CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A human individual as a living being has a life process full of action, experience and education. Whereas life process has its end, education is a never ending process covering not only the life of an individual but also life beyond, through offsprings to next generations. Conservation of past is, therefore, an essential element in educational activity.

How life came into being is a mystery no doubt, but its survival needed an eco-system on earth conducive to life. In the eco-system, living together by the same species has been found to be a felt need and therein lies the history of the origin of society.

As in the eco-system there is natural selection, so in the society also there is social selection about the destiny of an individual whether or not to exist or be extinct. For the social selection, education, whether, formal, non-formal or informal,
has, from time immemorial been considered as the institution and instrument of operation. On the other hand education has also been considered as a means of social change, progress and prosperity. It is said -

"Vidyā Dadāti Vinayam
Vinayāt Jati Patratam
Jatishu Dhanam Spnoti
Dhanat Dharma Tatosukham."

The education that leads one from ignorance to enlightenment is based on sum total experiences of the human race; when the totality of experience is more, the greater is the scope and function of education. Experience again is obtained from problem-solving situation and thus individuals, enriched with experiences are likely to possess more wealth and riches than the other. It may, therefore, be presumed that healthy socio-economic conditions are conducive to better educational growth and development. It may be of particular interest to know what particular socio-economic factors are, to what extent responsible, for the quality and quantity of education. Herein lies the importance of the study to establish the history of the growth and development of education as the resultant of the contributions of different socio-economic factors operating in the society.
Studies have been made so far in different countries relating socio-economic conditions with education. Such studies have covered rural-urban variances, sex-variances, income-type and range variances, vocational and professional variances, and variances relating to attitudes, topography and life's demands. And such studies have indicated the contributions of some such above mentioned factors to education at a particular point of time and at particular place. But for the purpose of the educational planning, both short term and long term, trends of contributions of these factors towards educational growth and development need to be estimated for which a sufficiently long period of history need to be covered, if possible, from the days of beginning of the present type of education to the modern times.

In the present study an attempt has been made to determine the extensity and intensity of influences and contributions of different socio-economic factors on and to education in Nagaland for a period of about fifty years starting from the days of Western education introduced in the State by the missionaries in 1930's
(although Western education came to Nagaland through the missionaries but it was not introduced in a comprehensive scale till 1930's). This coverage of time in the present study, considered with a view to establishing facts and truths about history of education in Nagaland and to evolve socio-economic strategies of educational growth and development to be used for making short-term and long-term educational plans and projects that would produce desirable outcomes in the field of education.

Nagaland came into being as a State on First December, 1963. Prior to that, it was known as the Naga Hills and Tuensang Area (NHTA) under Assam. This track of land, due to a number of reasons could not draw the attention of the people belonging to other advanced regions of the country and thus remained neglected for decades prior to the nineteenth century. In a sense the people are fortunate enough that the obstacles and hurdles faced by the so called developed races and nations have not been faced by the people of Nagaland. Experiences of some other people were utilized for whatever development is needed by the people of Nagaland. Due to this reason
inspite of the people of the soil remaining so called backward, the literacy percentage of the Nagas now figures 41.99 against the national figure 36.17 (Census 1981).

The life style of the early Nagas which had developed in isolation living in the midst of lofty mountains, roaring rivers, deep valleys and dense forests was concerned with the meeting of two meals a day. In such a situation where the traditional practices of training the youngones for their future days, through indigenous methods, were felt adequate, acceptance of some other type of education was beyond their realisation.

Varriar Elwin¹ wrote in this context:

"Many tribal parents regard the spread of education with apprehension, for they feel that their boys and girls will be turned into Sjahibs and Memsahibs with new and expensive habits which they can ill-efford and that when they have left school, they will leave their homes."

The tribal people living along the stretch of Nagahills although are known under one common name
There are actually 16 different tribes and sub-tribes. The origin of these tribes is yet to be established. It is believed that these people migrated to this land through the hills of North-East India. Dearth of written records, remoteness of some important historical places (where remains and relics of Naga civilization are believed to exist), communication difficulties between groups because of dialectical variances had been and still continues to remain the main obstacles for tracing back the Naga history.

The earliest work of some British administrators published in the forms of books, memoirs, official documents are, now, considered as the only available written sources for the history of the Nagas. Mention may be made of in this connection about the work of J.F. Hutton, J.P. Mills and Varrier Elwin. Although the work of these officials were confined mainly to the political and administrative developments of the region and narrating only a few aspects of social and cultural life of the Nagas, yet these can still be considered as useful source materials for any form of informative work on the Nagas.
The British emergence to this hilly track of land was possible in the early nineteenth century through two occasions - namely, the Burmese invasion of Assam in 1822 and the British Indian Government's decision in 1830 to open a road to Manipur connecting upper Assam through Nagahills. This contact, in fact, laid the foundation of all educational development in Nagaland that is apparent to-day.

It is no doubt that the present system of westernised education had its origin in Nagaland through the missionaries under the patronage of British rule. But, afterwards, towards the end of the thirties, the impact of Gandhian Basic Education, brought home, a type of national resurgence in the field of education inspite of being shadowed by the world-wide socio-political turbulence created by the Second World War. The post-War educational plan prepared by Sir John Sargent could hardly get its start of implementation because of the emergence of independent India in 1947.

However, till Indian independence missionaries had their major say in education of the Nagas and it continued to be so till late fifties. The political instabilities during the period from 1940-60 left its
impact felt in the field of education. Inspite of putting in ample resources through the Government for educational explosion nothing worth mentioning development could be achieved prior to the Statehood. Thus while the other States of the country had been taking newer schemes for educational development as per the reports of various National level committees and commissions, Nagaland, then had to pass through a period of confusions and conflict.

The first decade of Statehood had been the busiest period for educational reconstruction in the State. The school curriculum too, which existed in the State was given a new shape keeping in view the national objectives. Now that, the new school curriculum adopting the national system of education has been in vogue since 1980, a new wave of awareness for educational reconstructions is becoming operant as may be viewed from many State-Central projects and programmes which may ultimately lead the Nagas towards socio-cultural mainstream of the nation. It is, therefore, very important now to determine what socio-economic strategies would bring in desirable educational growth and development in the State since these factors play vital role in
educational achievements. As such, the present study has been considered well worth undertaking for the timely application of its findings and observations.

With the limited scope of the research work, attempts have been made to identify the major and minor socio-economic factors contributing to different aspects of education and the total system and function of the process of education as a whole.

The most important aspect of this study is concerned with the information and opinions collected from educated and elite individuals forming a cross-section of the different groups of Naga tribes. It is expected that the findings of this study would depict the true history of educational growth and development in the State, because it has tried to turn every stone which forms the path-way of Naga life.