

**YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEM**  
**A Sociological Study of Educated Unemployed Youth of Imphal East and**  
**Imphal West districts of Manipur**

**Ph.D. ABSTRACT**  
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## I. UNEMPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

Unemployment is a problem to most nations of the world. It is one serious problem facing the developing countries like India. Unemployment can be briefly defined as a state of being without gainful work. It is considered as an involuntary failure to get income yielding work. It is recognised as one most significant sociological problem in the society.

*Rudolf Gyan D. Mellow* (1969) defined unemployment as “ a condition in which an individual is not in a state of remunerative occupation despite his desire to do so”. Again, *Harris and Levenly* (1975) defined unemployment “ as a condition of one who is able to work but unable to find it”. Therefore, an unemployed person is one who has potentialities and willingness to earn or work, but unable to find a remunerative work. Unemployment has three elements:

- (a) the individual should be capable of working;
- (b) the individual should be willing to work; and
- (c) the individual must make an effort to find a remunerative work.

It is major source of hardship, deprivation and suffering to many people. It affects the individual and the society in many different ways. On the other hand, employment determines one's chances for leading a peaceful and meaningful life. Our action, feeling and thought are also influenced by employment one's hold. Work provide a variety of satisfaction, including achievement, recognition, responsibility and intrinsic pleasure. Mentioned may be made here the three aspects of employment as given by *Amartya Sen* (1975):

- (a) *the income aspect*: employment gives an income to the employed;
- (b) *the production aspects*: employment yields an output; and
- (c) *the recognition aspects*: employment gives a person the recognition of being engaged in something.

## II. YOUTH

Youth is a stage of life, and a transient population in demographic terms sandwiched between childhood on one hand and adulthood on the other. It is difficult to define in clear terms, as it is difficult to assign lower and upper age limits for youth. The United Nations recognises the age between 15-24 as “youth” which is adopted in many western countries. Whereas, in India, generally the age between 15-

34 is recognised as “youth” (*Saraswathi*, 1988). The period of youth stands for growth, development, action and leadership. They mature quickly in an atmosphere where there is freedom, activity, recognition and opportunity. Problems associated with youth are part of the problems that the society as a whole faces. If their energy is channelised purposefully, it yields to delightful future, not only for them, but also for the society as a whole. They therefore need to be properly guided and gently led.

### **III. EDUCATION AND EDUCATED UNEMPLOYMENT IN MANIPUR**

The British brought modern education in Manipur, though it made little progress during the colonial period. However, with the independence of India, there has been a considerable expansion of education in Manipur. There were altogether 538 educational institutions in 1950-51, whereas it was 3,792 in 1997-98. At present, the state has 2 universities, including a central agricultural university. The Manipur University has more than 70 affiliated / permitted colleges including 9 professional colleges/ institutes (Medical-1, Law-2, Teacher Education-2, Fine Art-1, Physical Education-1, Engineering / Technology-2). Along with the increase in educational institutions, there has been a considerable expansion of students' enrollment in the state as well. The percentage of literacy has also risen to 64.84 percent (2001 census).

On the other hand, there has been an alarming rise of educated unemployment in the state. Out of the total unemployment mass prevailing in the state, educated unemployment forms a major part. There were only 10,639 jobseekers in the live register of Employment Exchanges during 1960-61. The corresponding figure rose to 1,15,546 in 1980-81 and 3,87,276 as on 31-12-1999. The available statistics shows that the number of educated unemployed keep on increasing at a very fast rate year after year, whereas the placement effected is very low. There is a large imbalance between the registration and placement done. The situation is so alarming that the percentage of placement to registration was 3.30 in 1980-81; 0.72 in 1990-91; 0.47 in 1995-96 and 0.42 in 1998-99.

The state is badly affected by unemployment in general and educated unemployment in particular. Unemployment among the educated youth is a serious problem facing the state. It affects the Manipuri society in many different ways. It

badly affects the Manipuri youth, which may prove detrimental to the state. Unemployment has destabilising consequences both for the individual and for the society.

#### **IV. AIMS OF THIS RESEARCH**

The study aims at the following:

- (i) to examine the social background of the educated unemployed youth;
- (II) to determine the employment aspirations and expectations of the educated unemployed youth, and to ascertain the societal expectations from the educated youth;
- (III) to highlight the problems faced by the educated unemployed youth; and the social consequences of educated unemployment.

