

## **A Qualitative Study of the Problems of Academics, Examination and Evaluation, Infrastructure and Finance of Secondary Education in Garo Hills, Meghalaya**

**Mamunur Rafique Mondal Willy, Brinda Bazeley Kharbirymbai**  
Department of Education, North Eastern Hill University, Shillong, India

### **Abstract**

This study emphasis is laid on basic problems of secondary education in Garo Hills region of Meghalaya. Education, the fulcrum of sustainable development, holds the key to 'social inclusion'. It is thus, essential for integrating the marginalised and vulnerable in society into the development process. It is obvious that the 'goal of social development' can be achieved through education. Even when the benefits of education are obvious, it has yet to achieve the required urgency in the development agenda of India as the country is capable of spending 3.5% of its GDP which is 10.5% of the total national budget expenditure (Economic Survey, January 2020-21, Volume 2). Secondary education in this region is subjected to hurdle(s) in attaining academic excellence, to cope with examination and evaluation procedures, to enhance existing infrastructure and in mitigating financial constraints.

**KEYWORDS:** Secondary Education, Problems.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

It has been found that, not all sections of the tribal people have utilized the new educational opportunities that have been extended to them. The weakest sections of the tribal population find the financial aid given to them as meagre. Alongside the quality of education that is being imparted also need rethinking. Education has to be correlated to tribal needs. We shall have to provide special incentives and assistance to the weaker sections among the tribes and provide for additional preparatory educational progresses for tribal students so that they may be in a position to utilize effectively the increasing opportunities of primary secondary, and higher education. At these schools 25% seats are proposed to be reserved for the most deprived sections of tribal population who will be provided with free board, lodging, uniform, books etc. Tribal welfare and development have become routinised and is not producing results" (S. Nurul, 1977).

As far back as the first decade of this country, Lord Curzon voiced the criticism that was uncontrolled expansion of secondary education and the quality was going down. Since then, the tempo of expansion has increased incomparably and the complaint about the lowering of the quality education has grown stronger. "Paradoxically, secondary education in India did not grow up as a natural development of the elementary system but actually proposed in isolation from it. While the education of the masses continued to be imparted in the indigenous elementary schools, the English high schools proliferated mainly due to the growing demands by the upper and middle-class Indians for the western learning, and the government initiative and patronage..." (Shiv Kumar, 1980).

Research shows that, the government has been following a policy of protective discrimination so as to promote the educational and economic interest of the weaker

sections including the scheduled tribes. The government has launched several programmes to motivate and assist the schedule tribes to obtain education. Two important antecedent conditions for utilising available facilities and assistance for education and his perception of the importance of acquiring education. They further found that the relationship of the social composition and the level of development of the village community to their educational development,- they have “a positive relationship between the proportion of the non-tribal and the educational development of the tribal in a village community, suggest that the theory of delusion norms of education is perhaps not applicable across the non-tribal/ tribal axis but is relevant within the broad spectrum of cultural homogeneity of the tribal” (Research by Vimal P. Shah and Tara Patel,1985).

“In the sphere of secondary education there has been an advance in some respects, notably the average capacity of the body of teachers, in their improved conditions of service and training, and in the attempt to widen the general activities of school life. But here again there are grave defects of organisation. The whole system of secondary education is still dominated by the idea that every boy who enters a secondary school should prepare himself for the university examinations indicates a great waste of effort. Such attempts as have been made to provide vocational and industrial training have little contact with the educational system and are therefore, largely infructuous” (A. Biswas and S. P. Agarwal, 1986).

“The impact of type of family on enrolment of children in the schools. In other words, it was tried to know as how many boys and girls attended schools and the type of family they belong. As per his findings, the school going girls is lower than the boys in all the three types of families namely Large Joint Family, Small Joint Family and Nuclear Family. It is further stated by him that school going children are engaged in domestic works or food gathering and plantation works in first two family cases while in nuclear family the standard of education is highest. Thus, the type of family has important effect on standard of education of school going boys and girls” (O. P. Malhotra, 1998).

Research shows that “it is obvious privatisation with unending profit making brings in distortion and dissatisfaction. In other words, privatisation as a concept has much to offer provided it functions within some socially accepted parameters. General impression however remains that while privatisation means accountability, efficiency and transparency on the one hand it also means more cost, access to only rich or to those having nearness to the management. Recommendation plays a greater role due to excessive pressure from users and limited resources of the organisers” (Nila& K. M. Joshi, 1999).

