CHAPTER IV

Social Consequences of Unemployment, Structural constraints of Education and Problems of Youth

Magnitude of Unemployed Educated Youth

Today, Manipur is faced with various social problems ranging from political instability, ethnic tension, insurgency activities, and alcohol and drug abuses leading to HIV and AIDS. The youth bear the brunt of the problems, which seriously affect their well being and the society at large. 1 Apart from the problems listed above a major problem facing the youth is unemployment and particularly among the educated. The problem of unemployment among the youth, particularly the educated is quite disheartening, which has been adversely affecting the individual, family and community at large.

Unemployment can be simply defined as a state of lack of paid/gainful work although such is being actively sought. In India, an educated youth is usually defined as a person whose educational level is from matriculation and above. 2 Taking this definition into account, in a labour surplus economy like Manipur, many youth remain unemployed/jobless and continue to be in search of or are available for employment. In fact, persons falling in the age group of 15 -34 years, considered as belonging to the stage of youth are continuously entering into labour market after attaining certain level of qualification required for employment. However, the absorption rate is dismal, thereby adding to the problem of unemployment year after year.

Broadly speaking, persons, who, owing to lack of work, have not worked but are either seeking work through employment exchanges, intermediaries, friends and relatives, or by making applications to prospective employers or expressing their willingness and availability for remunerative work are considered unemployed. 3 In this connection, we may also differentiate between chronic unemployment and underemployment. Some educated youth may be chronically unemployed and remain jobless for most part of the

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1 The problems faced by youth are part of the general problem that the society as a whole faces.
3 Ibid., p. 7.
year. While others, though usually employed, become intermittently unemployed due to seasonal fluctuations in the labour market or inability to contribute one’s maximum potential as a result of the nature of work. In so far as the unemployment of the Shiipfomaramth youth is concerned, chronic unemployment is dominant. Therefore, an unemployed educated youth of the Shiipfomaramth is one who is available and willing to work, but unable to find one for most part of the year.

Manipur is industrially a backward state, and agriculturally poor with no good transport or communication system. Above all, as already indicated, the state shows wide regional disparities in term of infrastructure facilities and development. The valley is far more developed than the hill areas. In the hills there is no industry worthy of mention. The few industries in existence are all small and home-based activities such as handloom, handicrafts, sericulture and mechanical works,\(^4\) which can no longer absorb the rapid growing number of educated youth. In such a situation of surplus labour and lack of employment opportunities the educated youth become the worst hit.

Consequently, the state has a high rate of unemployment particularly among the educated youth. As per the records from Employment Exchange Offices, the live register of unemployed educated youth shows a tremendous increase from 2,15,677 in 1993 to 3,22,253 in 1998, to 3,87,889 in 2000. Likewise, the live register in Senapati district alone, which is also the home of the Shiipfomaramth youth, reveals increase in the number of unemployed educated youth from 22,052 in 1998 to 25,479 in 2000. These figures show that the rate of unemployment among the educated youth has been increasing rapidly over the years.

While there is an alarming increase in registered jobseekers, the vacancies notified have declined sharply resulting in a decrease of placement in employment exchanges. The number of registrations, total number of job seekers on live register in Employment Exchanges and corresponding job placement from 1992-2000 are given in Tables I and II.

Table I
Registration, vacancies notified and placement as on 31st March 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Registration</th>
<th>Vacancies notified</th>
<th>Placement</th>
<th>Vacancies outstanding</th>
<th>Submission made</th>
<th>Live register</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>18,455</td>
<td>999</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>27,727</td>
<td>2,15,677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>29,894</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>1,390</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33,024</td>
<td>2,41,272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>19,189</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1,085</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>20,766</td>
<td>2,49,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>30,135</td>
<td>596</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>16,246</td>
<td>2,76,157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>28,189</td>
<td>1,959</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>649</td>
<td>64,326</td>
<td>2,99,881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>31,007</td>
<td>642</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>2,466</td>
<td>17,103</td>
<td>3,22,253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>37,861</td>
<td>1,108</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>51,327</td>
<td>3,54,269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>35,760</td>
<td>2,083</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>954</td>
<td>74,609</td>
<td>3,87,890</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table II
Number of posts advertised and candidates recommended by the State Public Service Commission, 1992-2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of posts advertised</th>
<th>Number of Applicants</th>
<th>Candidates interviewed</th>
<th>Candidates recommended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1992-93</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-94</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994-95</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3,550</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-96</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-97</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997-98</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998-99</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>6,684</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>6,851</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The figures in the above tables clearly show that the corresponding placement as against the live registration and applicants are far from commensurate and proportionate. For instance, in 1998-99 the number of posts advertised by the State Public Service Commission was just 70, but the total number of applicants was 6,684, out of which 70
candidates were selected. In 1999-2000 the number of post advertised was 144, where as there were as many as 6,851 applicants and only 98 successfully got through. Similarly, as per record in the employment exchange offices, in 1999 just 1,108 vacancies were notified but the number of applications submitted was 51,327, out of which a mere 162 were awarded placement. And, in 2000 the vacancies notified was 2,083, where as the applications made were as high as 74,609 and only 69 candidates got placement. The data clearly points to the rapid increase in the rate of unemployed educated youth in the state.

Besides the general problem of unemployment in the state, there is ample evidence to suggest that employment mechanism and structure has gone against the tribes including the Shiipfomaramth youth. Irrespective of the courses completed and qualifications of tribal youth, there is clear evidence of discrepancy in the government’s policies and initiatives in regard to employment opportunities. The control of both the government machinery and work force by the dominant community - the Meiteis has resulted in the exploitation and deprivation of the tribal quota. Data shows that the government is at fault by taking the Meitei-centric stand on most developmental prospects and work force. The Hill people, as per their respective numerical strength, ideally should constitute one-third of the state’s work force. However, the process of the last three decades has indicated a complete contradictory picture. In many departments, tribal representation has hardly reached the effective share of a third of the work force. The details are shown below in Table III. 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Government Department</th>
<th>% to the total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Vety &amp; Animal Husbandry</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Police</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Central Government has provided for reservation up to 7 ½ % to tribal in proportion to the percentage of population in 1961 census (which is 7.5%). Based on this logic and arrangement all the departments show a distinct shortfall in the intake of tribal representation against its numerical strength, which is 31% (1961 census) in Manipur.

The proportion of the state’s work force does not change much since under the MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) signed with the Centre in 1999, the state is forbidden from creating new jobs or undertake fresh recruitment.
The rapid expansion of education coupled with stagnant economic development has created a situation whereby numerous educated youth in the state are left jobless. The problem of the Shiipfomaramth youth is not different. Indeed, among the Shiipfomaramth youth the problem is aggravated by a strong feeling of discontent and sense of neglect by the government. They are angered because they feel that government on most occasions adopt the Meitei-centric approach.

