

Status of Enrolment and Achievement in Higher Education in the Hill Areas of Manipur

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The hill areas of Manipur, which covers about 92 percent of the geographical areas of the state and 35.1 percent of its population, is comparatively backward in terms of higher education. There are only 17 colleges of general education and a lone law college in these areas serving the higher education needs. There are 33 recognised tribes living in the hill areas of the state. However, there is no separate policy for higher education in these areas. This article attempts to study the trends and status of enrolment and achievement of higher education in the hill areas of Manipur in terms of available documents like government records, College Development Council Reports and information gathered from the principals of these colleges. The presentations are made using tables and figures. The data for this article was gathered during the year 2013.

Keywords: Higher education, Enrolment, Achievement, Hill Areas, Manipur

Introduction

The state of Manipur lies in the eastern most part of the North-East India between longitude 93.20° E and 94.47° E and latitude 23.50° N and 25.4° N bordering Myanmar. Geographically, Manipur can be divided into the hills and the valley. The valley has an average elevation of about 790 meters above sea level and that of the hills is between 1500 meters and 1800 meters. It has a total land area of 22,327 square kilometres of which 92% is hill area and the valley covers only 8% of the total geographical area. It has a total population of 25,70,390 (Singh, 2011).

The erstwhile princely kingdom of Manipur was for several years under the British colonial powers, freed only when India got its independence in 1947. Then, Manipur merged to the Indian union on 15th October 1949. It became one of the union territories of India in 1957, which again became a full-fledged state of India on

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21st January 1972. Manipur has a recorded history of its existence as an independent princely kingdom ruled by its kings for centuries. However, the hill areas surrounding the Imphal valley was the domain of the head hunting tribes, who were mostly the allies of the kings of Manipur rather than being loyal subjects. Therefore, the king had to occasionally suppress and crushed any potential threat thereby exercising his control over the vast 'un-administered' hill ranges. Manipur has nine administrative districts. These nine districts can further be divided into the valley areas and the hill areas. The hill areas of Manipur consist of five hill districts namely, Chandel, Churachandpur, Tamenglong, Senapati and Ukhrul districts. These hill districts covered almost 90 percent of the total land area of Manipur and holds 40 percent of the state's population. Recently six districts were carved out of Senapati, Ukhrul, Chandel, Churachandpur, Tamenglong, Imphal East and Thoubal districts namely Kangpokpi, Kamjong, Tengnoupal, Pherzawl, Noney, Jiribam and Kakching respectively.

The Kukis and the Nagas are the tribal communities inhabiting the hill areas of the state. These tribals consist of 33 different recognised tribes having their own distinct languages and cultures (Institute, 2008). These tribals constitute about 35.1% of the total population in Manipur. Mention may be made at this point that the Kuki communities, despite their different languages and sub-tribes segregation can communicate with each other each speaking his own language or dialect. The 33 tribes claimed to have a long history although most oral. However like many primitive tribals elsewhere, they do not have written records of their own past. Only oral traditions have been the source of connecting oneself to the past of these tribes. Many scholars have contributed a number of works on these tribals too, starting from the colonial rulers trying to keep what is known of the past history of these hill people.¹ Unfortunately many of the early writings are today a source of contention among the different communities in the hills. Christianity had been introduced to them by the colonial missionaries. In spite of the brute life in the past, the tribals have embraced Christianity. This way the past traditional way of life slowly disappeared even as western and eastern culture began to dominate the mind-set and culture of the tribals. These tribals waken up only when Christianity was brought in by the missionaries during colonial period. Their suspicious nature had hindered them from accepting the western style of education for a long time. Their recent awakening was put out by the government's apathy. Thus, these hill areas showed limited progress both economically and educationally.

Available Courses

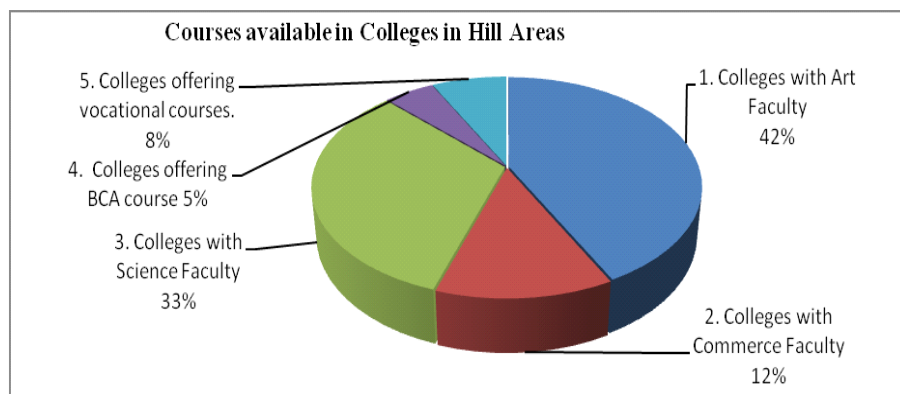
In the hill areas, higher education institutions were started with the Pre-University Courses (now 10+2). Even though higher education came late, there was introduction of many degree courses in these regions of the state of Manipur. At present, a variety of courses under different streams are offered to students in colleges. Some colleges offered only arts subjects while there are colleges which offered science and commerce subjects as well. In recent times, few government colleges also have offered few vocational courses.