“Measures are to be taken for equalisation of Educational Opportunities in secondary education: individual differences among boys and girls are more prominent at the secondary stage than at any other stage. Thus, at secondary stage diversified curricula should be based on the needs, interest and capacities of the students. he further noted, it is necessary to pay specula attention to the education of SC and ST children. Along with expansion of educational programme measures should be taken for the social and economic development of disadvantage communities. Hostel facilities, provision of scholarships, special coaching classes, reservation of seats in schools, colleges, universities, professional and technical institutions preparation of bilingual textbooks and appointment of tribal teachers are some of the measures which are required for their education” A study by (M. Dash, 2000).

“The task of maintaining order in and out of the classroom is as old as the school, and though its nature varies from community to community and changes with times, it has never wholly disappeared. It is nearly uppermost in the minds of the teachers in training, and it persists as a source of worry to many experienced teachers. The principal particularly in the small school, is not infrequently judged by board members and by citizens on the basis of whether or not he maintains good order and in spite of the other competencies, is like to be considered a failure if he cannot satisfy the community on this. The publication of increased adolescent lawlessness, by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and through the findings of the congressional investigating committees, lends statistical support to the gravity of the youth problem. Freedom which provides the very essence of opportunity for most youth, is readily converted by others into a sort of license for irresponsible conduct. Parents who are notoriously indulgent of their youth, and tolerate open disrespect from them at home, take on the pretence of surprise that they get into difficulties at school. The high school, because it occupies that peculiar peninsula between the child and adult worlds, will apparently always be the centre of sharp contrasts in the behaviour of the youth” (Ivan H and Henry M,1963).

The study shows that “there was a point in the early seventies when it seemed as if many secondary schools in the major urban areas were heading for breakdown, and it is likely that some schools come dangerously near it. A special news report in the ‘Times Educational Supplement’ for 8 October 1971 was headed ‘secondary education crisis’ and presented a disturbing picture of increasing absenteeism, educational failure and anti-social behaviour. Secondary education can still be stressful and unsatisfactory places to work in, but the general situation is better than might have been predicted. There are some encouraging trends in the practice, and new evidence about the positive effects of schooling in the face of social difficulties which has forced a reconsideration of accepted evidence to the contrary. Perhaps most important of all, these has been a shift in our perceptions of problems of behaviour and social relationships in secondary schools” (Bill, 1981).

## 2. METHOD

**Research Design:** A research design is the specific procedures involved in the research process: consists of the sampling, data collection, data analysis and report writing (Creswell, 2019). Research design refers to the behaviour and instruments used in the collection and analysis of data (Kothari, 2004). In this study, mixed method design is used to find out the status and problems of secondary education in Garo Hills region of Meghalaya where both qualitative and quantitative data is used to give insight into the study.

**Participants:** Data for this study were gathered from a sample of 1509 students, 261 teachers and 49 head teachers of secondary schools who were randomly selected from four districts of Garo Hills viz., South West Garo Hills, West Garo Hills, East Garo Hills and North Garo Hills, of Meghalaya.

**Data Collection:** The process data of collection was performed in a well sequenced manner. In this study, random selection of secondary schools was adopted to meet the respondents. Efforts were made to establish rapport in order to collect authentic data for the study. Alongside, additional questions in relation with the objectives of present study were recorded in a diary and taken into account for necessary use.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Academic:** It is found that when asked about the problems with text books, a majority of head teachers said yes to this query; - and a majority amongst them has mentioned (a) typo errors, (b) wrong contexts in the content, (c) lack of motivational contents. A marginal percentage i.e., 6% head teachers have stated that they provide text books to most needy students, from their ends, because Government fund is not allotted so far on 'book grant'. Data collected for this study reveals that schools are devoid of school library which is one of the basic facilities; this problem must be addressed at the earliest to bring in overall development of secondary education as stated by all head teachers. Again, library facility is wanting amongst the surveyed schools thus, access to library is not applicable at present circumstances. In few cases books are kept in store rooms of schools in absence of proper libraries. Data further reveals that in all the schools sufficient teachers are employed for core subjects viz., science, mathematics and language. It is also found that no innovative teaching method is used in any of the surveyed schools, because it is time and cost effective. In majority cases teaching methods like lecture, demonstration, note dictation are used while only a few schools use ICT. Whereas, all the head teachers agree that a specific technique of teaching is always beneficial for the greater understanding of concepts. It has been responded by all head teachers that the assistant teachers are asked to follow the contents of text books strictly. In relation to the curriculum all heads stated that they are satisfied.