Further, in the absence of industry and other employment opportunity, state administration is the only source of gainful employment. However, the state administration seems to be overstaffed and often-developmental fund is diverted to paying the salaries of the employees. Besides, to the extent that corruption is rampant, jobs are garnered by the wealthy and people with political connection. There is a general opinion that if one can afford to bribe or is related to politicians and the ruling 'class', one's future is secured. This alleged 'back door' entry or 'illegal' appointment with no consideration of merit cannot but worsen the already deteriorating employment problem in the state. In this way the prevailing social-political system not only puts a check on the youth from effective utilisation of their productive capacity but also creates condition for their entry into anti-social activities.

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Effect of Unemployment on Youth

High rate of unemployment among the educated youth has far reaching consequences. The impact of unemployment does not end with the individual alone but affects the family and the society as well. Although the youth are futuristic in outlook and their comparatively younger age does not prevent them from envisioning a better tomorrow their inability to get gainful employment has caused irreparable damage to themselves and the society at large. This has not only led many youth to become irresponsible and get into depression but also increase the possibility of their falling prey to anti-social ways. By anti-social ways we mean deviating from accepted social norms while indulging in alcohol/drug abuse, becoming less accountable and even taking up arms. This is clearly reflected in the responses to this question posed to the youth belonging to the area of study: ‘in your opinion, what is/are the social consequences of the problem of unemployment in your society?’

Unambiguously, those educated youth who are unemployed become socially disoriented, indulge in deviant behaviour and become easy prey to various vices of life. The unemployed youth are easily led to involve in anti-social and destructive activities. For instance, a youth leader of Kalinamei village notes that ‘an unemployed youth becomes disoriented and hence involve him self in anti-social activities and odd behaviours, which effect both the family and society’. This shows that unemployment and anti-social behaviour are closely linked. Increasing unemployment rate, disappointing educational options/opportunities and blurred view of their future obstruct healthy construction of the youth and society. There is strong evidence that the government is not providing them with window of opportunities to create peace and tolerance. In this regard, one respondent employee in a primary school comments, ‘there is restlessness and confusion among the unemployed youth that led many to indulge in anti-social activities. But, what to do since the government has failed in all fronts’. What is a matter of concern is that these unwanted activities often give way to actions and decisions that are detrimental to the future of the youth and society as well.

Ironically, insurgency impedes development but lack of development and economic stagnation fuels the problem of insurgency. This is because the growing discontentment and thwarted aspirations among the youth has driven many into anti-
social activities and insurgency that pose a serious challenge to the established system. The point is that unemployed youth become easy targets of anti-social and anti-state forces thereby posing a formidable challenge to society at large. Even repeated statements and reports about ‘misguided youth’ seem to lack the real understanding of the actual ground situation. In the light of this perception, a local NGO functionary says, ‘out of helplessness many unemployed youth become more vulnerable to violence and some have even taken to arms’. One postgraduate student expressed the same view, ‘many unemployed youth turn to violence because of their helplessness and sense of being neglected’. The fact is that the government has failed to meet the minimum requirements of what the youth deserve. In such a disturbing situation, widespread unemployment among the educated youth acts a catalyst that drives the youth to indulge in anti-social activities. The actions and behaviours of the youth, which are seen as alienated from the normal course, are happening not out of choice but due to compulsion of the situation.

Likewise, the problem of unemployment has led to increase tension within the families and disturbed their immediate social settings. This is how the consequences of unemployment not only become a liability to their families but also to their society as well. There is a very insecure and uncertain future for any unemployed educated youth. In this regard, a science graduate says, ‘problem of unemployment has led to increase of personal disorder and irresponsibility thereby leading to family hardship and disturbance’. In line with this argument, a woman leader of a local church also commented that ‘unemployment problem results in irresponsible behaviour, which causes family disharmony and more social problem’. In this way, the state of being unemployed has led to an increase in personal anxiety thus resulting in a negative outlook, which is harmful to both the self and society. Accordingly this has led to an increase in social disturbance and confusion since it is responsible for the declining sense of responsibility.

In addition, the high rate of unemployed educated youth increases the risk of alcoholism, drug abuse and other undesirable activities. Many of the Shispensomaramth youth graduate every year, but the poor scope for gainful employment is causing deep anxiety. Many of them are said to have lost courage and utterly disappointed. Many have resorted to escapism and ended up as alcoholics or drug abusers. Accordingly, increasing alcohol and drug abusers are seen among unemployed youth. A graduate in theology, for
instance, says, ‘out of disillusionment many unemployed youth often turn to alcohol and drugs’. A college dropout similarly observes, ‘we find increasing alcohol and drug abusers among the unemployed youth’. It appears the frustration of holding a degree in their hand without any opportunity to get employment severely affects many youth’s mental and physical health. This explains why when alcohol is easily accessible the unemployed educated youth do not take too long to experiment with it. Before realising the consequences many get hooked to the harmful substance.

It is unfortunate that massive problem of unemployment has also indirectly bred corruption. In the absence of any alternative, concerned and protective parents/guardians would go to any length to get their son/daughter employed in the state administration. Ultimately this leads to the use of bribe as a means to get employment. That this is not a mere assumption but a reality is demonstrated by the response of a woman leader of T. Khullen village, who says, ‘the high rate of unemployment has resulted in corruption since only the rich families could buy the job without any sense of merit’. This reflects the present trend that problems of unemployment are not confined to the individual alone but affects the wider society. Such situation also results in many deserve and meritorious individuals been deprived from getting employment.

In the joint agricultural enterprise of bygone days, every member of the family contributes to meet the family’s need. But with the changing nature of work and occupation at present, unemployment problem adds to the parents’ financial responsibilities. The parents are under pressure to search employment for their children. Besides, children are increasingly less considered as a contributor to the household income as a result of serious unemployment problem. Rather, they are becoming economic liability to the family. As a result, young people remain economically dependent upon their family for a long time.

The impact of unemployment problem is threatening the Shiipfomaramth society, which is harmful to the individual as well as the society. In general, the gathered responses in the course of field work confirm the reality that high rate of unemployed educated youth is affecting the existing social structure in a serious way. The presence of a large number of unemployed educated youth adds to the social tension and conflict in society. This has also led to the exploitation of the educated youth as they are compelled
to serve in various private schools/colleges and other non-organised sector with an unimaginably low pay. This situation contributes to the increase in the existing problems of underdevelopment and exploitation, thus furthering unproductiveness/destructiveness in the social setup. Driven by compulsion many educated youth have gone out to other states in search of employment. (This does not mean that all those who look for employment outside do so out of compulsion, but these constitute a small minority). It therefore comes as no surprise that there is no district in Nagaland where youth from the Shiipfomaramth community is not found working in private schools for a mere pittance. Despite the gravity of unemployment, the number of freshly graduated youth is increasing every year.

