustration and the feeling of worthlessness, it has often resulted into malnutrition and ill health of the youth.
g) The unemployed youth faces financial hardship.
h) The unemployed youth suffered from identity formation and as a result identify oneself with symbols of a job.

7. Conclusion: The findings of the present study in accordance with the general findings of many scholars, is a very complex socio-economic phenomenon and its causation is multi-dimensional. The approach to its solution and attack to remove obstacles would have to be multi-pronged and multi-phased covering not only the
programmes for the educated unemployed youth but also education system, widespread corruption and criminalisation and economic institutions.

The educated unemployed youth must be encouraged and their energies must be cultivated and channelized in order to make them productive citizens. They should be motivated not to depend merely on government jobs that are scarce and difficult to get but certainly they can achieve their goal by self-employment as one alternative. Self-employment programmes should be feasible and expanded. And the failures of self-employment schemes should be checked. A careful system of selection, proper training, and identification of trade/skills related to local economy, financial support, and marketing arrangements should be made and it should not be handicapped by the politics and the bureaucratic system of implementation.

This problem of unemployment among the educated youth is a serious problem that needs timely attention and solution. Unemployment should not be viewed as a 'residual' problem to be tackled after the other problems have been solved, but as the 'primary' problem. Determined efforts are needed and appropriate policies, plans and programmes are to be made so that young men and women can become job creators and not remain job seekers.