

Historical Development of Education in Arunachal Pradesh: Special Study of Ziro Valley in Arunachal Pradesh

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Abstract

Arunachal Pradesh is late starter in formal education. The actual opening era of education came in state after India became independent in 1947. The process of development was slow but steady because of many unfavourable factors like inaccessibility, lack of interest of administration, illiteracy and ignorance of local people and lack of communication etc. In Arunachal Pradesh till independence literacy rate was only less than 1 percent. In the succeeding five years plans, an increasing percentage of expenditure on education has given good result despite of formidable constraints. The Apatani one of the major tribes of Arunachal Pradesh primarily resides at Ziro, the headquarters of Lower Subansiri district. In early time in the Apatani valley, formal system of education was completely absent and unknown to the people. Only the home and social institutions were the sources of learning in informal ways through experiences and transmission. The natural development of education, which was very much similar to Naturalism of Gandhiji, existed. The people were attached to nature. Now, there are mushroom growth of government and private schools at the Apatani valley. The present literacy rate of Ziro valley is 85.52% higher than state average of 84.2%. Through this researcher attend to study the developmental scenario and transition of educational institution in Apatani valley of Arunachal Pradesh.

Introduction

Arunachal Pradesh is late starter in formal education. The state is situated in the North eastern most corner of India sharing international boundaries with three countries namely- Bhutan, China and Myanmar. In area wise the largest state amongst the eight states of North- eastern region having the area of 83,743 sq. km and low-density population of 17 per. The territory was known as hidden land during the British period. Slow and gradual administration penetrated only after the independence of the country in 1947. Rapid development was made only after 1947 when the territory attained the states of union territory and statehood day in 1987.

When the first ever census was conducted in the state in the year 1961, The literacy rate was recorded at 7.23 percent against 28.30 percent of the India. It was officially recorded that there were only three primary school with enrolment of 35 students. As per the latest census 2011, report the state has achieved the 66.65 percent literacy rate but it is still below the national average of 24.04%.

Objectives of the study: The study is based on the following Objectives-

1. To study the historical development scenario of education in the Arunachal Pradesh.

2. To study the transition of education system in Apatani tribe of Ziro valley.

Methodology:

The present study is based on secondary data collection from various published sources like various issues of census reports, research journals, magazines, report of govt institution like Directorate of Education department Directorate of economics and statistics and websites etc.

The development scenario of education in the Arunachal Pradesh.

The Actual Era of education came in Arunachal Pradesh after Indian became independent in 1947. The process of development was slow but steady because of many unfavourable factors like-inaccessibility, lack of interest of administration, illiteracy, lack of communication and lack of many other sources.

The Christian missionaries who followed the British administration established their centres at the adjacent place like Sadiya, North Lakhimpur etc. They operated their religious preaching to the present Arunachal Pradesh through Education in the school established at these centres. They also penetrated to some places in the foot hills areas of the state. The first of such attempt was made in 1839 by establishing a school at Namsang near present Deomali in Tirap District. This was done by Mr. Bronson of American Baptist mission of Joypur centre Assam. Similar school were recorded to have established at Balek near Pasighat around 1915, Ningroo in 1934, Bolung in 1940, Dambuk in 1945 etc. The Anglo Abor war of 1911-1912 compelled the British government to established a regular administration centre with posting of an assistant Political officer at the Pasighat. This necessitated the establishment of a Govt. Lower Primary school at Pasighat in 1918 and another at Riga (an army-based camp) in 1941.

In the real sense, the formal education in Arunachal Pradesh began only after the independence of the country in 1947 with the appointment of Mrs Indira Miri as the Education officer. She started the office as the education office at Sadiya most probable in the month of October and functioned as the Head of department of the Education. She also established the teachers training centre at Sadiya at the end of the same year and trained 10 Teachers in the first batch of the training centre. Their training completed in the month of August in 1948 and they were sent out to established new school in different places of the state like Dening in Lohit, Nijam ghat in Lower Dibang valley, Taki Lawung in East Siang district etc. Also, to existing school at Pasighat, Bolung, Dambuk etc were strengthened by posting some of these Teachers. As per the record, there were 14 schools by the end of 1947. These schools were confined mostly in Siang and Lohit Region. Out of these there were 6 in East Siang, 2 each in west Siang, Lower Dibang Valley and Lohit and 1 each in Upper Sang and West Kameng District. Therefore, the system of Formal Education in particular had been conspicuously absent in the past in Arunachal Pradesh. Even the system of informal education had also been non-existent excepting the Buddhist i.e the Monpa . Among the Mythological education was used significantly only with a view to explaining and preaching the principles of Buddhist Religion. But this was mostly confined to those who used to dedicate their lives to serve the society through monastery. The rest of the tribe in Arunachal Pradesh do not has their own script. The documentation practice remained totally absent in the territory in the past. The whole tribal society in Arunachal Pradesh remained verbal in the past.