**Structural Constraints of Education and its Effect on the Youth**

To gain a better understanding of the problems of the Shiipfomaramth youth in the light of rapid social changes, the challenges of education are enumerated in the following discussion. The perception that education is imperative to transform a society has two parallel connotations that tends to create confusion among the youth. The first has to do with the notion that education brings ‘modernisation of tradition’. The other view is that education is another form of ‘cultural colonisation’. The major concern in these opinions is whether the educational system is harmonising the existing ways of life/values and/or it is attempting to flood the minds of the youth with concepts, thoughts and discourses of the West.\(^8\) However, putting the blame on the West may not be appropriate given the nature of the influence of ‘internal colonisation’ in the form of elitist and urban-centric syllabus.\(^9\) This is true even in the Naga society including the Shiipfomaramth community, where the current educational system has been, by and large, dominated by the cultural tradition of the (Indian) dominant group and urban elite at the cost of local cultures. The

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process of upbringing and nurturing, in the formative-stage of education and educational quality also leaves much to be desired. Economic inequality and the level of poverty further perpetuate this. Further, the importance accorded to career guidance and motivation is far from satisfactory.

Importantly, popular appeal to higher studies is relatively a recent phenomenon in the Shiipfomaramth society. This new development has been the result of an awareness that the higher degree one acquires life will become easier and better. One needs longer duration of time to achieve higher education. This has, however, come about at a time of declining employment opportunities, deepening of economic problems and widening of unequal provisions and facilities between the privileged and less privileged both at the national and regional level.

This situation is more challenging in the context of Senapati district and the Shiipfomaramth community in particular, because of its poor literacy rate (in fact, the lowest literacy rate is found in Senapati). The improvement in the last few decades is also the slowest in Senapati district. Table IV given below brings out this fact.

### Table IV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>49.66</td>
<td>59.89</td>
<td>68.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Senapati</td>
<td>36.05</td>
<td>46.04</td>
<td>50.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tamenglong</td>
<td>44.22</td>
<td>50.16</td>
<td>58.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Churachandpur</td>
<td>54.34</td>
<td>58.17</td>
<td>74.67</td>
</tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Bishnupur</td>
<td>39.23</td>
<td>54.94</td>
<td>71.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Thoubal</td>
<td>41.13</td>
<td>52.47</td>
<td>67.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Imphal West #</td>
<td>73.01</td>
<td>80.61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Imphal East #</td>
<td>68.05</td>
<td>76.38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Initially, the purpose of education was primarily meant to serve the colonial interest to produce person fit for clerical work or Christian missionaries for preachers, which do not go beyond elementary education. Maimom Shanti Devi, Development of Education in Manipur, Rajesh Publications: New Delhi, 2001, pp. 65-66; Udayon Misra, *The Periphery Strikes Back: Challenges in Assam and Nagaland*, Indian Institute of Advance Studies (IIAS): Shimla, 2000, pp. 22-23.
<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ukhrul</td>
<td>49.94</td>
<td>62.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Chandel</td>
<td>39.51</td>
<td>46.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: 
(a) Census of India 1991, Series-13 Manipur, Part II-B Primary Census Abstract, Directorate of Census Operations, Manipur, p. 10

Note: The census year of 1981 is taken as the base period of this study because the literacy rate of the population starts from the age of 5 years onward for the census years of 1951, 1961 and 1971. While from 1981 census onward the age for the literacy rate was raised to 7 years and above. Under this new system, children of age six years and below are treated as illiterate even if the child is going to a school and have picked up reading and writing.

# Literacy rates for 1991 for Imphal West and Imphal East are based on provisional recast population figures because it was bifurcated after 1991 census.

From the above table it can be seen that the literacy rate of the Senapati district, which was 50.47 per cent in 2001, is the lowest among all districts in the state. It is again 18.4 per cent below the state average of 68.87 per cent. The improvement in the literacy rate in the state during 1991-2001 is 8.98 per cent, but the increase in Senapati district in the same decade is just 4.43 per cent. This is also the slowest improvement among all the hill districts, not to compare with the valley districts. During the same period the rest of the hill districts had shown greater increase - Tamenglong (8.3 per cent), Churachandpur (16.5 per cent), Ukhrul (6.42 per cent) and Chandel (10.7 per cent).

Before going into a detailed analysis of the problems of education, it will be prudent to briefly examine the nature and role of education. Education can simply mean the process of learning. In a broad sense, it can be understood as both formal and non-formal arrangement through which one may acquire knowledge during his/her course of life. Formal education refers to schooling, that is, structured and organised system of training for developing knowledge, skill, mind, character and the morality of an individual.\(^\text{11}\) In this chapter, the term education is used in its narrower sense; it is referred to formal learning and schooling system.

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An ideal view of education is that it is a means to bring out the best in an individual. The other view is, it is a means to prepare young people to enter the work force with the aim to reduce the prevailing unequal social-economic conditions. For the Shiipfomaramth youth, the appropriate connotation of education is the latter view. For them pursuing education is not an end in itself, but a preparatory process for a long-term shift in their socio-economic condition so to bring them at par with others. To put it briefly, education is a process of training the young people for an easier but healthier work life. Thus, the process of formal learning is conceived of as a process of ‘life preparation’ rather than a sole pursuit of knowledge.

The factors affecting the education of the Shiipfomaramth youth are many and varied. Of these, the most important factor seems to be what Shyamlal and others termed as “structural constraints” or the uncontrollable external inadequacies affecting the individual. Structural constraints in its wider connotation will include the prevalent unconducive social environment, poor economic conditions, ‘controlled’ curriculum, and the outcome of the inferior quality of education and lack of infrastructural facilities. In general, these affect the provision of school and other educational resources and the use of the same by the individual in a given social environment. In other words, “it is society as a whole and each particular social milieu that determine the ideal that education realises”. The remaining of this chapter will focus on aspect of these constraints as an important determinant of the educational predicament for the youth in the Shiipfomaramth community.

The discussion is an attempt to testify that individual inefficiencies of the youth in the Shiipfomaramth community are not entirely free from structural constraints. By and large, structural constraints come under the heading of the effects of personal factors. If not for exceptional case, what this implies is that personal inadequacy is the reflection of

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15 Roger Girod, op. cit., p. 66.
structural constraints. In other words, personal factors are the manifestation or in
Merton’s word 'latent function'\(^\text{16}\) of the socio-economic, infrastructure, quality of
transmitting education and social environment backgrounds. Therefore, in essence,
personal inadequacy is a dependent trait of structural problems.\(^\text{17}\)

It also connotes that individual social setting and backgrounds determine the
perspectives of education. The resourcefulness of a person is to be found in the social
endowment in which one is enmeshed.\(^\text{18}\) A person’s effectiveness is in a way guided by
the prevailing circumstances. It is expected from the analysis that the individual
inadequacies will be more when there are larger inconsistencies between one’s structural
arrangement and the real requirement for sound learning. This, thus, makes imperative
for a serious emphasis on an individual’s characteristics as having direct bearing on
‘structural constraints’. As mentioned above, there are certain significant ‘structural
constraints’ responsible for the problems of education as revealed by the respondents. Let
us begin with the problems associated with the ‘financial’ aspect of education

**Economic Backwardness and Poverty**

Poverty and economic backwardness have a direct bearing on many of the
Shiipfomaramth youth’s basic educational orientation and occupational choice. What is
noteworthy is that poor economic background acts as a constraint to a person’s access to
educational opportunities. This has also resulted in a person focusing more on problems
associated with his/her day-to-day life rather than on promotion of education. This is
clearly corroborated in responses to the question: ‘what is the economic condition of your
family? Is it able to meet the demand of the present cost of education? Give reasons’.
Table V presents the youths’ response to this question.