To reveal the problems related to secondary education, here it is worth mentioning that all the teachers stated that whichever school has a library (books kept in stores) is not timely updated and maintained properly. Again, all the teachers stated that textbooks and study materials are also unavailable in their respective school libraries. Another problem area of secondary education is the 'completion of syllabus on time' which according to the data is being faced every year by all teachers. All teachers said that they provide notes on important topics and they sufficiently use the blackboard. Few respondents stated that during teaching-learning social science and mathematics they sufficiently use TLMs. None of the teachers have reported any major problem on academic facility in their respective institutions. According to a majority respondents the existing academic facilities are good. They also agreed upon the suitability of curriculum for the secondary level students. Only a few respondents seek change in the present curriculum and majority of them want inclusion of motivational and moral value uplifting content. While all respondents of this study stated that the syllabus of secondary education is too vast which results in time constraint. Since the syllabus is vast, 50% respondents stated to take extra classes to complete the syllabus. A good majority of respondents stated, the existing curriculum is satisfactory, while a few (16%) respondents expressed dissatisfaction on the typo error, contents and unorganised chapters too.

It is found also found that, none of the student respondents reported to have well equipped library in their schools. Few respondents have reported to get too much of home work daily, they have also said teaching aids is used by teachers. A few students stated that computer education facility is available in their institution besides, other wanting facilities are CAL and ICT.

**Examination and Evaluation:** In the present study it is found that CCE (Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation) has not been introduced in any of the sample schools. In all

cases those students who qualify selection test are allowed to appear SSLC final examination. It is revealed many respondents are satisfied with the students' performance in mathematics and science which are generally students considered as difficult subjects. The data further revealed that majority heads are satisfied with last year's SSLC result. Pass percent data was furnished by a few respondents which shows both increase and decrease trends in pass percent of boys and girls in last 5 (five) years, it further shows that data management should be strengthened.

In understanding the problems of secondary education, the table further shows that, almost half of the respondents conducted regular (weekly) class test in their respective subjects, leaving behind marginally above 50% teachers who do not take test in all subjects. All teachers stated that half-yearly and yearly examination are taken in their respective institutions. Only around 25% teachers are satisfied with last SSLC result. A thin margin of 27% teachers take extra classes for class X students in view of matriculation examination which needs to improve in order to enhance the quality achievement of secondary education. The present examination system is satisfactory to majority respondents of this study.

According to the data, all respondents stated that they appear half-yearly and yearly examinations in their institution. Only few students stated that they are happy with the present examination system, while above 20% students stated that remedial teaching facility for academically weaker students is available at their schools. According to all the respondent internal assignment (I.A) marks help to pass matriculation examination. Unlike to this, none of them supported that, students score single digit mark in mathematics and science still declared pass by MBOSE, this may be traced as one of the major problems of secondary education.

**Infrastructure:** A few head teacher stated the problem that classrooms are overcrowded thus; they are compelled to deny admission to decongest accommodation issues. Data of this study reveals that noise pollution is a concern in few schools due to the physically location of the schools are adjacent to main road. Most shockingly noise pollution issue has no redressal in this case because relocating those schools is indeed a difficult task for the state government. In relation to electric fans facility, it has been found a few surveyed schools are yet to have this infrastructural facility. The data as tabulated has revealed that a few schools supply safe drinking water according to the response of the head teacher but it is in contrary to the report that, a total of 3.28 lakh water conversation related works have been completed in the current financial year as on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2021 (Economic Survey, 2020-21, Volume 2).

A few teachers have stated that classrooms are over-crowded, so this infrastructural facility needs improvement. All teachers stated that infrastructural facilities namely well-ventilated classrooms, separate toilet for students and lavatory for staff are available and functional at their respective schools, but residential quarter facility is available to 5% of teachers which is a major infrastructural problem of secondary education in Garo Hills regions. Again, another problem persists in secondary education is that there is no separate toilet facility for teaching and non-teaching staff according to the data of present study. One of the infrastructural barriers of secondary education in 4 (four) districts i.e., South West Garo Hills, West Garo Hills, East Garo Hills and North Garo Hills districts of Meghalaya is that access to school and classroom is 'not ideal for CWSN (Children with Special Needs) students, because only a few

schools have 'ramp' for CWSN students. As per data a few teachers have specified the problem of school building which shows the developmental status of infrastructure. One of the major problems of secondary education is that, none of the sample teachers reported to have science laboratory for secondary classes, therefore, laboratory equipment is also wanting.

It is also found that a few sample students have reported that they do not have enough bench and desk in their schools, while all have reported to have games and sports facility. Another problem area of secondary education is that transport facility i.e., school bus is not available to the majority students. Separate hostel facility with other physical facilities is available to a few students of 2 (two) residential schools out of 49 surveyed schools of this study. Only marginally above 20% students stated that their school provide safe drinking water facility which is most essential; for Garo Hills districts are usually humid during summer.

