Problems of Government Secondary Schools in Mao Naga Areas of Manipur

*1 Daikho Manehrii

*1 Ph.D Research Scholar, Department of Education, Nagaland University, Kohima Campus Meriem.

**Note:** * Indicates corresponding author

**ABSTRACT**

The Mao Naga tribe is one of the emerging tribe in Manipur state. Though, the introduction of modern education has impacted the lives of Mao in various aspects, the growth and development rate remains stagnant. Performance of the students was very disappointing in the past preceding years. The secondary education system in the area seems to have plague with multiple problems. This paper is an attempt to highlight the many problems hampering the growth of secondary education in the area. The study was based on direct observation and interaction with various stakeholders. The study found out some prominent problem such as insufficient teachers, linguistic difficulties and lack of adequate infrastructure.

1. Introduction

The Mao Naga tribe occupy the northernmost part of Manipur state. They are neighbours with Angami and Chakesang tribes in the north, Pomaini and Tangkhus in the east and Zeliangs in the west. As per 2011 census, the population of Mao is 93,343. The Mao Naga speaks Maola or Emela which falls under the Angami-Pochuri group of Tibeto-Burmese language. Modern education among the Mao dates back to 1893. The first full-fledged government high school was formally recognised in 1952-53. Presently, there are four government high schools, one autonomous higher secondary school, besides a dozen of private high schools. Only 15% of the students from government schools could manage to clear the recent concluded HSLC examination 2019, out of which one school drew blank and two schools couldn’t manage to send students. Secondary education which holds utmost vitality in educational development seems to have been neglected by the people. The public schools which are supposed to generate young talented students seem to have degenerated. This paper explores the various problems which hamper the growth of secondary education in the region which need immediate intervention from stakeholders.

(Kengoo, 2011) highlights irregular recruitment of teachers, proxy system of teachers, linguistic and identity problems as the core reason for lack of educational development among the tribes in Manipur. The gap between hill and valley divide in educational development revolves on geographical, political and intellectual factors. Imbalances distribution in the institutional set-up, linguistic backwardness and economic constraints also adds to the problems of tribal residing in hills. A fair understanding on the following problems would emit hopes of equity in the development of education in the state.

2. Insufficient Teachers

The problem of inadequate teacher seems to have no end in the hills of Manipur. Most government schools are functioning without sufficient teachers. Teachers who are not from home district often end up being transferred or utilized within a month of their posting. While there is shortage of teachers in hill district, Government schools in valley are overcrowded with teachers. Shortages of teachers result in poor enrolment. It also leads to high drop-out rates. The acute lack of Science and Mathematics teacher led to mass failure in the concerned subject.

Absenteism of teachers, practice of proxy teachers and utilisation in secretarial works are some of the major concerns related to inadequacy of teachers in the area. On the other hand, irregular payment of teacher’s salary also affects the smooth functioning of government schools.

3. Traditional Methods of Teaching

Many of the teachers are still following the old teaching methods based on rote learning. There is little or absence of activity-based learning. Use of technologies is far lacking behind in the region. Many of the teachers
are not efficient in handling teaching learning materials. Some teachers hardly or never used teaching learning materials. Co-curricular activities are not given due importance.

4. Lack of Infrastructure

The pathetic condition of government secondary school will prick any sensible person as to whether it is feasible to conduct class or even called it a school. Some buildings do exist but basic amenities are absent in most cases. The existing ones are in dilapidated conditions. The furniture in the school is not well furnished. Proper ventilation is not maintained in most schools. There are complaints of non-availability of books and irregular distribution of books. The fund sanction for renovation and extension never seem enough to develop the school. It remains unattended and abandoned.

The non-availability of teachers’ quarter is another serious problem. Not many villages have the facility of house-renting. Moreover, the transport facilities are very bad in the area.

5. Lack of Orientation and In-Service training

Lack of proper orientation on various developmental projects also affects the development of secondary education in the area. Most of the teachers are not well-equipped with the latest developments in the education system. Another drawback of orienting teachers and in-service training is the problem of location. Most of the trainings were conducted in the state capital which gives rise to some very serious difficulties. Many a times, due to lack of proper transportation and accommodation facilities, and delayed in proper dissemination of information, teachers failed to participate in the orientation programme.

6. No Proper Inspection

While certain officers are appointed to inspect the development of education system, it seems they have forgotten the ethics of work. Inspections were done haphazardly just for the sake of maintaining record. Factual reports were missing in all the yearly reports. There are certain cases where the school headmaster or headmistress has to report himself or herself to the concern officer. Lack of sincerity on the part of the inspection team resulted in presenting faulty data. Officials prefer to enjoy the limelight instead of performing their duties religiously.

