
Educational Status of the Thadou-Kukis of Manipur

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Abstract

Formal education in Manipur was started by the colonialist during the later part of the twentieth century in the state of Manipur. However in spite of more than a century of its introduction, compared to the valley areas, most of the villages in the rural areas (tribal dominated villages) are even without primary school facilities. The present article looks into the educational development in the state of Manipur-governmental, aided as well as private educational institutions. The paper examine the educational status of Thadou (largest tribe) of Manipur by taking into account six Thadou villages situated in different geographical region of Sadar Hills sub-division of Senapati district. The study illustrates how lack of higher educational institution, poor educational infrastructure, remoteness and poverty etc has resulted in wide disparity in the level and quality of

education between the valley and the hill areas. However, despite the differences and difficulties, most of the villagers in the study villages are literate. Both primary and secondary data are used for the study. Primary data are collected from field by administering schedule at the household level and secondary data are collected from reports, articles, magazine, and records. Data is tabulated and analysed accordingly for writing the paper.

Keywords: Education, Manipur, Thadou, Valley, Rural

Introduction

Education as define by Gordon Marshal in the Oxford Dictionary of Sociology (2004) is a philosophical as well as a sociological concept, denoting ideologies, curricula, and pedagogical techniques of the inculcation

and management of knowledge and the social reproduction of personalities and culture. In practice the sociology of education is mostly concerned with schooling, and especially the mass schooling systems of modern industrial societies (Marshall, 2004, p. 183). This paper mainly focuses on educational status of the Thadous (largest tribe) of Manipur. For intensive study six Thadou inhabited villages viz. Motbung, T.Moulbung,

Chalva, Govajang, Saikul and Bolkot have been randomly selected. The study villages are located in Sadar Hills sub-division of Senapati district. Selection of sample villages is made in order to represent Thadou -Kukis living in hill areas as well as sub-urban areas. In Sadar Hill sub-division there are three development blocks. From each development block two Thadou inhabited villages are randomly selected for study. The sample size is:

Table 1
 Selection of Sample from Six Thadou Villages

Serial No	Village	Male	Female	Total
1	Motbung	30	30	60
2	Chalva	30	30	60
3	Saikul	30	30	60
4	T. Moulbung	20	20	40
5	Bolkot	20	20	40
6	Govajang	20	20	40
Total	6	150	150	300

Total sample size is 300. For first three villages i.e. Motbung, Chalva and Saikul 180 people is taken consisting of 30 males

and 30 females from each village as these three villages have large population. For remaining three villages 120 samples is

taken- 20 male and 20 female from each village. Following table represent the number of population of the respondent households in the six villages:

Table 2
 Population Wise Distribution of the Respondent Household

Sl. No.	Category	Motbung	T.Moulbung	Chalva	Govajang	Saikul	Bolkot	Total
1	Male	192 (46.71)	137 (48.58)	223 (51.74)	134 (52.14)	226 (52.19)	119 (44.41)	1031 (49.51)
2	Female	219 (53.28)	145 (51.41)	208 (48.25)	123 (47.85)	207 (47.81)	149 (55.59)	1051 (50.48)
Total		411	282	431	257	433	268	2082

Total population size is 2082. Based on the population size of the six villages, scheduled was frame for collecting information with regard to literacy rate, level of education, dropout rate and cause of dropout which are collected at the household level.

The paper is an attempt to explain the development of formal education from primitive to modern education and growth in parameters like literacy rate, number of educational institutions, educational structure etc., of the six villages under

study. It also looks into the present educational development of governmental, aided as well as private educational institutions.

Indigenous System of Education

Gangumei Kamei (2002) content that among the tribal people who inhabit in hilly tracts of the eastern Himalayas, the traditional education was imparted through their dormitories, in the form of training in martial arts and welfare, handicrafts, creative arts, custom and tradition, morality and discipline. The objective of the traditional and tribal education was to produce an all rounder individual, a tribal warrior, a committed member of the village

community with full knowledge of the creative arts, dance and music, well versed in the tradition and folklore of his tribe, clan and village. Thus, in the traditional tribal society, despite the absence of literacy, the social and moral fibre of the people was sustained (Kamei, 2002, pp.137-138)