The real beginning of formal education was started after independence and process of development in education took place some momentum in 1954 when Arunachal Pradesh (NEFA) was curved out of Assam and education began to play important roles in the various development activities of the tribal people. The

Government of India formulated different welfare schemes for the development of the people of this area giving priority to Education.

Beginning with two Primary school, now Arunachal Pradesh has nearly three thousand schools up ‘+2’ level imparting education from general studies to branches of specific studies in commerce, science and humanities in Higher secondary level. The state is proud of having a Central University dispensing postgraduate in the subjects like Botany, Zoology, History, Political science, literature in English and Hindi etc, and B.Ed. and M.Ed. training course for teacher education under the department of education since 1988. It has Regional institute of Science and Technology (NERIST) at Nirjuli, Papum Pare district, a Polytechnic college at Itanagar, Agriculture training college at Pasighat and a number of Distance education centres under IGNOU. In addition, the adult education programmed, Jana Shiksha Nilayan in the form of Non-formal Education and functioning throughout the state. Apart from Government Education Institution Many highly acclaimed educational Institution run by voluntary organisations, Private agencies, missionaries, central Government for eg: Donyi-polo Mission, R.K Mission, Vivekananda Kendra Vidhyalaya etc are spreading over the entire Arunachal Pradesh with the aim liberating people from the bondage of illiteracy, Ignorance, poverty, develop human resources and Man power skills to cope up with the age of science and technology.

Apatani Tribe of Ziro valley.

The ‘Apatanis’ one of the major tribes of Arunachal Pradesh has been living at Ziro valley of Lower Subansiri districts. The total population is around 60,000 to 67,751 approximately the half of the population is scattered throughout the territory of Arunachal Pradesh and other States to earn their livelihood. The Apatani belong to the **Tibeto- Mongoloid** stock. They are well built, fair complexions and medium to tall structure. In case of the origin and migration of the Apatanis there are no literary sources or evidences or proper written record found. However, there are certain myths, traditional folk tale and priestly versions, which come down from generation to generation but the myths, traditional folk tale and priestly version are somewhat different from village to village.

According to the belief of the Apatanis, the original place of the Apatanis was ‘iipyo lembo’ (probably Mongolia). They have migrated to the present habited from northern areas beyond Kuru and Kime (Kamal) rivers, the tributaries of river Subansiri.’

The Apatanis constitute a separate endogamous community with its own territory, languages, customs and traditional, and an economy fundamentally different from that of the other tribes of the Subansiri region. The Apatani live in seven major villages the first group consist of single village of **Hong**, the second group of **Hari** and **Bulla** and the third of **Hija**, **Mudang Tage** and **Bamin Michi** each group constitute for certain purposes a ritual unit. For instance, the **MYOKO**, the annual festivals of the Apatani, is celebrated by each of the three groups in turn wise and there is **slight dialects variation between the groups**. The three groups intermarry freely and there are no appreciable differences in custom. The Apatanis are industrious by nature and are well known for the systematic and scientific methods of their agriculture system are extensive even without the use of any firm animals or machines. In early time they never depend upon other for food and crops. The tribes have distinct civilization with systematic land use practices and rich traditional ecological knowledge of natural resources management and conservation, acquired over the centuries through informal experimentation. The tribe is known for their colorful culture with various festivals, intricate handloom design, skills in cane and bamboo crafts, and vibrant traditional village

council called 'BULYANG'. This has made Ziro valley a good example of a living culture landscaped where man and environment have harmoniously existed together in a state of interdependence even through changing times, such co-existence being nurtured by traditional customs and spiritual belief system.