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\(^\text{17}\) This does not mean to justify that personal factors are peripheral in nature. The point is that the
structural constraints and personal inadequacy cannot be read in isolation. Personal dispositions are a
product of the social milieu in which one’s is born and brought up. See, for instance, Pia Nazareth,

\(^\text{18}\) Rajendra, Pandey, “Social Structure and Educational Aspirations of College-Going Youth: An
Table V

Youth Responses of Economic Condition in Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answers</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fine</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14(7.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not helpful</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>59(29.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat good</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27(13.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad and discouraging</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>100(50.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#Figures in the bracket indicate the percentage to the total respondent.

It is clear from the above table that most of the respondents view their economic condition as not being sufficiently helpful to their educational pursuit. As per the figures, 50 per cent of the respondents stated that their economic condition was bad and discouraging for their studies. Likewise, 29.5 per cent said that it was not helpful. Another 13.5 per cent of the respondents were of the view that though it is not satisfactory but somewhat good. Hence, only 7 per cent of them were able to say that their economic condition was favourable in meeting the present cost of the education.

It is sad that financial problem in the family due to poor economic condition stood against one’s desire for acquiring better and higher education. Economic backwardness has prevented many from fulfilling their dreams and ambition. The immediate consequences of financial liability and burden of poverty on enhancement of one’s education is serious. Elaborating the consequences of poverty, one college student says, ‘financial problem in the family due to poor economic condition is an obstacle to my desire for better and higher education’. Reflecting a similar problem, a student leader of Yaikongpao village commented that ‘poor economic condition has prevented me from carrying out my desire and ambition’. Most of the respondents pointed out that if money was sufficient and adequate they could do many things but financial problems hampered their interest in education. This is how poor economic condition has put many of them in a dilemma whether to give up their studies and start earning to help their family or to continue with their education amidst financial constraint.

Similarly, economic backwardness and poverty has hampered many youth’s ambition. Poverty does not allow many committed students to pursue their studies.
consistently thereby frustrating any attempts made by them. Many respondents pointed out that poverty and poor economic conditions made the parents feel that investment in education is wastage of money. This is aptly illustrated by the response of one science graduate, who says, 'economic backwardness has jeopardised my ambition since my parents find it difficult to support my studies and expressed the hope that I secure a job at the earliest'. An undergraduate student shares a similar experience: 'poor economic condition has made my parents to think of my education purely as a means of securing a job, and nothing else'. Poor economic condition has compelled many to take up any job or to pursue higher studies with much financial constraint. Therefore, many youth go through deep frustration and helplessness because of the constraints of poverty. In the absence of a sound economic base many youth are compelled to think more of fulfilling immediate economic needs than go for higher education. Thus, although education has been recognised as a nodal means of upward mobility, in the Shiipfomaramth society its scope is still limited and narrow as many are constrained by economic conditions.

This illustrates the point that many Shiipfomaramth youth are unable to get the best out of education due to economic instability. It suggests that poor economic condition has bogged down many able and potential minds. To achieve proper education takes many years, hence it requires strong moral support and good financial background. But this is an unreachable goal for many of them. In this way, poor economic condition is one of the decisive 'structural constraints' to the academic journey of the Shiipfomaramth youth.

Not ruling out the consequences of poor economic condition, few respondents commented that the parents are however trying their best with whatever they can to meet the cost of their education. They held the view that while their families are not rich, they got what is needed for their educational pursuits. For instance, one another undergraduate student maintains that 'we are not rich, but I get what I need for my studies'.

It can be inferred from the responses that when success is merely measured in terms of economic security one cannot make the best use of one's potential. When securing some source of earning becomes a necessity, higher studies or chances of better scope of employment loses significance. Instead of devoting time to make the most of one's potential one becomes more concerned with obtaining an immediate economic
security. The simple fact is that to attain higher education and success in stiff competitive situation one needs sound financial background. This makes clear that the choice between education and any sort of employment is conditioned by economic consideration. The economic situation, in turn, is the product of the occupational backgrounds of the parents.

It cannot be over emphasised that sound financial position and support is crucial for every success and achievement. Hence poor economic condition implies less chance of getting access to standard study materials and to good schools and colleges. Consequently, this affects the quality of education obtained. It could prevent a person from getting into good educational institutions since the foundation is weak. This, in turn, results in acquisition of less professional skills necessary in this highly competitive era. In other words, the inability to attain sound and adequate education because of poor economic condition is a major determinant that hinders many youth's educational development and promotion. Thus, this analysis has shown the severity of the impact that falls on the Shiipfomaramth youth due to economic constraint.

Economic backwardness and poverty as a constraint to education can be further verified in Table VI presented below. It may be noted, that the classification of economic background shown in the Table is based on the respondents' family monthly income. The respondents were asked to provide information on income from all possible known sources, both cash and kind. Accordingly, economic conditions of the respondents' families are categorised into three income levels namely low, medium and high.19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification of Income Level</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High (Rs.5000 and above)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27 (13.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium (between Rs.3000-5000)</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>83 (41.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table VI
Economic Backgrounds of the Respondents

19 It is worth mentioning here that the classification of income levels is not based on any standard scale but primarily for the purpose of this study. Since, there is no landed and industrial aristocrat group in Naga society, technically, the term middle class is defective, because there is no class above it, although there is a lower class. See, B. B. Ghosh, "Emergence and Role of Middle Class in Nagaland", in B. Datta Ray (ed.) The mergence and Role of Middle Class in North East India, Uppal Publishing House: New Delhi, 1993, pp. 218-219; See also, Udayon Misra, “Naga Nationalism and the Role of the Middle Class”, in ibid., p. 163.
The table shows that most of the youth interrogated belong to the economically weaker section of the population, with 45 per cent having family income of below Rs 3000, 41.5 per cent between Rs 3000-5000 and 13.5 per cent above Rs 5000. The figures suggest the intensity of difficulty and constraint large majority of the respondents experience while pursuing their studies. In addition, this shows the amount of difficulty the parents’ might have faced in trying to provide education to their children hoping that someday they would relieve them of their heavy loads.

This is how the Shiipfomaramth youth’s educational promotion and success remains at the mercy of their economic conditions, which is grossly inadequate to meet the cost of higher education. In effect, many parents are unable to meet even the cost of their children’s school education. Consequently, many of the Shiipfomaramth youth are compelled to give up ideas of continuing their study beyond a certain level rather seek any sort of employment available to them.

If this is the condition, and other factors being equal, it is obvious that educational attainment of students from good economic background would be better than their counterparts from economically weak backgrounds. The connection between poverty and poor academic achievement is, of course, crucial. As Sonia Neito suitably puts in: ‘from ill-equipped schools, to poorly prepared teachers, to the mismatch between how families prepare their children for schools and the expectation that schools have of them’,\(^{20}\) the challenge is immense even without the economic constraints per se. Thus, although education is considered as an important tool of socio-economic development, education per se is not independent from economic condition. The condition of educability to a large extend is dependent on economic factor.