Similarly, among the many tribes of North East India, the Thadou-Kukis have their own traditional form of informal education which centered on the family and youth dormitory. In earlier days, the family acts as an important educational institution for the child in order to learnt to live and socialise in the society. It is the family that taught them language, sense of right and wrong, social norms, etiquettes and to socialised in the society etc, etc. When they reach the years of understanding that is youth, they entered the social institution called *Som* (youth dormitory). *Som* is the remarkable traditional social an institution which means bachelor dormitory where all unmarried young men of the village sleep together at night. It serves as an institution wherein young people received non-formal traditional education like (i) Handicrafts (ii)

Technique of war (iii) Traditions (iv) Stories (v) Songs (vi) Dance (vii) Discipline (viii) Social etiquette etc. Unlike the youth dormitory system of some Naga tribes and Mizo, the Thadou have no separate dormitory house. The boys of the village forms separate groups and select a house having unmarried ladies. They remain in the house as long as there are unmarried girls. In case the *som* girl of the family got married the dormitory is reliable to be shifted to another house which has unmarried girl. In this way the youth dormitory is not confine to one particular house. They are at liberty to shift the dormitory if they want to at any time.

The *som* boys generally consist of group of friends of the same age group. Each group of the young boys after finding proper place called *Som-in*, select a potential and capable person to be the leader of the *Som*. The selected leader is called *Som-upa* meaning dormitory leader. The *Som-upa* serves as a guide and teacher to its *Som* members (Haokip, 2013, p.183). Likewise when the leader got married, the senior most *som* boy becomes the *som-upa*.



With the advent of the British and subsequent introduction of formal education system in the hills of Manipur, the traditional *Som* system of informal education has become out of date. Paokhohao Haokip puts: "Today the traditional *Som* has disappeared as it is not practicable. However, it can be contended that it has now been replaced by the modern formal educational institution like schools, colleges, universities, boarding houses and hostels" (Haokip, 2013, p.183).

Formal Education

Captian Gordon (R.Brown, 1975, p.42) and Major General W.E. Nuthall (1872) (E.W.Dunn, 1975, p.26) were the first two people to have introduced western system of education in Manipur. Among the tribals of Manipur, the genesis of modern education goes to the Christian Missionaries William Pettigrew who in 1896 started one Lower Primary School at Ukhrul which was later upgraded to a Middle English School in 1906 (Singh, Reverend William Pettigrew and Modern Education in Manipur, 1996, p.8). At first the tribals were reluctant to send their

children to school. However gradually with Pettigrew effort the school was attended by both the Nagas and Kukis. The first few people among the Thadou- Kukis who received modern education and consequently got converted in the Ukhrul Baptist Mission School are *Pu Jamkithang sithou, Pu Pakho Sithou, Pu Seilut Singson, Pu Tongul Gangte, Pu Helkhup Chongloi, Dengkhup, Thangneilal, Teba Kilong. Longkhobel Kilong* etc (Convention, 2008,p.6). Non formal education was imparted through Sunday schools and evening schools where Madame Pettigrew taught the girls not only to read and write but also on sanitation, cleanliness and vocational training like sewing, embroidery, knitting, gardening etc. Though the people were not quick to respond at first, they have now made tremendous progress in the field of education. Today the Thadou-Kuki language is included in the curricular syllabus of Manipur as Modern Indian language (MIL) from Class IX till B.A. (TDC) level in the state of Manipur.

Present Educational Status of the Thadous

Thadou-Kuki population is mostly concentrated in Sadar hills sub-division of Senapati district where most of the villages are located in remote areas. Thus in spite of the Indian and state government effort for free and compulsory education to the age of 14 years, there are still many villages in the remote areas which do not even have primary school facilities which resulted in their backwardness and further isolation. Of the total number of 2456 schools in Manipur at present, only 400 government

schools (mostly primary schools) is found in Sadar Hills sub-division of Senapati district as against the number of 623 villages. And of the total of 72 colleges/ professional colleges (Govt., aided and unaided colleges) only three colleges is found in Sadar Hills (Education, List of Schools, General Education, 2010-2011, p.3-87). The following table shows the number of educational institution (Schools/ colleges) during 2010-2011 including aided and unaided:

