Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

With the advent of modern civilization, a question arises, why Manipur is economically backward, what are the links between past and the present, how the past has helped in its progress and how it has become an obstacle in the way of progress. This is also to be considered as to how education affected the way of the life of the people there on the one hand and on the other what problems it has created for the people of the valley and the hills and how different agencies of education have helped them to remove illiteracy, ignorance and poverty. These are some of the problems which have aroused my interest in the study of Manipur.

It is said that in ancient times education was part of culture and culture was part of education. But with the spread of the western type of education, many changes took place in Manipur, as in the rest of the country. The people preferred western education because it gave them employment and it was the system of education introduced by the rulers. But the acceptance of the western education by the people of Manipur had been very slow in the early stages. When earlier attempts were made to open schools in 1835 and 1872 by Captain Gorden and Major General Nuthall respectively, these schools were closed because of the fear of social boycott of those who went to these schools.

During the native rule Education did not get sufficient encouragement from the authorities, as most of them were afraid of political awakening in the masses. They preferred to keep their
people ignorant, illiterate and poor. However, to meet the demand of justice and to introduce various reforms, Sir James Johnstone devised an unorthodox method of obtaining the permission from the king for opening a school through General Thangal, and this scheme was carried out in 1891. The result was the setting up of an English middle school, but it could function properly after the defeat of the king in the same year. Anglo-Manipuri relation dates back to 1762.* A situation of confrontation between the then king and the British arose when Mr Quinton tried to install Churachand on the throne and demanded the extermination of Vir Trikendrajit from Manipur. It finally resulted in the war of 1891, in which the local forces were defeated. This 'great war' gave the idea of superiority of Englishmen, and the native people started learning their language, wearing dress and attending their schools. During 1894, missionaries also came to Manipur but officially permission was granted to them in 1917 to work in hill areas. The missionaries opened a number of schools, in which they received encouragement from the British government. This brought the awakening in the people of hills and valley.

Manipur has always been a place of attraction to those people who happened to visit the valley. It is beautiful and has a great aesthetic significance. Mrs Grimwood says, "Manipur! How

*It took almost a century to see the educational affects of Anglo-Manipuri association. Earlier as R. Brown (1873) has stated, "There were no schools or any wish for them on the part of authorities. Offers of assistance in the formation of the schools were declined by Manipuris, who stated that they preferred to remain ignorant." The reasons for remaining ignorant have been stated. "Some of the officials did not know how to read and write and like the knights of the middle ages, despised such arts beneath their serious considerations."
well I remember the first time I ever heard the name - a name, to which I was comparatively unknown three short years ago, owing to the fact that it belongs to a remote little tract of country buried amongst hills and difficult of access, ... . A pretty place, more beautiful in its habitable parts, but more beautiful in those tracts covered with forest jungle where foot of the man seldom treads, and the stillness of which is only broken by the weird cry of the hoolluck or the scream of a night-bird haunting its prey."* Today, more than 8 decades later, one finds many changes in Manipur that may be related to the advent of modern civilization, yet it retains its natural beauty.

Manipur is a small State surrounded by ranges of hills on all sides. It is one of the beauty spots and is rightly called 'The Jewel of India.' ¹ Manipur achieved its present political status only in January 1972. In the centre of Manipur there is a basin, 50 km long and 30 km broad, surrounded on all sides by high mountains. It is situated between 23.83⁰N and 25.68⁰N latitudes and 93.07⁰E and 94.78⁰ longitudes. The boundaries of Manipur were settled only in the present century. In the words of Lt. Col. P. Maxwell (1899-1900), "The settlement of the boundary between the Manipur State and the Lushai Hills, commencing from near Langlem Hill where the last pillar of the Manipur-Chin Hills boundary was erected westward to Tipaimukh, was completed during the year, ... the boundary between the State and the Burma Kubo Valley, Burma-Chin Hills and Assam-Lushai Hills respectively, has been carefully settled; the boundary between the State and Assam-Cachar and Assam-Naga Hills, respectively

¹ Manipur Reader Book III, MacMillan & Co. (1963)
*Mrs Grimwood, My Three Years in Manipur (1893)
was arranged during the time of the previous Rajas. The boundary of the State is now complete, ... two.

Manipur lies in the region of Tropical climates - one of the four major climatic regions that extends between 10° to 30° of latitude in either hemisphere. But within this major climatic region it is further located in the region of monsoon type climate. The amount of rainfall varies a good deal even though the geographical area is not very large. Imphal gets an average annual rainfall of 1,413 mm, Tamenglong 4,017 mm and Ukhrul 1,799 mm.

About three-fourths of the area is under forests. Timber value is low on account of mixed type of forests. Bamboo is in abundance accounting for about 1000 sq. miles, particularly in the drainage of the Barak in the west and also near the Burma border. Area under bamboo is increasing because jhoom lands are being turned into bamboo forests. Compared with the area under forest, the revenue is low (vide Chapter VII) because of inaccessibility, uneconomic techniques of extraction and management and jhooming. The minerals are there, but they are not fully exploited because of the inadequate communication and the absence of technical know-how. The degree of prosperity of a society depends upon education, availability of resources and the extent of their utilisation. Material prosperity depends on knowledge and it is possible only through education. The use of knowledge makes life comfortable. While selecting an occupation or a source of livelihood, knowledge is a must. Education must be related to the social, cultural,

2. Administrative Report, 1899-1900, Government of Manipur
political and economic problems of the society, so that such education may help us in removing ignorance, illiteracy and poverty with which the whole human civilization suffers. Education needs to enlighten the people about the problems mentioned above. Now comes the question what should be the form of education for all. What should be the purpose, the extent, the timing and the recurrence and the content of education. This is so because the vision of the society must be that of a 'learning society'.