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Unstable Socio-Political Environment and Education

Many respondents have expressed that the prevailing social environment is not helpful enough to invoke their passion and interest in studies. There is a lack of balance between social environments and one’s interest to learn. This is derived from responses to the question, ‘what do you think is/are the impact of the prevailing socio-political environment on youth education?’

The respondents have commented that with so much of disturbance in the form of strikes, bandhs and the presence of army and barracks even locally situated educational institutions are unable to create an environment that promotes interest in education. Likewise, social unrest, ethnic tensions and animosity between the tribals and the Meiteis, and among tribes between the Nagas and Kukis are not conducive for the pursuit of sound education. For instance, one college student says, ‘socio-political environment is not conducive to studies due to frequent bandhs, strikes, ethnic tensions and presence of army, as it disturbs the mind and creates fear psychosis. A postgraduate student endorses the views that ‘there is no favourable environment to learn because of general backwardness, ethnic tensions and political instability’. A college dropout also notes, ‘with full of social problems and political instability education suffers’. What this suggests is that the environment is not conducive to make a person be determined to achieve and eventually do better. As a result, a wide range of negative impacts of the prevailing socio-political atmosphere affects the educational development of the Shiipfomaramth youth.

It is clear from the responses that the perpetually unstable socio-political environment is a constraint that hinders the growth of education among the youth. This not only creates disruption in studies but also contribute to low motivation and weak academic achievement. This means that the social context of the Shiipfomaramth region is unfavourable to sound learning. The sort of exposure and experience provided by the environment makes it unlikely for the students to develop a strong interest in education.

Beyond doubt, the Shiipfomaramth youth are suffering from the consequences of political instability and social unrest in the form of contesting interests and claims. The powers that divide the Nagas have indirectly institutionalised violence thereby creating a situation of instability and tensions. In this way, the present generation has inherited
protracted violence and ethnic tension. Violence and disturbance are no longer new for the present youth. They are brought up in an environment of extreme State oppression and under the condition of draconian law like Armed Forces (Special Power) Act and National Security Act among others in which human rights violation is rampant.

Likewise, frequent strikes, bandhs, demonstrations and economic blockades are becoming common forms of agitation launched by different organisations/ethnic communities, which have a direct adverse impact on education. These sorts of disturbances have serious consequences in the normal functioning of the schools and colleges. Among others, it has affected transportation, causing inability for both the students and teachers to attend the class on time or entirely miss it. This has also induced stress and tension in the minds of the students. It is apparent that cooperative and healthy environment for sound educational growth is denied to them. Such sorts of disturbances and interruptions also compel the teachers to rush through the syllabus in an attempt to complete the course within the available time. Often, this has resulted in the syllabus being left uncovered and incomplete. Either way the students are the ultimate sufferers. General strikes and bandhs have also badly affected various entrance and competitive examinations. In this way, intending students are denied the opportunity to appear the examinations. This is how chances of getting into different professional courses, higher studies and enhancing job prospects have been affected.

Above all, the presence of the armed forces in the name of maintaining law and order in civilian places has created a fear-psychosis and has trumatised the people. Schools and colleges are not spared from the prowl of the armed forces. In fact, whenever curfew is clamped down or any slight tension erupts, the school/college premises are often converted into a place of torture and concentration camp. Many army camps and barracks are built just a stone’s throw from educational institutions, thereby denying free movement and healthy environment for the student.

In this way, lack of congenial socio-political environment is one of the structural constraints responsible for low academic attainment. The intellectual capacity to learn has been seriously undermined by the prevailing plight of socio-political environment. Such an environment is not congenial for free development of educational growth. It does not enable the student to develop originality in academic endeavours. Instead, it causes stress.
and tension in the mind of the student. When the mind is disturbed there is little room to accommodate the lessons properly, let alone the question of defining them in proper perspective. The unhealthy socio-political environment has partly made many students mere graduates although they are competent for higher studies.

In such a disturbing situation, therefore, the importance of the educational system gets subverted in the midst of conflicts and violence. In a way, they are also victims of social unrest and sufferings due to sustain deprivation of equal opportunities and government’s indifferent attitude. Therefore, it is imperative to know what extent does the level of knowledge differs because of the social environment deficiency. In the end, the sort of knowledge the student acquires in a given social environment ultimately determines their quality and output.

It is clear from the above that the prevailing socio-political environment has serious impact in the educational development of the Shiipfomaramth youth. It would not, thus, be wrong to say that a person’s intellectual ability and achievement has direct correlation with social environment background. The analysis shows that the congenial social environment, the basic requirement for all round educational development, is severely lacking. Thus, to be able to provide an environment for sound learning, social and political stability should be ensured. In the same way, well-balanced surrounding with adequate infrastructure and facility need immediate attention. The urgency of providing a congenial social atmosphere is more so for students coming from neglected communities like the Shiipfomaramth youth.

Faulty and Exclusive Curriculum
The contrasting situation between individual home experience and curriculum is again less helpful to learning. It was deduced from the responses to this question: ‘how do you find the role of the present syllabus and curriculum in developing your interest in studies? State the reasons.’ Most of the respondents said that the syllabus is less helpful in motivating interest in studies because it was somewhat outdated, exclusive and not oriented to social needs (See Table VII for the responses).
Table VII
Respondents’ Response on the Status of the Syllabus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answers</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fine and helping</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>39 (19.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat outdated</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>51 (25.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riddled with exclusiveness</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>77 (38.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less interesting</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>33 (16.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figures within the bracket indicate the percentage to the total respondent.*

It is clear from the above table that the syllabus is less helpful in promoting the enthusiasm to learn. According to 38.5 per cent of the respondents, they are of the view that it is too exclusiveness, therefore making learning uninteresting. Likewise, 16.5 per cent of the respondents are of the opinion that the present syllabus is less interesting to learn. Another 25.5 per cent of the respondents responded that it is somewhat outdated. On the other hand, 19.5 per cent of them feel that the syllabus is fine and helping their studies.

Many respondents hold the view that the syllabus has many shortcomings, since there is no place for their history and culture and hence it is less inspirational to learn. In many of the respondents’ views they study only about other cultures and histories while at the same time there is no practical education and syllabus is less oriented to changing situation. Aware of this problem a private schoolteacher says, ‘the syllabus need to incorporate the different cultural histories, it is outdated one should be revamped wholly’. A student leader of Purul village endorses this point when he opines that ‘the syllabus is all about other cultures, there is no practical education and is hardly oriented to the changing situation’. According to our respondents, therefore, the prevailing educational system is not only less oriented to social needs but also alienated from tradition and popular experiences. This type of syllabus does not stimulate the expected interest to meet the requirement of the lesson.