Table 3
 Distribution of Government Schools and Colleges in Sadar Hills sub-division of Senapati district, Manipur, 2013

School/College	Primary	Junior High School	High School	Higher Secondary	Total	College
Government	230	21	13	1	265	1
Aided	58	7	2	—	67	—
Unaided	9	27	27	5	68	2
Total	297	55	42	6	400	3

Source: (1) List of Schools, General Education, 2010- 2011, Planning and Statistic Section, Director of Education (S), GOM, pp. 3- 87

(2) Source: Administrative Report 2008-09, Govt. of Manipur. p.273

The preceding table shows that of the total of 400 schools mostly primary schools, 40 primary schools are under education department, 190 primary schools under Autonomous District Council, 21 junior high school and 13 government high schools and 1 higher secondary school.

Besides there are also 2 aided high schools, 7 aided junior high school, 58 aided primary schools. There are 9 unaided primary schools, 27 unaided junior high schools including, 27 unaided high schools and 5 unaided higher secondary schools (Education, List of Schools, General

Education, 2010-2011, p.3-87). As regards to the number of colleges there is only 1 government college in Motbung village (Presidency College) and 1 permanently affiliated college in Kanglatongbi (Damdei Christian College) for both Science and Arts stream and 1 permanently affiliated college in Kangui (Kangui Mission College) for only Art stream (Administrative Report, 2008-09,273).

Current Educational status of the Six Sample Villages

In order to analyse the educational status of the Thadous of Manipur, it shall be appropriate to assess the status of educational institution of the six sample villages:

Table 4
 Distribution Schools and Colleges in the six sample villages

School/College	Primary	Junior High School	High School	Higher Secondary	Total	College
Government	2	1	1	1	5	1
Aided	1	-	-	1	2	-
Unaided	2	1	5	-	8	-
Total	5	2	6	2	15	1

Fieldwork reveals that of the six sample villages, 5 primary schools, 2 junior high schools, 6 high schools and 2 higher secondary schools are available within the six sample villages with only 1 college. Of these 3 primary schools are available in three villages while 4 junior high/ middle schools are available within one villages, 6 high school in two sample villages and 2 higher secondary schools are available in one villages and 1 college within one

village only. Of the six sample village two villages are even without primary educational facilities.

Village Motbung have three state government run educational institutions, viz. one Government aided UJB School under state education department from class 1- V called Hoinei Primary School with three teachers, Government High School and Government Presidency College. Besides there are also three

unaided government recognised high school schools called Baptist English High School, Shalom Academy (with hostel facilities) and Apex Christian High School (with hostel facilities) and three Junior High School called Educational Training School (with hostel facilities), Sen Royal Academy and Mount Senai. This unaided educational institution fulfills the educational needs of the villager and neighbouring village children's up to high school level. Beside this the Government High School established in 1957 within the village also served the educational needs of mostly the poor families. The school has around 40 faculties with an enrolment of 360 students in 2013 mostly from the village and neighboring villages. The medium of instruction in all the schools is English. After completion of the high school level the students usually go to Imphal or outside the state or neighboring colleges for post-matriculation studies since the village has no higher secondary School. For degree level, Presidency College established in 1973 within the village served the purpose of most of the students within the village and outside the village. The number of student for the session 2013 to

present is 1543 in both science and arts stream with 63 faculties 29 male and 34 females working in various departments. Most of the teachers in the college are Manipuris, besides there are a few Kukis including Thadou working in the academic or as non-teaching faculty in the college. The medium of teaching is English. However, due to poor attendance and irregularity of the teachers everyone prefers to go to Damdei Christian College, a private government recognised college which is 3 km away from village or Imphal colleges and some outside the state.

Village T. Moulbung on the other hand has only one Government Lower Primary School within the village. The school was however attended by only few sections of the village children who are probably within the age group of 5- 10 years. The medium of teaching is mostly Thadou and English. The enrollment rate for the year 2013 was 18 students. The village though small in numbers holds high value to educate their sons/daughters. They make use of the neighbouring Keithelmanbi village which is about 5 km away from the village to meet their educational needs up



to higher secondary level. For graduation, the students mostly go to Imphal or other places suitable to them.