Table No. 1. List of recognised tribes inhabiting the hills of Manipur with strength

Sl.no.	Tribe	Population	Sl. no.	Tribe	Population
1	Aimol	3,643	18	Monsang	1,635
2	Anal	13,853	19	Moyon	1,710
3	Angami	650	20	Paite	44,861
4	Chiru	5,487	21	Purum	503
5	Chothe	2,675	22	Ralte	111
6	Gangte	15,100	23	Sema	25
7	Hmar	42,690	24	Simte	7,150
8	Kabui	62,216	25	Sukte	311
9	Kacha Naga	20,328	26	Tangkhul	1,12,944
10	Koirao	1,200	27	Thadou	1,15,045
11	Koireng	1,056	28	Vaiphei	27,791
12	Kom	15,467	29	Zou	19,112
13	Lamgang	4,524	30	Poumai	78,249
14	Mao	38,350	31	Tarao	600
15	Maram	10,510	32	Kharam	1,000
16	Maring	17,361	33	Any Kuki	
17	Any Mizo	10,520			

Source: Annual Report 2007-08, TRI Manipur

All colleges in the hill areas, except LMGM Law College, Churachandpur, have arts faculties up to degree level. Four colleges namely Lamka College, Hill College, Kanggui Christian College and Mount Pisgarh College, are colleges with only art faculties. Fifteen colleges offer science faculties up to degree level besides the art faculties. They are Presidency College, Churachandpur College, Pettigrew College, Tamenglong College, United College, South-East Manipur College, Bethany Christian College, Don Bosco College, Mount Everest College, Damdei Christian College, Moreh College, Rayburn College and Azufii Christian College.

Figure. No. 1. Courses available in colleges of hill areas in Manipur

Source: College Development Council, Manipur University

Only 5(five) Colleges namely Don Bosco College, Mount Everest College, Moreh College, Bethany Christian College and Rayburn College offered commerce faculties up to degree level. Beside the traditional courses mentioned above, new subjects like Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) and Bachelor of Computer Application (BCA) courses have been open at Don Bosco College, Maram and Mount Everest College.

Apart from the traditional courses mentioned above, various vocational courses have also been started in some colleges in the hill areas. A course on Domestic Animal and Farming have been opened in Pettigrew College, Ukhrul. Sericulture course has been started in Presidency College, Motbung. Office Management and Secretarial practice have been started at Lamka College, Churachandpur.

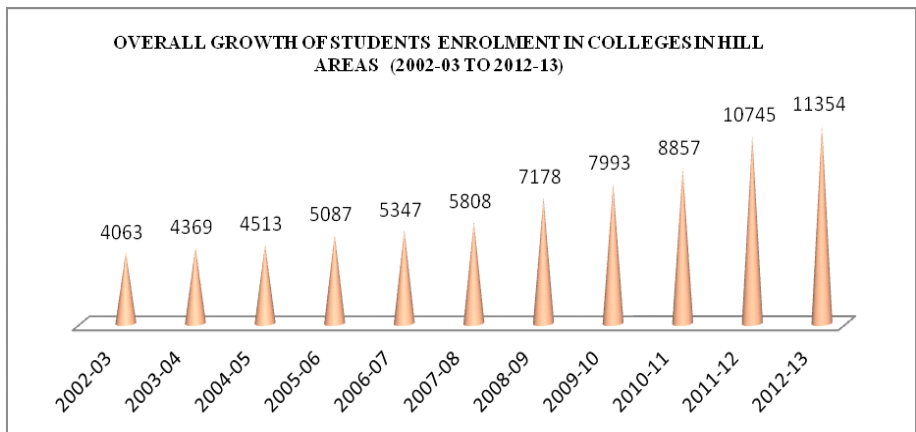
Colleges in India were started during the British rule in India. Although the intention of the colonialists might have been different then, the introduction of formal college system was indeed a blessing to the Indians. Some critics were of the view that Indians are still suffering from cultural and knowledge colonialism because of the system of education which is borrowed from the western world. Colleges continue to grow even after Indian independence. The growth and development of higher education institutions (HEIs) is not only in terms of number but also in terms of enrolment. Sharma (1977) reported that there was growth of enrolment in higher education from 1960 to 1970. However, this growth rate declined during 1970-75. He was of the view that expenditure on higher education was an important determining variable in the rate of growth of enrolment. The faster rate of growth in the number of institutions of higher education had resulted in deterioration in the quality of higher education bringing about what he termed as under-populated colleges and larger supply or product of graduates than the economy could absorb.