In the same way, many respondents felt that the present education system is full of western thoughts and theories. According to them efforts should be made to render education more practical and relevant to meet the need of the social condition they are in.
In their opinion, the present syllabus is not at all socially oriented, but only examination oriented. Therefore, in many of the respondents' view, there is a necessity of incorporating about different ways of life/values in the syllabus in order to make the syllabus more practical and socially useful. To illustrate, a local NGO functionary says, 'the syllabus need to be revised in order to meet the present social demand and should represent the multi-cultural colour in the region'. Similarly, one postgraduate student also comments, 'the syllabus is full of theory, it requires to be restructured and make workable with time'. These statements reflect that the present educational system is in part responsible for not generating the right enthusiasm and motivation to learn. It means that the local culture and ways of life are simply ignored in the curriculum thereby making them alienated from the educational system.

The responses have showed that the syllabus is less oriented to the present needs of the society and does not accommodate the tradition of various communities including the Shiipfomaramth Nagas. It appears that the very essence of the curriculum is framed to undermine the local ways of life and cultural practices of the Shiipfomaramth community. This sort of curriculum, therefore, gives less motivation and interest to learn.

On the contrary, few respondents held the view that the syllabus is fine but still there is lack of commitment in studies. According to them, success does not come overnight but through hard work. For instance, another college student says, 'the syllabus is fine but many students are not determined in their studies'. In the line of this argument, a commerce graduate also notes 'for me the syllabus is all right, if not it is due to an individual's lack of seriousness in studies'.

It is clear from most of our respondents that the syllabus, which is alienated to present social needs, elitist and urban oriented syllabus has a negative spillover, which is felt down the line in studies. This implies that non-holistic syllabus with no relation to local social needs has been in a constraint to learn. It means 'imposed' learning and negative feeling on the syllabus create side effect that tends to lower interest in the subject. It is unfortunate that negative feeling of the subject has made the content of the text boring and less interesting. Imposed learning does not give the required motivation to know the subject matter. Rather, it leads to undermining the right aptitude and motivation, which are the pre-requisite qualities to attain successful learning. In the
absence of spontaneous and free-flow aptitude to learn low educational attainment has become endemic. In others words, there is a lack in the educational system to generate passion and promoting a strong attachment with the subject matter. Without the right focus the lesson remains trivial and disappears as time goes. Compulsion learning seems to rarely bear fruits.

This shows the high intensity of backlash due to failure to incorporate the local socio-cultural practices and experiences in the syllabus, which has alienated the youth from the education system results in dropouts and low performance. It has also led to gradual but destructive alienation of the Shiipfomaramth youth from their society and culture. In turn, the incongruence between everyday experiences and the books they read does not give them the right motivation. This suggests that the prevailing educational system having failed to refine their traditional thoughts and knowledge is causing less interest in studies. In other words, the educational system, which was aimed to alter the existent mode of cognition and behaviour, ends up being the contributing factor of conceptual weakness.

A quick look at the social sciences textbooks would show the extent of dominant culture-centric syllabus on one hand, and the negligence of the native cultural history, on the other. The social sciences textbook for classes XI and XII on Political Science and History developed by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) is taken up to show the same. Primarily, this is because the Council of Higher Secondary Education, Manipur does not have its own textbooks, but prescribed a list of books, which include the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) publications as well. Thus, in the Political Science: An Introduction (Textbook for Class XI) and Political Science: Key Concepts and Theories (Textbook for Class XII), not a word on the nature and practice of the Naga political-history has been mentioned. Likewise, in the Democracy in India: Issues and Challenges (A Textbook for Class XII) other than the brief mention of the line “similarly, in 1965, simultaneous

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election could not be held in Nagaland...”, 23 there is nothing about them (Nagas). Nowhere, does it mention about the challenges and issues of Indian democracy, within the context of Naga resistance movement.

Similarly, in Medieval India (A History Textbook for Class XI), nothing was included except to state “… the area was not rich and was surrounded by warlike tribes such as the Nagas living in the mountains”. 24 Their history, culture and tradition in the medieval age were completely ignored. In the same way, in Modern India (A History Textbook for Class XII), nothing was incorporated about the British invasion of Naga Hills, the role of the Nagas in the first and second World Wars and the various legislations that the British Government made pertaining to the Nagas. Among other legislations, it is worth mentioning here that Regulation of 1880 (which was incorporated in both Government of India Act of 1919 and 1935), “excluded” the Nagas from the coverage of British Government law and governance. 25 Likewise, some of the major battlefields of the Second World War were fought in Naga areas such as Mao and Kohima. 26 While ignoring all these, it does include, “… Nagaland produced a brave heroine in Rani Gaidilieu, who at the age of 13 responded to the call of Gandhi and the Congress and raised the banner of rebellion against foreign rule”. 27

What this suggests is that the syllabus with less relevance to the Shippomaramth ways of life relating to history, culture, forest and agriculture makes the subject dull and devoid of interest for the students. 28 Incidentally, exclusion and negligence of their ways of life/values in the curriculum not only lead to a feeling of alienation but also less interest towards the subject. The texts they read are those that are full of other cultures

26 M. Horam, Naga Insurgency: The Last Thirty Years, Cosmo Publications: New Delhi, 1988, p. 11.
28 Number of other studies has revealed that the educational system in India has not changed from the British period, which was initially introduced for colonial interest. See, L. Leiren Singh, “Universalisation of Elementary Education in the Hill Areas of Manipur”, in M. Horam (ed) op. cit., 2000, pp. 204-205; N. K. Behura, “Constraints in Tribal Cultural for Formal Education”, in B. Chaudhuri (ed.) op. cit., p. 258; T. Lakshmaiah, “Problems of Education in Tribal Areas”, ibid., p. 236; L. R. N. Srivastava, “Development of Curriculum for Tribal Students”, ibid., pp. 133-135, M. Kundu, “Tribal Education in India: An Effective Pedagogy”, ibid., pp. 49 -50.
and histories, which stand in sharp contrast to their own experiences and reality. In this way, the educational system heavily based on 'other' cultural traditions results in not only cultural problem but also low interest towards learning. In turn, the sort of alienation that the youth are presently facing has a double impact – from their own cultural tradition and the educational system as well.

If the colonial policy towards the Nagas including the Shiipfomaramth community was one of isolation, exclusion and protectionism, that of Independent India has followed assimilation and integration, by dividing them along disparate cultures and histories. The underlying assumption of both the policies are that the local tradition like the Shiipfomaramth community is uncivilised or barbaric and that they needed to be isolated (in the former) and civilised (in the latter case). It is unfortunate but true that this perspective continues to guide the educational policies that are solely based on the dominant elite and urban tradition. And to this day, the urge and mentality to inculcate “Indianness” (purely Hindu model) and encouraging assimilation into the ‘mainstream’ remains the preferred mode of the educational system.

However, exclusive policy of education that led to outright rejection of local indigenous tradition results in feeling of alienation and less interest in the subject as well. Besides, with this sort of educational system the feeling of ‘cultural separation’ has become almost a forgone conclusion. Education as an agent of change with no aim to refine the local socio-cultural tradition leads to distort the very purpose of it. The Shiipfomaramth youth have seen inconsistencies is what they have learnt and in what they experience. It is apparent that others have defined education for them.