There is only one Lower Primary School in Chalva village established in 1956 from Class-1 to 8. The school has 13 teachers, four from the village itself including the head master. The school has been recently upgraded to class IX level. The enrollment rate for the year 2012 was 272 but it decreased the following year that is 2013 with only 203 students. This drop in number is the result of the establishment of one private school in the nearby village. The medium of instruction is English. For High school and college education they mostly go to Kangpokpi town (Kanggui) which is more than 20 km by staying in rented house or hostels or .

Village Govajang have no educational institution neither Government nor private school. The nearest educational institution for this village is Chalwa primary school which is about 5 km from the village. For higher education they mostly go to Kangui town (within the same block) for high school and college education which is more

than 25-30 km. or whatever place is suitable to them.

Village Saikul on the other hand has one state government Higher Secondary School called Thangtong Higher Secondary School. It also has one state government aided school called Golden Primary School from class 1 to V with an enrollment of 50 students in 2013. Besides, there are two un-aided High School called Christian English School and Lhungkhosat Memorial English School with one Model English Higher Secondary School in the art stream. This institution can fulfill the educational needs of the villagers only up to Higher Secondary level. The medium of instruction in all the educational institution is English. Majority of the students are Thadou-Kuki from within the village or outside the village. For college education, they usually go to the colleges in Imphal located 34 km south of the village.

S. Bolkot village too has no educational facilities neither private nor government. For education they usually go to Motbung or Saikul village by staying in school hostels or rented house.

Structure of School/college

The structure of schools and college in the sample village is divided into: kutchha, Semi pucca and Pucca. Government owned and aided primary/junior high schools have kutchha structure while private run primary

schools have semi pucca structure. Most of the high/higher secondary/college whether government or private recognised have semi pucca structure.

Table 5
 Structure of school and college in the sample villages

Category	Primary school	Junior high school	High school	Higher secondary	College	Total
Kutchha	2 (40.0)	1 (50.0)	-	-	-	3 (18.75)
Semi pucca	3 (60.0)	1 (50.0)	5 (83.33)	2 (100)	1 (100)	12 (75.0)
Pucca	-	-	1 (16.66)	-	-	1 (6.25)
Total	5	2	6	2	1	16

Of the available schools and college in the sample villages, 75 % have semi pucca, 18.75 % are kutchha and the rest have 6.25 % have pucca structure. Only one pucca structure is found in privately run higher secondary school.

Availability of class classrooms

The number of classrooms in school as well as college in the sample villages is divided into less than five, 5-10, 10-15 and 15 or more.

Table 56
 Availability of classrooms in the sample villages

Category	Primary school (F=5)	Junior high school (F=2)	High school (F=6)	Higher secondary (F=2)	College (F=1)	Total (F=16)
Less than five	3 (60.0)	-	-	-	-	3 (18.75)
5-10	2 (40.0)	2 (100)	2 (3.33)	-	-	6 (37.5)
10-15	-	-	4 (66.66)	1 (50.0)	-	5 (31.25)
15 or more	-	-	-	1 (50.0)	1 (100)	2 (12.5)

The data shows that in the sample villages 18.75 % schools have less than five classrooms, 37.5 % schools have between 5-10 classrooms, while 31.25 % schools have between 10-15 classrooms. The remaining 12.5 % in college and 1 higher secondary school in both the science and arts stream have more than 15 classrooms each.

Sanitation facility

Sanitation facility in schools and college in the sample village includes toilet and safe drinking water. To determine sanitary facilities in educational institution in the sample village the following table is drawn:

Table 7
 Sanitation and drinking water facility

Category	Primary (F=4)	Junior high school (F=2)	High school (F=9)	Higher secondary (F=3)	College (F=1)	Total (F=19)
Toilet	3 (75.0)	1 (50.0)	6 (66.66)	2 (66.66)	1 (100)	13 (68.42)
Drinking water	1 (25.0)	1 (50.0)	3 (33.33)	1 (33.33)		6 (31.57)

The table shows that sanitation facilities in schools and college in the sample villages revealed that while toilet facilities are available in 68.42 % schools and college drinking water is available only in 31.57 % of the schools. This clearly shows the poor coverage of the total sanitation.