7. Linguistic Problem

It is true; language is a barrier for students in the area. According to a study by (Vashum, 2011), 59.21% of the tribal students face problem with the medium of instruction in the classroom. The reason was that, most of the teachers were Meiteis resulting in the lectures been delivered in Manipuri where most of the tribal students don’t understand. The Mao community doesn’t have developed language system. Maola is only studied as a language subject. English is used as the medium of instruction as well as the language to understand other subjects. This creates two serious problems. Firstly, the burden of learning a new language i.e. English language. Students have to be proficient in English language to learn other subjects. Secondly, most of the teachers from Meitei community couldn’t teach in English as their medium of learning was in Manipuri. Students can somehow understand English but they couldn’t understand Manipuri. It may be mentioned here that even though Manipuri is the official language of the state, it is not popular to about 50% of the people in the state. Again, there is also a lack of local teachers who can teach the students in their mother-tongue.

8. Curriculum Related problem

The present curriculum doesn’t give enough emphasis on the practical based learning. The syllabus also includes only a small aspect of local context. Students couldn’t find relevance to relate to their learning. The quality of the books has been neglected so much. The black and white representation couldn’t serve its purpose of identifying the same. The hegemony of dominant community’s context in the curriculum also poses a problem to these hilly students. The representation of smaller communities is negligible. These create a vast gap of understanding among the learners in the hill areas. “Language issue in Manipur has often been politicized where we find tensions and conflicts on linguistic and communal lines came to the surface.”(Pramodini, 2011) She recommend that a policy which would inculcate a target approach which could maintain and develop minority languages need to be initiated in a linguistic diversity and complicated multilingual situation of Manipur.

Apart from the above mentioned problems, improper mapping of secondary schools, non-inclusion of local needs in orientation programmes, mass illiteracy of parents and lackadaisical attitude of the administrators and representatives also obstructs development of secondary education in the area. Low enrolment and high drop-out rates continues to haunts the area because of the above problems.
9. Recommendations

The Government should deployed requisite teachers for smooth functioning of secondary schools. The government should recruit trained local teachers as far as possible to solve the vexed problem of linguistic barrier. The department of education should recruit enough supporting staffs so as to relieve teachers from secretarial works. The Government should formulate a stricter law which would regulate transfer and utilisation of teachers. Teachers payment should be disburse regularly. Teacher's transit quarter in every sub-divisional headquarters can solve the problem for migrant teachers. Orientation programmes and in-service training should be held in concerned district, if possible in school premises. Practical based and skilled development related to local needs should be the primary aim of any orientation.

Teaching methods need to be updated with latest development and use of technologies. Distribution of books should be done in the beginning of the year. Classroom should be well-furnished and equipped with latest technologies. Basic amenities should be well-maintained.

Inspection of schools should be done regularly. Reports about the schools should be verified through spot inquiry by another third party. Disciplinary action should be initiated immediately on any discrepancies. Private monitoring agency should be set up to check the quality, progress and maintenance of infrastructural development.

Syllabus need to be revised regularly; at least once in five years. It should inculcate minority community interest and culture too. Life skills, soft skills and vocational skills should be inculcated in the syllabus to enable the students to be independent. Co-curricular activities can be held instead of class during weekends i.e. Saturday. Setting up of different clubs like science club, literary club, mathematics club and aesthetic club in the school would arouse the interest of the students. It will also give them an opportunity to explore their capacities.

10. Conclusion

In conclusion, the Government should not remain as a mute spectator while the education system is rotting. Government should start acting before things get out of control. Secondary educations being at the transition level needs to be given due importance. Proper sensitization and awareness campaign should be provided to the villagers on various educational developments. The community need to be more responsible towards educational development to uplift the society. With the advancement in science and technology, innovative teaching and learning method should be encouraged. Incentives meant for poor students should be monitored properly. The hegemony of centralised administration should be minimised. Inclusive education should be introduced by both Government and private school to promote equity in educational development. This will help in harmonious co-existence in the society. ‘No work, no pay’ policy should be implemented to check absenteeism of teachers. Teachers need to possess the integrity to work and explore their capabilities. They should not be conditioned by job-oriented mindset. Research in educational department should be given a prominent place to ensure quality and equal development. Proper mapping of secondary schools should be ensured so as to provide education to all. Government and common people should co-ordinate and work on a mutual framework to provide a vibrant secondary education system in the area.

REFERENCES