Inadequate Facilities and Opportunities

If the flawed curriculum discussed above has served to alienate the Shiipfomaramth youth from education, the inadequate facilities and lack of quality education intensify this. Not to mention of the much needed additional facilities, even the basic requirements are lacking. Most of the respondents stated that good facilities and adequate educational infrastructures that have a direct bearing on quality education are far from satisfied. This is built from responses to the question: ‘how do you find the school/college facilities and quality of teaching? Is it helpful in promoting your educational growth? (By facilities here is meant building, library, laboratory, class-room equipment and teacher efficiency)’. See Table VIII for the responses.

Table VIII

Youth views on Facilities and Quality of Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answers</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19(9.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat good</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27(13.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>84(42.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far from satisfied</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>70(35.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>108</strong></td>
<td><strong>92</strong></td>
<td><strong>200</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#Figures in the bracket indicate the percentage to the total respondent.

The above table makes it clear that majority of the respondent are not satisfied with the kind of facilities and quality of education they receive. Out of the total respondents, 42 per cent of them are of the view that provisions and imparting education are inadequate. Likewise, 35 per cent of the respondents responded that it is far from satisfactory in helping to attain sound educational growth. On the other hand, 13.5 per cent of them are of the opinion that it is not satisfactory but somewhat good. This left with just 9.5 per cent of the respondents who said that they are satisfied with the facilities and quality of imparting education.

Many respondents have noted that if they had the same facilities and quality education like others from the beginning of their school days, they would not remain weak and inferior. This indicates the ideal picture of inadequate facilities and opportunities that the Shiipfomaramth youth have access to. According to them, the
schools/colleges are not keeping pace with time in this fast increasing frontier of knowledge and stiff competition. Many respondents stated that their schools/colleges are lacking in vital facilities such as prescribed books, other study materials, journals and newspapers. In the light of this perception, one undergraduate student says, ‘quality of imparting education is poor, there is lack of books, journals and buildings are in bad shape’. A student leader of Kalinamei village echoes the view as he opines that ‘there is urgent need of quality education, qualified teachers, proper facilities such as library with adequate books and journals, good building and laboratory’. It shows that there is vast mismatch between modern educational standard and the actual quality that they received. This, in turn, results in lack of acquiring proper knowledge thereby eventually leading to weak academic attainment.

Similarly, large number of the respondents stated that there is no interactive and participative system of learning at all. Instead, according to them, the bookish and technique of teaching by rote memory constitute the popular mode of education. They held the view that free flow of learning is lacking. To illustrate this point, one college graduate says, ‘learning through experience and equipping knowledge with understanding is required to succeed, but remains a distant dream’. A private schoolteacher similarly states, ‘there is a serious lapse in creating an environment of spontaneous education and provision of quality education’. What this suggests is that the present system of education promotes rote learning just for the purpose of getting through the examination. It means that there is no creative and articulative modes of education that will help to sharpen one’s academic ability and generate interest to learn.

It is clear from our data that the quality of education the Shiipfomaramth youth receives and facilities they enjoy are weak and inadequate. It means the educational formation is feeble and facilities are far from encouraging. This indicates that the disparity of facilities and quality of education imparted is partly responsible for creating problem in their studies. With enormous inadequate facilities and lack of quality education, perhaps, the Shiipfomaramth youth cannot be expected to become confident like the others coming from well-equipped backgrounds. It is apparent that inadequacy of facilities and opportunities is also causing weak insight and an emergent sense of low-
esteem. In short, not only the educational facilities are inadequate and dated but also traditional form of ‘spoon-feeding’ is continuing as a popular mode of education.

The respondents’ views show that they have been ignored and neglected. The claim is not just a cry. It speaks volume of unequal opportunities since the institutional infrastructures and other facilities have proved beyond doubt. In fact, most of the educational institutions are ill-staffed and under-equipped. The government is at fault for not showing equal attention to the students in tribal areas including the Shiipfomaramth community. Thus, library with required books, journals and newspapers, and other academic books on related current affairs to update one’s knowledge are hardly maintained. Where laboratory exist in some schools/colleges, condition is deplorable and pathetic. Excepting a few sub-standard sports and recreation centre, other related academic infrastructures are not at all furnished. Updating of current knowledge and creating favourable educational environment is immensely lacking.

Likewise, many teachers are either poorly qualified or untrained. The fraudulent appointments by way of bribe, favouritism and ‘back door’ entry aggravated the present problem in education. Even more disheartening are the many government schools and colleges that are managed by ad hoc or part time teachers whereby their commitment becomes questionable. In fact, at present the total number of teachers required is 1980 against 1310 sanctioned post of teachers in colleges in the state. Entirely blaming these teachers would be unfair for it is expected on the part of the government to meet the requirement of educational institutions in the right earnest. The reason that a good number of teachers remain ad hoc/part time for many years is best known only to the government. With uncertainty looming over their heads, part-time teachers cannot be as committed as they should be, since many would be in search of better options. Besides, valley-based teachers are hardly present to take the classes on the pretext of security reason. As a consequence the students suffer for days and weeks and even months. The situation in the private schools/colleges is no better. The teachers are paid unimaginably low salary that cannot even meet their basic needs. Needless to say, without satisfactory remuneration qualified teachers are hard to come in.

Good school buildings, adequate infrastructures and library, qualified and dedicated teachers create an environment of sound learning. However, most of the Shiipfomaramth youth suffer from badly equipped schools and colleges. Consequently, the inadequacy of facilities and quality education cause lack of required knowledge and weak conceptual insight. It has resulted in failure to stimulate the right educational interest. That is why sometimes students from the Shiipfomaramth community have suffered academically not because they are weak, but are buckled with so many disadvantages. One of the reasons is that the school facilities and teachers are ill-equipped to give quality education.

More often than not, the belief that the students from Shiipfomaramth community are weak in conceptual richness is also due to prevailing assessment of one’s capability on the basis of ‘equality of output’ instead of focusing on ‘equality of opportunity’. The fact is that the latter is enormously imbalanced and unequal. This exclusive sort of perception shows that the educational system has not been able to provide academic commitment, and subsequently is deprived of appropriate educational environment. In other words, the existing system of measuring one’s ability has categorically overlooked the background of inadequate facilities.

Another aspect of structural constraint is, therefore, the means and facilities to learn are not equally distributed. The same is true of the constraining factor that is affecting the ability to learn and hindering the desire to capitalise the goal. Inequality of facilities leads to inequality in output and interest in education.34 In a nutshell, non-availability of suitable infrastructure and lack of quality education is equally responsible for lack of self-confidence.

Lack of Career Guidance and Motivation
Another related structural constraint leading to the problem of the Shiipfomaramth youth is the lack of proper career guidance and motivation. In a broad sense, career means a patterned sequence of occupational role through which the individuals move over the

course of a working life. A career in this discussion is referred to switching one’s academic journey to an ideal goal. Most respondents have remarked that as a result of being less educated, illiterate or ignorant their parents and guardians are not that helpful and motivating in their course and vocation. This is obtained from the responses to the question, ‘what sorts of input do your parents and guardians contribute in your career and vocation’?