From the above discussion, it is seen that out of the six villages only Saikul and

Motbung village has facilities for higher education. Looking at educational enrollment rate and performance in class-x, class-xii and degree level of government, aided and private undertaking in Saikul and Motbung village for the last five years, it reveals that though the enrollment rate i.e. student appearing for class-x, class xii and Degree exams is less in private run institution yet the students performances is



quite satisfying on the contrary. The few government run schools for higher education in the hill areas exists only as formalities with no regular classes and poor standard of teaching though the teachers are highly qualified. This resulted in rise in number of private schools and colleges in the state. In almost all the schools, the females outnumber the male students which show that today parents are becoming equally concerned with educating the girls along with boys.

Literacy Rate of the Sample Villages

The main objective of the universalisation of elementary education by means of establishing a number of educational institutions under different management in the hill areas of Manipur, among other things is to increase the percentage of literacy among the people¹ (Singh, Reverend William Pettigrew and Modern Education in Manipur, 1996, p.8, p. 205) which have a significant bearing on the socio-economic development of communities.

The overall literacy rate of the respondent households in the six villages is 76.1 per cent by incorporating all those who can read and write. The extent of literacy rate among the Thadou of Manipur represented by the six sample village is shown in the following table:

¹ Leiren Singh, Modern Education in Manipur, p.205

Table 8
 Literacy Status of the study Villages

Sl. No.	Category	Motbung	T.Moulbung	Chalva	Govajang	Saikul	Bolkot	Total
1	Male	154 (47.67)	119 (54.83)	167 (52.51)	99 (53.51)	172 (50.43)	107 (53.76)	818 (51.67)
2	Female	169 (52.32)	98 (45.16)	151 (47.48)	86 (46.48)	169 (49.56)	92 (46.23)	765 (48.32)
	Total	323	217	318	185	341	199	1583

The data presented above show that the overall literacy of males in the six villages is 51.67 %, a little higher than the female literacy of 48.32 %. Village Motbung have female literacy higher than the male literacy rate. While in the other villages the number of literate is higher among the male than the female.

The literacy rate of the respondent in the sample villages as seen from the table is higher than the literacy rate of the Thaduo i.e., 57.1 %, major tribes of the state 65.9 %, and of the state 70.5 % as of 2001

(Manipur, 2001, p.3) census by incorporating all those who can read and write. Like the state and the district as a whole, male literacy rate is higher than that of female in the sample villages.

Educational Level

To understand educational level in the six villages, the following table is formulated which is categorised into illiterate, Primary level, Upper Primary School, High School, Higher Secondary level, Graduate level, Post-graduate level.

Table 9
 Level of Education in the Study Villages

Sl.No.	Level of Education	Name of the Villages						Total
		Motbung	T.Moulbung	Chalva	Govajang	Saikul	Bolkot	
1	Illiterates	88 (21.41)	65 (23.1)	113 (26.21)	72 (28.1)	92 (21.24)	69 (25.74)	499 (23.96)
2	Primary	53 (12.89)	44 (15.61)	49 (11.36)	36 (14.1)	59 (13.62)	52 (19.41)	293 (14.1)
3	Junior	67	49	68	34	65	39	322

	High School	(16.31)	(17.37)	(15.77)	(13.22)	(15.1)	(14.55)	(15.46)
4	High School	65 (15.81)	55 (19.51)	81 (18.79)	41 (15.95)	69 (15.93)	49 (18.28)	360 (17.29)
5	Higher Secondary	76 (18.49)	48 (17.1)	67 (15.54)	52 (20.23)	78 (18.1)	34 (12.68)	355 (17.1)
6	Graduate	51 (12.41)	19 (6.73)	49 (11.36)	21 (8.17)	57 (13.16)	23 (8.58)	220 (10.56)
7	Post Graduate	11 (2.67)	2 (0.71)	4 (0.92)	1 (0.38)	13 (3.1)	2 (0.74)	33 (1.58)
Total		411	282	431	257	433	268	2082

It is clear from the above data that one-fifth of the population is illiterate while most of the people have upper primary and high/secondary level of education. The level of education in the six villages in the primary level is (14.1 %), junior high school level (15.46 %), high school (17.26 %), higher secondary school level (17.1 %), graduate level (9.51%) and post graduate level (2.66 %).