#### **V. METHODOLOGY**

The study examines and understands the social life and problems of the educated unemployed youth and its societal impact.

##### **Area and milieu of the study**

Manipur, an economically backward state of India has a population of about 24 Lakh as per 2001 census, and covers a geographical area of 22,327 sq. kilometer. Presently, there are 9 districts in the state. Imphal, the capital city is the main marketing and administrative centre of the state. The undivided Imphal district (now Imphal East and Imphal West districts) has an area of 1228 sq. kilometer with a population of 7,11,261 (1991) and density of population was 579 persons per sq. kilometer (1991).

The milieu of the study consists of 2,459 educated unemployed youth (only graduates and post-graduates including M.Phil and Ph.D. degree holders of the arts, science and commerce faculties.), who registered in the Employment Exchange, Lamphelpat, Imphal during 1995-1996. Since, there are practical difficulties to cover the entire population, we decided to limit the size of the sample to manageable proportion. Hence, samples of 300 educated unemployed are selected for the work. The whole population is stratified into three strata as Arts, Science and Commerce streams. By using the proportional allocation, the sample size allocated for different stratas are 208, 78 and 14 respectively, which are in proportion to the size of the

stratas i.e. 1706 (arts), 638 (science) and 115 (commerce) respectively. Thus, by calculating stratawise sample size, the sampling units included in the sample are sorted out by systematic sampling technique.

#### Data Collection

The main sources of information of this work are provided by the 300 educated unemployed youth. Questionnaire were administered to the selected educated unemployed and structured interviewed were conducted to obtain the primary information. In order to enrich the research and so as to obtain the people's expectations towards the educated, 50 prominent personalities including academicians, social-workers, administrators and journalists were also interviewed, besides informally obtained the views of people whom I came across during my field work in the two districts. The entire fieldwork took almost 6 months (November 1998- April 1999). For the secondary information, the statistics provided by Employment Exchange, Lamphelpat, Imphal and the Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Manipur are widely used. Besides, the reports and publications of the Directorate General of Employment & Training, New Delhi; Association of Indian Universities, New Delhi; University Grants Commission, New Delhi etc. and books and journals both national and international are also extensively consulted.

#### VI. CHAPTERISATION

The thesis comprises the following chapters:

**Chapter I** Part One: Introduction (Unemployment, types of Unemployment, Youth and Education and Unemployment, India);

Part Two: Review of literature, Aims of the research and Methodology, and

Part Three: Education in Manipur, Employment in Manipur and Educated Unemployment in Manipur.

**Chapter II** Socio-Economic Background of the Respondents

**Chapter III** Part I: Educated Unemployed Youth in the Family and Community, and Societal Expectations from the Educated Youth,

Part II: Youth and the Institutions of Marriage,

**Chapter IV** Part I: Educated Unemployed Employment Aspirations and Expectations; and their Assessment of Employment Schemes,

Part II: Unemployed Youth Attitudes Towards Societal Agencies (Education system, Bureaucracy, Political parties, Judiciary, Police and Other Armed Forces, Family and Community), and

Part III: Social Consequences of youth unemployment

## VII. MAIN FINDINGS

Unemployment among the youth is widespread in Manipur. It is a very serious problem facing the state. Going by the Employment Exchanges statistics, at present, there are more than 4 Lakh jobseekers. Besides, there are many more unemployed, who have not registered in the Employment Exchanges.

Of the total 300 educated selected for the present study, 214 are males and the remaining 86 are females. One hundred and forty are from rural areas, and the remaining 160 are from urban areas. Their age's ranges from 20 to 35 years, out of which 56.3 percent belong to the age group of 23-28 years, and 42.3 percent are between 29-35 years. Most of them are unmarried, and are Manipuri Hindus. A little more than half of the educated youth in this study are graduates and the remaining 47.32 percent are post-graduates including M.Phil and Ph.D. degree holders. Again, 41.66 percent of the educated are from the arts, 43.66 percent are from science and the remaining 9.66 percent are from the commerce. It is found that 19.66 percent fathers and 44 percent mothers of the respondents are illiterate. Most of the youth are found to have educated from state government schools. An analysis of their matric results found that those educated from the private or central government schools did better in their matriculation examinations.