In general, the respondents revealed that the parents and guardians are usually unaware of what course is good and suitable for their children, as they, to start with are uneducated. Parents are helpless due to ignorance when it comes to career option. The respondents also maintained that parents do force their children to study hard but cannot give them sound guidance due to their illiteracy. This can be illustrated from the response of a youth leader of a local church, who says, ‘my parents do not know what course I should take up because they are illiterate’. A college dropout expressed a similar experience: ‘my parents are helpless due to their illiteracy when it comes to career choice and so I face problems in my education.’ Similarly, a theology student stated, ‘my parents were uneducated and hence they could not help much in planning my career, which created difficulties in my choice of subject option.’ These responses reveal the intensity of the lack of parental role in the youth’s career formation. It means that the parents and guardians are not well educated to guide their children education.

In fact, many youth are confused on what they are pursuing due to lack career guidance. There may be certain pressure of work since intense and deep learning is relatively new for them. However, the problems relating to education that the Shiipfomaramth youth face is not only the outcome of the pressures from school/college but also due to wrong choice of subject. In our respondents’ opinion, it is common that many students are unsure of what they are doing due to inadequate guidance. Sensing the effect of inadequate guidance, for instance, one Arts graduate says, ‘I am confused and regretted for choosing a wrong course since there is no one to give me guidance’. A private schoolteacher shares similar view: ‘Proper career guidance gives a person confidence, however, in my case lack of guidance has made me confused’. It is apparent

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that the lack of proper career guidance is a serious problem. General backwardness and poor economic condition of the parents is less helpful in children education thus leading to accentuating their problem in studies.

This can be further verified from our data on educational background of the parents given Table IX below.

Table IX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Qualification of the Respondents’ Parents</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational Level</td>
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<td>--------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Under matric</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matriculation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduation and above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uneducated/Illiterate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figures in the bracket indicate the percentage to the total respondent.*

It is clear from the above table that the number of the respondents whose parents are educated is far less compared to the uneducated ones. Even the level of the parents’ education, as shown above indicate that majority of them are matriculates and below. This suggests that majority of the respondents are first generation learners. Similarly, what this shows is that most of the respondents’ parents are not salaried employees. More than two thirds of the respondents’ parents are cultivators.

There are enough evidences from our data that in the case of the Shiipfomaramth youth, lack of career guidance has made many confused. Since career is usually determined by the education a person received to opt for a wrong course means a wrong choice, however this is the common experience for many Shiipfomaramth youth. As a result of the failure to prioritise the subject, many end up in frustrations.

In fact, the knowledge a person obtained from the parents and society gives him/her an edge over the others. Educated parents are able to think together with their children. They have better chance to know the children’s difficulties. In the Shiipfomaramth society, however, many youth are confused of what they are doing due to lack of proper initial guidance. As a result, instead of having positive attitude towards
education, many end up with guilt and despair. Coupled with poverty and unfriendly social environment, poor career guidance has lessened their interest in studies. Consequently, there exists a clear phenomenon of aimless studies and inadequate preparation to meet the demands of the work force.

Children of uneducated cultivator parents are much more likely to end up plying second fiddle. The uneducated/ignorant parents by any standards cannot go beyond certain level of motivation. Thus, for many of the Shiipfomaramth youth the dictum is ‘science for science’ and ‘arts for arts’, with no adequate knowledge of its scope. Their plight is aggravated by the poverty and economic backwardness since most of the parents are cultivators with little or no exposure to schooling. This together broadly describes why some parents are more sensitive to certain particular institutions and subjects while others are not. It does not mean to conclude that uneducated parents of the Shiipfomaramth youth are less enthusiastic in their children studies. But interest varies on the matter of quality contribution compared to others.

In this way, to use the words of Brooks, ‘the heterogeneity of the family background continues to remain a crucial factor in placing the students on equal footing with other’. We have seen that most of the respondents are the first generation to avail the opportunity to study. The absence of history of formal learning is, therefore, yielding a negative result. It is in this context that the heterogeneous nature of social background becomes indispensable in determining one’s future. Although parents are taking keen interest in education of the children, ignorance is constraining them to contribute qualitatively.

Conclusion

The above account shows that today Manipur has turned into a centre of instability and tension. Conflicts and violence have become a daily routine, which hit the youth most severely. The state of affairs is deteriorating and as a result, development has been

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36 The failure of the parents to adequately guide their children due to illiteracy and low awareness of the importance of various courses is part of the problems in educational development.

stagnant. The increase rate of unemployment among the educated youth has affected the entire social fabric and the social environments at large.

The findings reveal that the socio-environment conditions of the Shiipfomaramth region are contributing less its youth’s educational growth. General backwardness and poverty are adding their share to the problem. At the same time, the existing educational system, which favours the metropole shows the perpetuation of exclusive syllabus. Ignoring the inclusion of local thought and cultural practices in the curriculum, has led to a major set-back in the development of modern education. This exclusive policy of education has resulted in not only low interest to learn but also caused a feeling of alienation and neglect.

No doubt, there is increasing rate of literacy in the Shiipfomaramth community during the last few decades. Rich and poor alike, depending on interest and economic condition has being sending their children for education. Instilling formal learning in the forms of structured institution and teacher is expanding rapidly. The sad part of the story however is that quantity has pushed quality to the back burner. For many youth, education does not satisfactorily produce sound knowledge as many have been expected but studied just to pass the examination. In other words, many are becoming literate but not educated.

When this is the case, the ideal of ‘equality of opportunity’ as enshrined in the constitution would be practically possible only when there is access of equal facilities and opportunities. For this to happen, following shortcut method by admitting only the brighter one may be incommensurate to meet the nation’s goal – education for all. An extra care and corrective measure is needed to let the students from marginalised and disadvantaged section get the opportunity of quality education and higher studies. Creative measures may include intensive orientation courses for the students and redrawing the curriculum by including the socio-historical aspects of all communities and tribal groups alike. It also means creation of spontaneous learning environment pertinent to one’s popular experiences, and equal distribution of facilities.

In a situation where structural constraints exist as seen in the current social environment conditions of the Shiipfomaramth region, pressure and tension is bound to
increase. In such circumstances, determination and passion becomes an outmost necessity. One has to clearly define one’s goal with fine detail and will to achieve. It cannot be left at the mercy of whims and chances. Normal routine that is left to chance will not work. Desire and ambition to succeed unless turned into concrete action would wither in the midst of competition. Work without commitment and dedication do not yield the desired result. Those persons, who fritter their lives away, become nothing and never do well in whatever they do. A great deal of pain and struggle is needed to unfold success.

In sum, the government needs to create deserving avenues and paths for the youth. The youth need opportunity to explore their creative and experimental instincts. Given the right facilities, the Shiipfomaramth youth can change the face of the present educational condition. The fact is that the parents and community together have shown strong desire to cooperate and readiness to sacrifice for their young people education. A feeling of responsibility and belongingness has to be ignited by diminishing exclusivist educational policy, enhancing economic life and equal distribution of opportunity.