**Administration:** It is found that all head teachers face one major problems of secondary education is 'school dropout' which is due to poverty, illiteracy of parents, carelessness and early marriage. Truancy in teacher's attendance is not reported by any of the head teachers. In a similar way all head teachers of surveyed schools are of the opinion that SMDC (School Managing and Development Committee) is keen in discharging its best service for overall development of secondary education. None of the head teachers have reported shortage of supporting staff for daily school activities. Thereafter, to point out administrative problems it has been noted that a huge number of students are 'first generation' learners eventually it becomes difficult for institutions to presume equal participation in educational activities be it- (a) participation in school events due to monetary constrains and (b) level of achievements. This situation can be tackled by proper parental guidance, secondly, counselling to both parents and students, thirdly, by enhancing the income of parents– in order to revive universal retention in secondary education.

Data of this study reveals that, head teachers are authoritative in administrative aspects according to all teachers of surveyed schools. A few teachers stated that, they have to spend extra time in non-teaching works. The burden of school duty is a problem to a few teachers besides, all the teachers are burnt out as they have to take a minimum 3 to 4 classes per working day.

The data also reveals that, students have a merger complaint about fees collected in their schools. More than half of the sample students stated that their schools do not maintain general notice board for mass circulation of any academic information. As stated by a few students one of the problems of secondary education is 'pre-matric scholarship' which is not regular. 'Late fine' is levied if monthly tuition fee is paid late.

**Finance:** Data shows that nearly half of the surveyed head teachers stated that financial assistance from the government is insufficient whereas for the rest it is not applicable because those are private pattern schools. An equal number of head teachers pointed out that often expenditure exceed the total allotted grant. Barring the 80% private schools, rest of the school heads of total surveyed schools have reported delay by 3 (three) months in releasing salary. In regard to building grants 65% school SMDCs (School Managing and Development Committee) have sufficiently utilised building grant which has increased the quantitative development of secondary education in South West Garo Hills, West Garo Hills, East Garo Hills and North Garo Hills districts. Again, the

same percentage of respondents stated that they avail government grants are it is eventually covered by audit, but it is not yearly basis. Another major problem of secondary education as reported by all head teachers is that excursion grant is not received in last five years or so. All surveyed school head teachers reported that they did not receive financial assistance from any non-governmental organisations or social groups either.

It is evident from response of majority teachers that salary is insufficient, only 28% teachers agreed that their salary is satisfactory as these teachers are in (government) sanctioned posts. All teachers reported to have problems in receiving TLM grants and library books grant. The pension facility is availed to a few sample teachers of the government schools, which indicate a major problem area towards the holistic development of secondary education. A huge percentage i.e., 95% teachers do not have secure retirement in absence of suitable pension facility in the secondary schools.

It is found that all the surveyed schools, be it - private, deficit, government, semi-government and ad-hoc pattern admission fees and other dues are charged high according to the respondents. According to data all students stated that there are no philanthropists for the financial help of students. More than half of the students reported to have witnessed monetary constraints of school management (SMDC) to participate in various competitions. On top of this, only a few respondents reported that their schools organised awareness camps at its own expense.

#### 4. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATONS

To conclude we can say that, secondary education opens the avenues to the adolescents to explore their future and the dynamic nature of education has had experienced hurdles which are still existent, and education system of this land locked state could overcome many of these hurdles till now. The problems are evident at all levels of education- eventually in secondary education too. We can say that, to ensure the quality of education and to safeguard the Article 21 which guarantees access to quality education for all- but a denial to it starts much ahead of secondary education due to limited growth of physical infrastructure of secondary school in particular and other educational institutions in general. It is due to increase in population and secondly high demand for secondary education. On top of this access to facilities in schools is a serious concern for all the states and UTs as education is a state subject to provide the basic amenities to the secondary school going children. Here in the state of Meghalaya state government has always appreciate the stakeholders for privatised school pattern apart from many other patterns, viz., Government, Semi-government, Ad-hoc, Govt-Aided and RMSA. Secondary education in Garo Hills regions needs attention of the deem authority to overcome the problems due to landlocked nature of the region of which the teacher and taught encounter every day. Secondly many students are besides parents have economic constrains in absence of major industrial activities which could generate income to the masses. The present study has also found that vocationalisation of secondary education is still in pipeline, which otherwise could shift the load of unemployed youths of the state.

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