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The Development and Problems of Women Education in Post-Independence Manipur

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Abstract

Independence India favored for the growth of non-prejudicial education of men and women. The Constitution of India guaranteed equal status to both the sexes. The Constitution of India provides for free and compulsory education to all children irrespective of cast, creed and sex. The impact of the promulgation of free and compulsory education gave an input to the development of women education in Manipur as elsewhere in India.

The promulgation of free and compulsory Education and the setting up of 'National Committee for Girls, 1959' gave tremendous filling on the development of Women Education in Post-Independence Manipur. Various measures were recommended by 'State Council for Women Education', Government of Manipur, and many recommendations were implemented by the State Government. As such Women Education in Manipur progressed speedily during the last two decades. However, there is a wide gap between the achievement of boys and girls. The percentage of literacy of male is still higher than that of female. Women Education in Manipur is facing the problems of non-enrolment, high Wastage and Stagnation and non-availability of adequate number of lady teachers. The 'National Education Policy, 1986' promises to further women's development by taking up various measures. The implementation of 'NEP' is full swing in Manipur, will bring about the improvement in the quality of Women's Education in Manipur. Thus the Paper tries to focus on the development and problems of Women Education in Post-Independence Manipur with facts and figures from historical prospective.

KEYWORDS: *Women Education, Development, Problems, Manipur and Post-Independence.*

Education imparted to women in Ancient Manipur was informal in character. Parents were responsible for the education of their daughter at home. Most of the girls were trained by their mothers in weaving and embroidery of their garments known as *Phanek* (wrapper) and other etc. To acquire the skill of weaving

and embroidery etc., by the girls before marriage was considered an asset for them. But in modern times many changes have taken place in the society. The old traditional system of education alone is inadequate to equip the women to face the ever changing society. From the available records indicates that Rev. "William



Pettigrew, Maharaja Sir Churachand Singh, KCSI, CBE and Major AE. Woods, ICS did the pioneering works of Women Education in Manipur. With the establishment of a Girls' School in Manipur at Moirangkhom in 1899, then the girls started receiving Modern Education.”(Singh Mangoljao 1967:p18) “The welfare and progress of a nation is depends on the quality of education prevailing in that country. In a democratic set up, the role of education becomes particularly important since democracy can function effectively only if there is an intelligent and active participation by the people in the solution of the problems of the country and this participation come only through education.”(Singh and Singh 1966: p 75). Before 1947, education of girls and women in Manipur was completely neglected. This was not very much due to prevalence of ill social customs but mainly out of ignorance of the people regarding the value of Women Education.

The Development of Women Education in Post-Independence Manipur: Independence India favoured for the growth of non-prejudicial education of men and women. The Constitution of India guaranteed equal status to both the sexes. The Constitution of India provides for free and compulsory education to all children irrespective of cast, creed and sex. The impact of the promulgation of free and compulsory education gave impetus to the progress of Women Education in Manipur as elsewhere in India. There was an appreciable increase in the enrolment of girls in the Schools. The progress was more accelerated, particularly after the first Five Year Plan onwards. Various measures were taken up to improve Women Education, which were considered

as indispensable for raising the status of women in the society.

‘State Council for Women Education in Manipur’: The setting up of ‘National Committee for Girl’s Education’ in 1959 under the Chairmanship of Smt. Durgabai Deshmukh gave a tremendous impact on the development of Women Education in Manipur. As recommended by the ‘Committee on Women Education’, the Government of Manipur set up the ‘State Council for Women Education’ in 1967. It was reconstituted in 1972. There is no separate staff for the Council. There is an Honorary Chairman. The Deputy Director of Education (Women’s Programme) acts as Ex-officio Secretary of the Council. The functions of the Council are mentioned below:-

- To advice Government on issues relating to the education of girls at School level and adult women.
- To suggest policies, programmes, targets and priorities for the expansion and improvement of the education of girls and women.
- To suggest measures for educating public opinion in favour of education of girls and women.
- To suggest measures for utilizing to the best voluntary effort in the field of education of girls and women.
- To assess the progress achieved from time to time and suggest measures for evaluation of work done/ being done.

Recommendations of the State Council: The Council took up various measures such as Seminars, Workshops and Publicity campaign etc. The following recommendations have been made by the Council to all appropriate bodies of the



State Government and other Private Agencies.

1. Female candidates may be given priority in giving admission to the Training Institutes.
2. Education of girls may be made free up to the Secondary stage, and adequate stipends and scholarships may be made available to them liberally.
3. Adequate hostel facilities for girls in Secondary Schools and Colleges may be provided.
4. Adequate sanitary facilities may also be provided for girls in the Institutions.
5. The Girls' Schools/Colleges may be staffed with ladies teachers, if available.

6. Preference may be given to female candidates at the time of giving appointment to a Government or non –Government Post.
7. Ladies teachers may be provided with amenities such as residential quarters and transport in the rural and hill areas.

Women of Manipur are now trying their best to occupy a position in the forefront of the society. Most of them have become aware of their rights and responsibilities. They have made tremendous progress in all walks of life. It is interesting here to observe the progress of women education during the last few decades.