The increase in enrolment in higher education also can be viewed at two angles - positively and negatively. As the largest democracy in the world, democratization in education especially higher education is a big challenge as large section of the population live in rural areas under extreme poverty, where higher education is just a dream. Increase in enrolment will mean we are heading toward democratization of higher education. Development and economy can be raised to higher level when everyone is conscious of the need and are well-informed with the skill and mental preparedness to stand their own ground to achieve something worthwhile. Negatively, rapid growth of enrolment and number of institutions of higher education and increase in enrolment compromises the quality of higher education in many cases. Many scholars have argued that lowering the standard of higher education to accommodate everybody and allowing maximum enrolment is not going to solve the problem. Rather, it will usher in new problems questioning the quality of graduate degree education.

The proportion of our population at the national level, in the relevant age group, that enters the world of higher education is about 7 per cent. The opportunities for higher education in terms of the number of places in universities are simply not adequate in relation to our needs. Large segments of our population just do not have access to higher education. Therefore, the need for enrolment in higher education holds very significant (Commission, 2007, p. 21). The colleges in hill areas of Manipur registered a progressive increase in the enrolment. The increase in enrolment became

more significant and noteworthy in the recent decades. In the past these colleges registered minimum number of students, paving situations for teachers to take excuses of missing the classes and idle environment to prevail in the campus. Although nothing like a leap in the enrolment strength is observed, a gradual increase in the enrolment is encouraging. No doubt, enrolment trend goes in the right direction as it increases. The decadal growth rate from 2002-03 session to 2012-13 session is 179.45%. Looking at the figure below, the years 2002 to 2005 have seen a stagnation of enrolment around the four thousand figure, while 2006 climb up to the five thousand figure and remain there till 2008. The year 2009 and 2010 recorded further step up to seven thousand figure. The enrolment in 2011 goes up to 8857 and that of the year 2012 was 10745 and the year 2013 recorded an enrolment of 11354 students in the colleges of hill areas. There is a steady increase in the enrolment over the years in the decade under study. Figure 4.1 give vivid illustration in the graphical representation.

Figure No. 2. Growth of students’ enrolment in colleges of hill areas in Manipur (2002-03 to 2012-13)



Source: College Development Council (CDC) Manipur University

Based on the information from the above figure no. 2, the growth rate of enrolment in colleges at 2012-13 with that of 2008-09 as based year is 58.1 per cent. The decadal growth rate with the enrolment of 2002-03 session as the based year is 179.45 per cent.

Studying the enrolment district-wise, the enrolment trend has been led by Senapati district right from the beginning of the decade 2003-13 followed by Churachandpur and Chandel district. Tamenglong and Ukhrul districts had consistently registered low enrolment due the lesser number of colleges.

The figure below showed that the trend of enrolment seem most promising in the district of Senapati while the worse enrolment during the decade 2003-13 was in Tamenglong district. The number of colleges in these hill districts have made this disparity in enrolment. Obviously, the district with the larger number of colleges would have higher enrolment. But, the point here is the trend of how enrolment remained horizontal or appeared vertical.

Figure No. 3. Percentage of enrolment in hill districts through-out the decade 2003-13