TRANSITION OF EDUCATION IN APATANI VALLEY: -

Education is development of character and mental powers within the child and man. It can be imparted in child for further development of character and mental ability. In early time in the Apatani valley, formal system of education was completely absent and unknown to the people. Only the home and social institutions were the sources of learning in informal ways through experiences and transmission. The natural development of education, which was very much similar to Naturalism of Gandhiji, existed. The people were attached to nature. They would go to forest for hunting animals and birds. They also depended to forest for firewood, timber, to review the demarcation boundary and for ceremonial purpose. While doing so all these activities, they would normally take their children along with them so that it may enable the children to learn the art and nature. The parent and elders also took their children to agriculture field, kitchen garden, rivers for fishing, house construction and others so that children too involve in these works and learn the methods and art.

Besides Naturalism, the imparted education was also there on preparation of art and craft. Father, who was expert in art and craft, taught their children about preparation of various arts and crafts with different designs. Mother also taught their female child about weaving of cloths and putting different designs on it. They also learn the preparation of wine, food and other eatable items at home. Therefore there is saying in Apatani '**ANII KAGII PAMI SONYO, ABA KAGII RIIBI SONYO**' that **means like father like son and like mother like daughter.**(Mihin Kaning,second edition 2015 page 180) It connotes that the male child learn knowledge and ideas from father and he is as intelligent as his father. The female child learns knowledge and ability from her mother she will be expert as her mother.

Moreover, the male child also learns spiritual education from their father or priest. That is called **MIJI-MIGUNG**. The children took keen interest to learn **MIJI-MIGUNG** because it is concerned with Gods, Satan and creation of universe and live on the earth. The children took keen interest in **Miji-MIGUNG** especial in **Murung and Myoko festival** of the Apatani. During the occasion of the festivals, the people compete with one another in **MIJI-MIGUNG** that was popularly known as **AYU**. But all these indigenous systems of education gradually change along with the change with the time and introduction of modern educational system in the Apatani valley. The actual opening era of education came in state after India became Independent in **1947**. The process of development was slow but steady because of many unfavorable factors like inaccessibility, lack of interest of administration, illiteracy and ignorance of the local people, lack of communication and lack of many other factors. For the first time, the Government had opened one primary school at **Dutta Papii** in the year **1948-49**. **Mr. Prabhat Sakia** was posted as a teacher in the school, who mobilized learners from villages and taught them the modern education. Unfortunately, the newly started school was gutted by fire on **11th june 1949**. It was reopened in **1950**. In 1951 another primary school was opened at old Ziro. In **1953** four more schools were opened at **Hong, Hari and Hija** villages. Each school was also attached by an Apatani youth to assist them in mobilizing the children from the village and to teach them properly.

Later on, a need was raised to impart higher education to those students who passed the primary standard. Therefore, one common middle standard school was opened at **Sululya** by closing down the Ziro primary

school, which was opened in 1951. The students who had passed from **Hong, Hari, Bula and Hija** School were admitted at **Sululya** middle school. The students who passed the middle standard were sent to high secondary school, **Doimukh** for matriculation. As the number of students was increased more and more, one school having higher standard was required. Thus, the Government had established one higher secondary school at ziro in 1964. Henceforth, the middle standard passed students were not sent to **Doimukh**. They were admitted in the higher secondary school located within the ziro valley. Students were discipline, punctual, regular, honest and sound behaviour except few students.

Present scenario of education institutions in ziro valley: -

Now, there are mushroom growth of government and private schools at the Apatani valley. The present literacy rate of Ziro valley is **85.52%** higher than state average of **65.38%**. **Male literacy** is around **89.81%** while **female literacy** rate is **81.26%**. There are more than **50** numbers of private schools, and one private Degree college St. Clarat College, (Autonomous) at ziro and one B.Ed college M.T.M B.Ed college ziro (NCTC recognized) and 44 numbers of government schools presently providing education in the valley.

Conclusion:

The state Arunachal Pradesh still requires lot of planning and budget for rapid development of education so as to cope up with main stream of India. The policy maker of education should give more emphasis on quality education along with quantity improvement. To achieve success, the remedial will be in the form of financial assistance to poor parents, supplying free meal, uniforms, scholarship, reducing the dependencies on children for domestic and agriculture work, educating the parents and guardians, imposing penalties on those parents who do not send their children to schools, appointing trained efficient and dedicated teacher and improving school curriculum by adopting excellent and attractive method of teaching etc. Hence, it is left to the society to re-think and act for the smooth and sound transition of real education towards the golden line. Last but not the least, I feel that purposeful research and field investigation may further affect all round progress and development in order to grow literacy and development in the field of education in Ziro valley in Apatani plateau in Arunachal Pradesh.

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