Table-1

No. of Girls enrolled in the different stages of Educational Institutes in Manipur during last few decades

Stages	1970-71	1979-80	1983-84	1990-91	2000-01
Primary	6,339	73,517	77,517	85,676	1,01,524
Middle	15,656	17,899	28,932	34,748	68,674
High School	12,758	28,770	39,188	57,811	1,11,121
College	2,385	6,105	10,463	16,697	9,677

(Source: Dr Jamini 2006(Reprint) p: 106)

From the above table it is clear that there has been a rapid increase in the number of girls receiving education in the state during the last few decades.

The Development of Women Literacy rate in Manipur: In the year 1951, the total population of the Manipur was 5, 77,635. The total percentage of literacy rate was 11.4. Out of which, male literacy

rate was 20.77 and female literacy rate was restricted to only 2.36. While, the female literacy rate has increased from 2.36 in 1951 to 15.93 in 1961 the number of illiterate women has increased considerably. The process of increase in Women literacy rate in Manipur can be seen from following table of last few decades

Table-2
Women Literacy rate in Manipur during last few decades

Year	Total Population	Total % of Literacy	Male	Female
1951	5,77,635	11.4	20.77	2.36
1961	7,80,037	30.4	45.12	15.93
1971	10,72,753	32.4	46.40	19.53
1981	14,20,953	41.3	53.29	29.06
1991	18,37,149	59.9	71.63	47.60
2001	21,66,788	68.87	77.87	59.70
2011	27,21,756	79.85	86.49	73.17

(Source: Census of India, 2011)

Problems of Women Education in Post-Independence Manipur: The most serious problems of Women Education in Post-Independence Manipur are Low Enrolment, Wastage and Stagnation and Problem of the Women Teacher etc. These same problems are seen in the case of India also.

Low Enrolment: Generally, enrolment is regarded as an index of educational progress. But in the case of girls the enrolment is low as a whole. The low enrolment rate of girls in the educational institutions may be attributed to poverty and ignorance of the parents. Girls are engaged in domestic and occupational works at home by their parents. Apart from this drawback, there still remains a prejudice against Girls' Education, even if the parents are not poor. As for the illiterate and ignorant parents, they lack knowledge about the practical value of education. They are not keen about the education of their daughters. Even now, majority of the people in the rural areas are not very enthusiastic about the education of their girls.

Wastage and Stagnation: Wastage and Stagnation in Women Education is extensive problem throughout India as pointed out by 'National Committee on Women's Education'. All India rate of

drop-out at the Elementary Stage was 74% for girls while that for boys was 62%. In the Lower Primary Stage, 62% of girls drop-out as against 56%; but in the Middle Stage, Wastage was 24% for boys and 39% for girls. The exact statistics for Wastage and Stagnation of Girls' Education in Manipur are not available but it is quite evident that the percentage of Wastage is higher than that of boys. The causes of Wastage and Stagnation, in case of Girls' Education are social factors like early marriage and parental apathy to Girls' Education.

Problem of the Women Teacher: To increase the number of Women Teachers is necessary for the development of Women Education. In Manipur, when the first Girls' School was established in 1899, the School could not function properly for want of Women Teachers. However, in 1955-56 there were 50 Women Teachers at Primary Schools, 9 in Middle Schools, 20 in High Schools and 1 in the College. There had been a substantial increase in the number of Women Teachers at all levels of education from 1960-61. The following table shows the number of Women Teachers at different Stages of Educational Institutes from 1960-61 onwards.

Table-3

Number of Women Teachers at different stages of Educational Institutes in Manipur

Year	College	Professional College	High School	Middle School	Primary School	Professional School
1960-61	4	2	49	63	195	7
1970-71	36	10	286	139	553	47
1979-80	189	43	598	333	1,248	112
1989-90	322	67	2,137	967	2,216	76
1999-2000	1,078	72	4,179	2,843	3,476	1

(Source: Dr Jamini 2006(reprint) p: 109)

Even though the number of women teachers increased as a whole, there is shortage of lady teachers for the rural areas. Lack of proper security in the villages, lack of materials amenities like hostel, quarter, transport, medical facilities and lack of support from the families are the dis-incentive to women teachers for serving in the rural areas.

The other obstacles on way of development of Women Education in Post-Independence Manipur are include (i)Unsuitable location of Schools building, (ii) Unsuitable School timing, (iii)Absence of part-time Schools and (iv) Poor communication facilities etc.

Conclusion: The promulgation of free and compulsory Education and the setting up of 'National Committee for Girls, 1959' gave tremendous filling on the development of Women Education in Post-Independence Manipur. Various measures

were recommended by 'State Council for Women Education', Government of Manipur, and many recommendations were implemented by the State Government. As such Women Education in Manipur progressed speedily during the last two decades. However, there is a wide gap between the achievement of boys and girls. The percentage of literacy of male is still higher than that of female. Women Education in Manipur is facing the problems of non-enrolment, high Wastage and Stagnation and non-availability of adequate number of lady teachers. The 'National Education Policy, 1986' promises to further women's development by taking up various measures. The implementation of 'NEP' is full swing in Manipur, will bring about the improvement in the quality of Women's Education in Manipur.

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