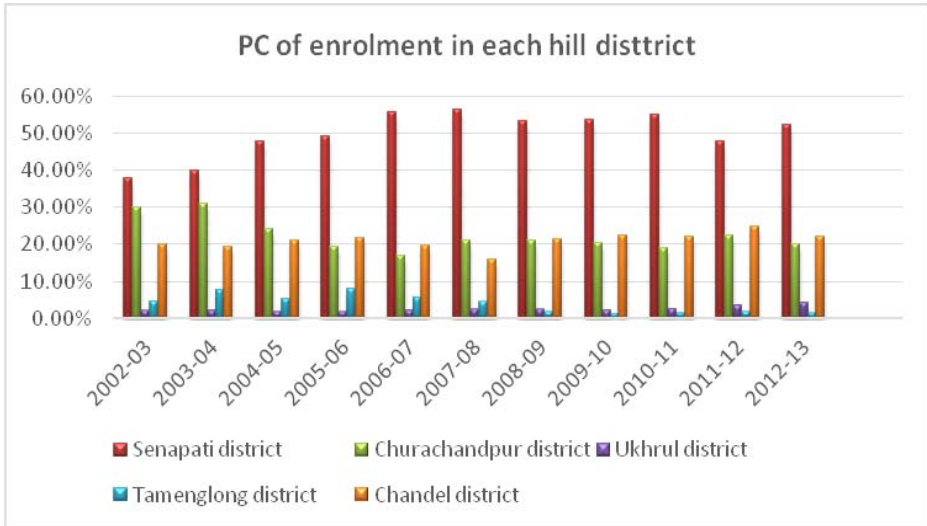
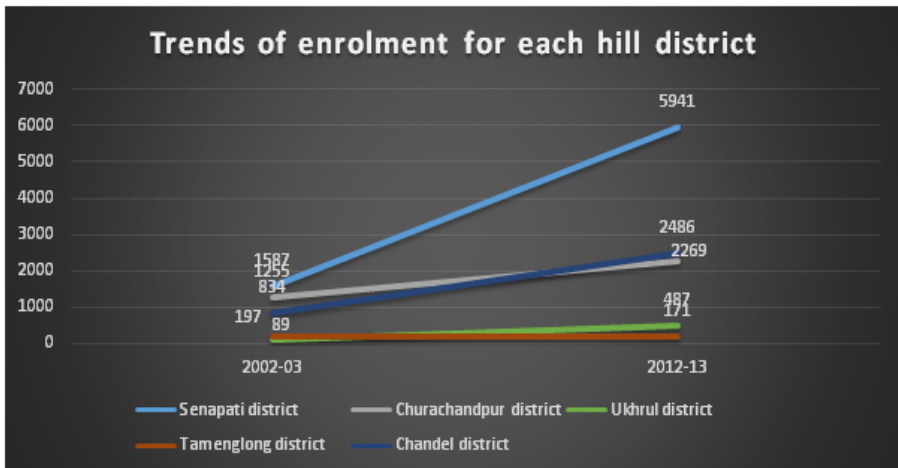
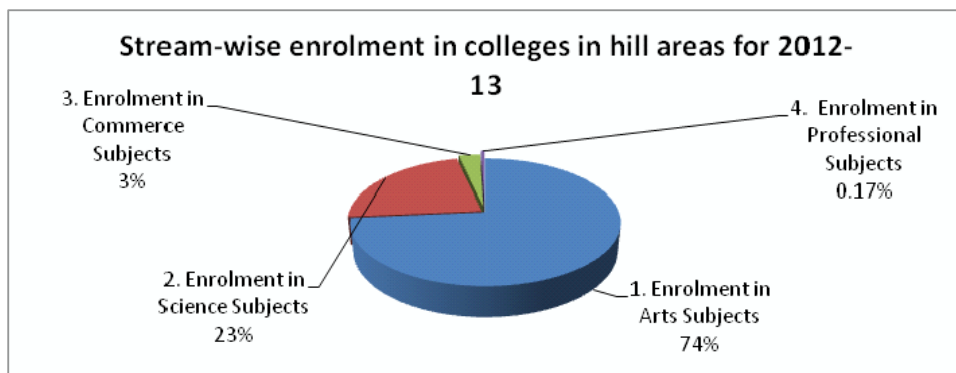


Figure No. 4. Trends of enrolment in the hill districts



The stream-wise percentage of enrolment tends to weight too much on the Arts subjects covering 74% (seventy-four percent) of the total enrolment. Students need to be encouraged to take up subjects other than Arts. This undue increasing enrolment in Art stream may be due to lack of ignorance of other courses, financial constraints to take up more expensive subjects, preoccupied notion or attitude that they are not good enough for other subjects. The undue emphasis of subject choice on humanities and Social Sciences is not a healthy trend. More enrolment into vocational subjects should also be encouraged.