The most important feature of a learning society, thus visualised, is that every member develops a keen sense of observation and inquisitiveness. This sense of observation and inquisitiveness is to be developed in the first stage of formal education which may lead to a craving for learning. Whether in job or outside, this unquenched thirst for learning will bring an individual, the learning situations, formal and informal, resulting in life-long learning and what may be called life long education. This shall help us in solutions of day to day problems in the society on the one hand, and on the other hand it shall eradicate to some extent ignorance, poverty and illiteracy. Thus only an over-all life long education can produce the kind of complete men the need for which is increasing day by day. We should not only acquire knowledge but also build up a continually evolving body of knowledge throughout our life. It shall always help us, enlighten us and guide us.

The old concept of benevolence is probably no longer true. By getting older form of education one was supposed to become polite and generous. It appears the concept of education in modern times has undergone a change. The old values are no more there
and even if they are there, they are found in the illiterate masses or in a few, who are far from the 'madding crowd' or who are kept aloof from the modern civilization or association. A radical change is the need of the hour.² In this regard Education Commission comments, "The destiny of India is now being shaped in her classrooms. This we believe, is no mere rhetoric. In a world based on science and technology, it is education that determines the level of prosperity, welfare and security of the people. On the quality and number of the persons coming out of our schools and colleges will depend our success in the great enterprise of national reconstruction whose objective is to raise the standard of living of our people. This kind of view can be taken as a radical one, which shall raise the standard of living and shall ultimately remove poverty of the people of the Indian nation."³ Then how to have education as an initiator of change, a creator of new social order and not a mere creature of the past, which geared round the clerical jobs or spiritual enlightenment based on the rote memory. True, that a teacher cannot go beyond what he knows but if a sense of observation, inquisitiveness discrimination and inference is developed among the learners, there is every possibility of the student becoming truly learned in his own way. History is there to bear testimony to this statement. In this connection 'Report of the Secondary Education Commission (1952)' may be cited: "He - [Student] must develop a scientific attitude of mind to think objectively and base his conclusions on the tested data. He should have an open mind receptive to new ideas and not confined within the prison walls of outmoded customs, traditions and beliefs. It

should neither reject the old because it is old nor accept the new because it is new, but dispassionately examine both and courageously reject whatever arrests the forces of justice and progress." Wien the liberal education was imparted, it laid stress on the training of skills because the older one did not train the individual for any job. In order to solve this paradox professional education came in, but it created a problem as it turned out surplus manpower in specialized fields. It also caused braindrain, and thousands of our doctors, engineers, technicians and professors migrated to the developed and other developing countries by ignoring the call of our Indian nation. Within a span of 30 years these changes have come about at the expense of our national resources.

Moreover, due to the lack of scientific planning, it has led to unemployment of highly trained persons and consequently to frustration and restlessness. This gave rise to the idea of gearing education to the manpower needs of our economy. This can be done without much difficulty where the system of the government is totalitarian. In such a system, students or youths could be channelled according to the needs of future, as it is done in China and Russia. The youths are destined to become what State decides in the Communist countries. In a democracy like ours it is difficult to do so. The concepts of ability, interest and attitude are taken into account but one cannot be denied the right to become what he desires to be. A democratic country allows every body to aspire for a better life and a better future, and the institutions are open for them. On the one hand it provides satisfaction for an

individual, but on the other hand, it creates some other problems. The parents desire that their son or daughter should be a doctor or an engineer or at least a professor in a college. These ambitions of the parents are not easy to check. The parents do not listen to the arguments regarding the ability of their wards. This leads to more trained men than jobs available, resulting in unhealthy competition. The incapable man gets the job on account of display of his other means while the capable man suffers and remains without job. The motto 'efficiency is the security of a worker' does not prove true on many occasions.

Even those who are in the job need know the latest developments in the field. It may be possible through refresher courses either in India or overseas. There may be many who, because of circumstances beyond their control, could not have education earlier. Need they be ignored for the whole of their life? They have to be brought into the fold of the educated. Thus the effort of the complete group is to educate and reeducate its members.

Purpose

The principal objective of the present study is not only to discuss the development of education in Manipur but also to relate it to the culture and economy of the State.

The second chapter is devoted to the study of the cultural history of Manipur. In it, origin, its relation with the mainland, inhabitants, religion, festivals, songs and dances, language and literature have been discussed and its similarities with other festivals, literature, dance and songs of other parts of India.
The third chapter deals with the development of education from 1891 to 1970 in a developmental form and the comparison has been done decadewise. The chapter also deals with development of women, tribal and professional education. At the end of the chapter the ratio of investment by the government from 1891 till 1970 has been discussed besides various problems relating to education.

The fourth chapter deals with missionary activities from 1894 to 1947, in the field of education.

The fifth chapter deals with administrative set-up and its importance in relation to education.

The sixth chapter deals with Teacher Education in the State, its history, its importance, the number of trained and untrained teachers, salaries, age, growth in their number from 1917 to 1972 and qualifications.

The seventh chapter deals with importance of economic development and economy in relation to education, number of employed and unemployed, natural resources, agricultural output, major products, minor products, transport and communication, monthly per capita income and expenditure, distribution of working population in industry and agriculture, salaries, manpower planning, occupational distribution and cottage industries, Vocational education courses, expenditure, and technical education have been taken into account.

The eighth chapter deals with conclusions and suggestions.