Salaried job is the main occupation of the 42 percent families, followed by agriculture and business. In addition, the families with business as main occupation have more income than others. One notable observation is that many of the educated are reluctant to give in details, their family income. This is mainly because of the prevailing volatile law and order situation in the state. However, most of them consider their families' economic condition as self-sufficient or low.

On the economic front, majority of them are dependant to their parents or guardians, except 82 youth who claim to be self-earning and are working part-time, in private schools and colleges where their income ranges from Rs. 500- Rs 1000 a

month. Nevertheless, their monthly income is very small to meet their daily expenses. Most of the youth don't get the required money and do not feel free to ask money from their parents now and then. Majority also feels that they are liability to their families.

A little more than half of the youth always interacts with the head of the family. Whereas, the remaining others occasionally interact with the head of the family. Many of the youth are always consulted in matters concerning the family.

Forty-two percent-educated unemployed are of the view that they are not fairly treated by the people. Many of them think that if the educated remain unemployed, the people's respect and regard goes down. They believe that the more an educated remain unemployed, they have nothing to gain from the society but to degrade their image in the society. They think that the status of educated unemployed is also low in the surrounding community and society. They claim that people don't want to listen to them because of their unemployment or helpless conditions. They perceive that their status in the family is also low. They also know that their families are also affected mentally, economically and socially because of them. Majority of them are doubtful of fulfilling the expectations of their parents.

The following are what the people want or expect from the educated Manipuri youth as revealed from this research:

(a) People want the educated youth to opt for central government jobs than the state government jobs; and to be more mobile, instead of confining within the state.

(b) Instead of sitting idle at home, people want them to take a leading role in the agricultural and its allied activities, as the state is mainly agricultural.

(c) To take up self-employment ventures: and

(d) Expect the educated youth to actively participate in social development activities.

A positive finding of the study is that quite a good number of educated youth are found to have link with various welfare, political and sports associations in the state.

The study also found that most of their friends are also unemployed. Hence, they mainly interact with their unemployed friends. And they don't feel free to

interact with their friends who are employed. Quite a good number of the youth in the study drink alcohol, but the study find no relation between their alcoholic drinking and their unemployment.

Most of the educated youth are in the high time for marriage. They believe in the essentiality of the institution of marriage. Seventy two percent youth think the age between 26-30 years as the right time to marry for boys, whereas, 51 percent favour the age between 26-30 years for girls to marry. Most youth prefer girls to marry at little younger age than boys. There are 17 married youth in the study, and family compulsion or love each other are the main reasons of their marriage. Many of youth want to get married in right time but they couldn't specify the timing because they prefer to marry after getting a job, which means a regular income. Thus, unemployment is a real hindrance to marriage. Therefore, we may conclude that unemployment delay marriage of the educated youth. Educated Manipuri youth, prefer self-choice or love marriage. Quite interestingly, more females educated than males' counterparts prefer their-to-be partner, to employ. In addition, more females than males youth like their partner from the high economic status. Whereas, an almost equal number of them look for physical beauty, in the selection of their marriage partner. Most of them are very much disturbed. Nevertheless, quite a large number of the youth are hopeful of getting a partner of their choice. More male than female youth believes that getting a partner of their liking is very much dependant to their employment or unemployment status.

Regarding employment aspirations and expectations of the educated, the study shows that 37 percent educated like teaching profession, followed by another 13.33 percent in police and other security forces, another 6.33 percent want clerical job, whereas the remaining are undecided. Majority of the youth have been waiting for job for atleast for 3 years or more at the time of interview. In addition, most of the educated have already applied for one or more job(s). Many of the youth also feel the futility of applying for job repeatedly.

The government of India from time to time implemented various employment-related programmes like IRDP, JRY, EAS, PMRY etc. The study shows that they are aware of such programmes. However, most of them are not availing these facilities. They are not attracted in such programmes as most of the

youth want to take up ready-made white-collar jobs. However, some youth would like to get these facilities only when they fail in getting job, which they are looking for. They are of the view that many malpractices are also involved in the implementation of such programmes. Most of the educated are not interested in taking up self-employment ventures. The study shows that 80 percent of the youth want government job, only 9.33 percent and 12.66 percent prefer private sector job and self-employment respectively. From this study, we may conclude that the Manipuri youth mainly want to work within the state and that to the government jobs. Most of the youth in this study have not been to other place(s) in search of job, except within the state.