The level of education mostly halted at higher secondary level. The percentage of post graduate level is very low. The possible reason is that after graduation most of the students opt for jobs. Still there are a numbers of school dropouts after completing primary education to help in the economic pursuit of the family. Further there are few who after completion of high

school and higher secondary school discontinued education mainly due to financial difficulties, since the number of government colleges in the hill areas are very less. The trend shows that despite the low level of literacy rates in graduate and post graduate level there is possibility of higher growth of educational attainment since the people are now more conscious about the importance of education.

Dropout among sample population

To determine the level of dropout rate in different level of education in the sample villages it is divided into primary, junior high school, high school, higher secondary and under graduate. The following table shows the dropout pattern of students of the sample villages:

Table 10
 Class wise dropout in the sample villages

Sl. No.	Level of Education	Motbung	T.Moulbung	Chalva	Govajang	Saikul	Bolkot	Total
1	Primary School	5 (5.68)	1 (11.11)	5 (9.43)	2 (33.33)	2 (3.92)	2 (9.1)	17 (7.42)
2	Junior High School	8 (9.1)	3 (33.33)	15 (28.31)	3 (50.0)	2 (3.92)	4 (18.18)	35 (15.28)
3	High school	24 (27.27)	1 (11.11)	11 (20.75)	1 (16.66)	13 (25.49)	11 (50.0)	61 (26.63)
4	Higher Secondary School	36 (40.91)	2 (22.22)	17 (32.1)	-	25 (49.1)	5 (22.72)	85 (37.11)
5	Under Graduate Level	15 (17.1)	2 (22.22)	5 (9.43)	-	9 (17.64)	-	31 (13.53)
Total		88	9	53	6	51	22	229

The table shows that almost four-tenth (37.11 per cent) drop out at higher secondary school, over two-tenth (26.63 per cent) at high school, over one-tenth each at the junior high school and under graduate level and a few (7.42 per cent) primary schools.

The dropout rate is highest in the higher secondary schools in almost all the villages

except village T.Moulbung where it is highest in the junior high school. Again it is lowest in the primary schools except that of village Govajang where the dropout rate is lowest in the high school. The reason and cause of student drop out at different levels are further depicted in the following table:

Table 11
 Causes of Dropout

Sl. No.	Level of Education	Motbung	T.Moulbung	Chalva	Govajang	Saikul	Bolkot	Total
1	Ignorance	7 (6.42)	2 (6.45)	2 (4.1)	4 (9.75)	3 (7.14)	3 (9.1)	21 (7.1)
2	Poverty	16 (14.67)	9 (29.1)	9 (18.36)	5 (12.19)	6 (14.28)	11 (33.33)	56 (18.79)
3	Failure in exam	15 (13.76)	2 (6.45)	3 (6.12)	4 (9.75)	3 (7.14)	2 (6.1)	29 (9.73)

4	Getting job	23 (21.11)	-	12 (24.48)	5 (12.19)	9 (21.42)	1 (3.1)	50 (16.77)
5	Not interested	17 (15.59)	5 (16.12)	4 (8.16)	2 (4.87)	2 (4.76)	3 (9.1)	33 (11.1)
6	Marriage	31 (28.44)	13 (41.93)	19 (38.77)	18 (43.91)	15 (35.71)	13 (39.39)	109 (36.57)
Total		109	31	49	41	42	33	298

The data shows that the primary reasons for drop out are due to marriage (36.57 per cent), poverty (18.79 per cent), getting jobs (16.77 per cent), not interested in further studies (11.1 per cent), failure in examination (9.73 per cent), and ignorance of the parent (7.1 per cent). The dropout rate due to marriage and poverty is more prominent than the others.

Conclusion

In spite of few educational institution especially higher education as compared to the valley areas most of the villagers are literate by incorporating all those who can just read and write using Roman script except for a few aged people. However, lack of educational institution, poor educational infrastructure, remoteness and poverty etc of the villages have resulted in wide variations in the level and quality of education and dropout rates between the

hill areas and the valley. It can thus generally be concluded that geographical and economic barriers stand on the way of educational development of the tribals and of the Thadous in particular.

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