A large number of youth have less hope of getting the job of their choices. Many of them are willing to take up any job whether big or small if offered to them. Unemployment has also forced some of the educated youth to continue their study by taking admission in some courses. They feel that by doing some courses they could at least utilise their time purposefully, but they will give up if they find a job, because the job is more important than the course they are doing.

Socially, psychologically and economically the educated unemployed are very much disturbed. There is a wide gap between what they think and what they are getting. They are therefore frustrated, isolated and helpless. Quite a large number of the youth in the study blame the present educational system for educated unemployment, while some also blamed themselves for their unemployment. The educated in the study are also not satisfied, with the functioning of the bureaucrats in the state, for unsympathetic attitudes towards the plight of the educated, corruption and dishonesty. Likewise, they blame the political parties and politicians, mainly for encouraging corruption in the society. Whereas, they show a satisfactory attitude toward the judiciary as compared to bureaucracy and political parties or politicians. They also don't like the police and other security forces for misuse of power, disregard for the honour of women, human right violations and lack of discipline. On the role of family in the society as a whole, the educated are satisfied, whereas they are less satisfied with the surrounding community, for what they call "no unity", "selfish" and "unsympathetic to the educated".

A good number of youth in this study think that their life will end up in doing something different what they are expected to do, though 24.66 percent are hopeful of achieving their dreams. However, another 49 percent educated don't comment in this regard.

Lastly, unemployment is a problem for the individual and the society. It affects the individual, the family and the society in many different ways. Here, we may look at the effect of unemployment at the individual level:

- (1) Psychological problems like frustration, shame, loss of self-confidence and ambitions, and anxiety;
- (2) Financial difficulties in their day today life;
- (3) Dejection and less encouragement from the society, resulting in problem of adjustment at the family and societal levels; and
- (4) Problem relating to marriage and inferiority complex. Unemployment makes the transition to an independent life problematic.

At the family level, unemployment creates a lot of problems and tensions. It is capable of undermining the status of the family and its reputation in the neighborhood. It is capable of crating conflict within the family and undermines the standard of living too. Socially and economically, the family is affected by unemployment. At the societal level, unemployment harms a lot. It is a great social evil, which can create many problems in the society. It is great loss to the society. It produces more problems and tensions in the society.

Economically and socially, the unemployed youths are deprived from what they are expected to get. There is always a huge gap between what they expect and whit they get. This situation makes them stupid, lazy, helpless and non-concern for the future. It may as well result in lowering of goals and aims, which in turns leads to alienation from the mainstream social life. When they find their prospects for descent life quite bleak, they can be easily influenced by the alternative forces. In this situation, the unemployed youth may even turn towards the other forces, out of anger and frustration, thus posing a challenge to the present political system. Widespread unemployment in the state may also be linked to corruption .It is common that the parents/ guardians desire their wards to employed by hook or crook so that they get any opportunity such as government appointment or selection in

medical or engineering entrance examinations. It naturally involves bribing the state ministers/ politicians or higher bureaucrats. Such a situation naturally angers youth, who loses faith in the system and turn violent. Hence, he further alienates himself from the mainstream social life.

Unemployment among the youth may also increase the risk of alcoholism, drug addiction and other anti social activities like robbery, burglary, theft, murder etc. Hence, there will be more social tension in the Manipuri society. Widespread unemployment also leads to exploitation of men by men, because it weakens the bargaining power of the unemployed youth. If alarming spread of unemployment among the educated youth is not checked, the state will face destabilizing consequences in the coming days. There can never be social, economic, political stability in the state if the large numbers of youth are without work and remain unemployed. Therefore, it is right time that the policy planners take concrete steps to tackle the menace before it goes beyond control.

Important measures that need special attention to combat the fast growing unemployment are given below:

- (1) Maintenance of conducive law and order;
- (2) Development and expansion of infrastructure facilities like power, transport and communication, irrigation etc.
- (3) Introduction of electronics and information technology industry as a priority areas for the future;
- (4) Modernising agriculture and its allied activities;
- (5) Development and encouragement of small and cottage industry;
- (6) Development of requisite infrastructure for tourism industry; and
- (7) Re-orienting the contents and quality of education for producing self-supporting individuals and not the educated parasites.

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