Figure No. 5. Stream-wise Enrolment in Colleges in Hill Areas of Manipur for 2012-13



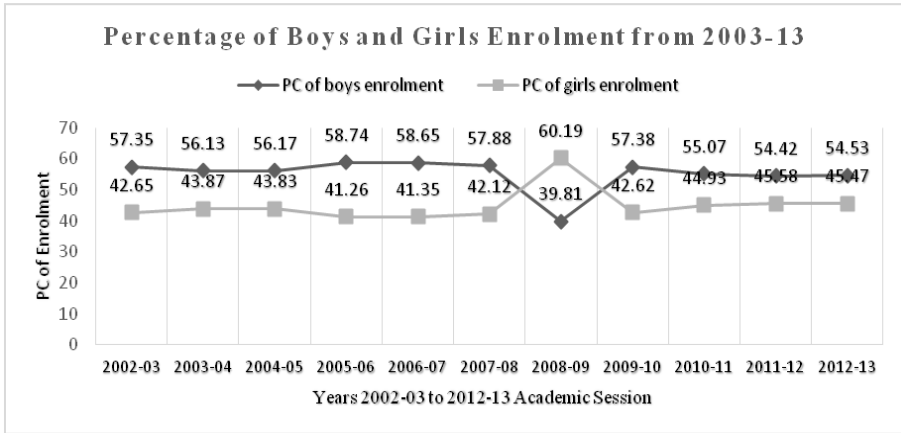
Source: College Development Council, Manipur University

During the decade 2003 to 2013, the percentage of boys and girls in the overall enrolment in colleges of hill areas was consistently dominated by enrolment of boys except the year 2008-09 where the enrolment of girls steep up to 60.19 per cent. In this year, the percentage composition of boys' enrolment went down to 39.81 per cent, which was one of the lowest per cent of boys' enrolment as compared to girls' enrolment all through the decade. Perhaps it was due to the political situation of the state in the previous year, where educational institutions were closed for a long period. Students from pre-school to higher education all over the state lost months of academic life and activities. This would have convinced many parents to send their children outside the state for higher education, especially students from the hill areas. The problem of insurgency in hill areas have either distracted or disturbed young boys from making effort in their academic life due to fear of the undergrounds on the one hand and the Indian armies on the other. This was because both were on the lookout for young boys to either recruit or arrest. Schools and colleges were closed for prolong period and academic mode was completely shattered. For this reason many parents and children being traumatized by the situation that prevailed in the previous year did not wish to risk enrolling in colleges of the state. While the percentage domination of boys in the enrolment kept decreasing year after year, that of the enrolment of girls kept increasing.

Achievement

Comparing the average output of public and private colleges in hill areas for five consecutive years, showed the trend of promising out puts. The trend in the five year showed that the result in the public colleges was more continuous and increasing although it stood less than the 50 per cent till the academic year 2009. There was no fluctuation of pass percentage toward extreme values. The average pass percentage of the five consecutive years was 71.90 per cent and the growth rate was at 0.40 per

Figure No. 6. Over all sex-wise total enrolment of college student in the hill Districts of Manipur

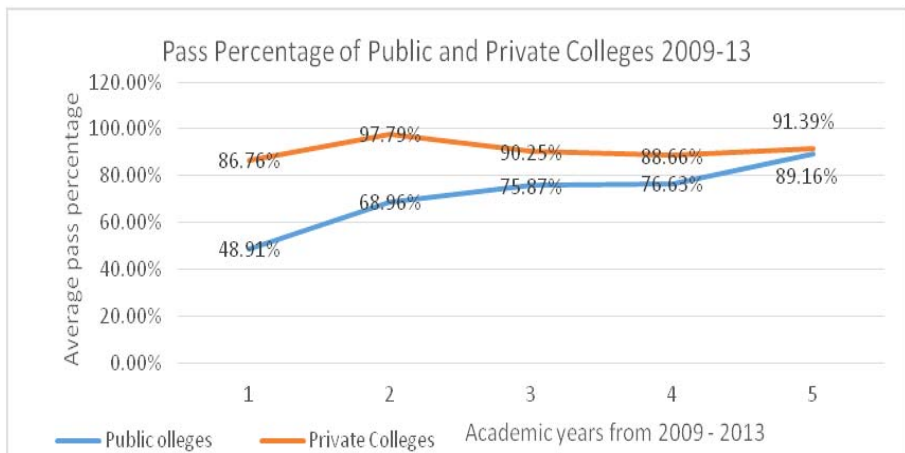


Source: Calculated from the data of College Development Council, Manipur University

cent.

Based on the report prepared by the college offices, the trend of result or pass students in the private colleges fluctuate. It went up to 97.79 per cent in 2010 and comes down to 88.66 per cent again in 2012. The average of the five consecutive years was 90.97 per cent, which is much higher than the average of public colleges. The growth rate of pass percent in private college with 0.046 per cent was much lower than that of the public colleges as shown in table No.4.9. However, it is to be noted here that the average of the pass percentage of private colleges was already very high.

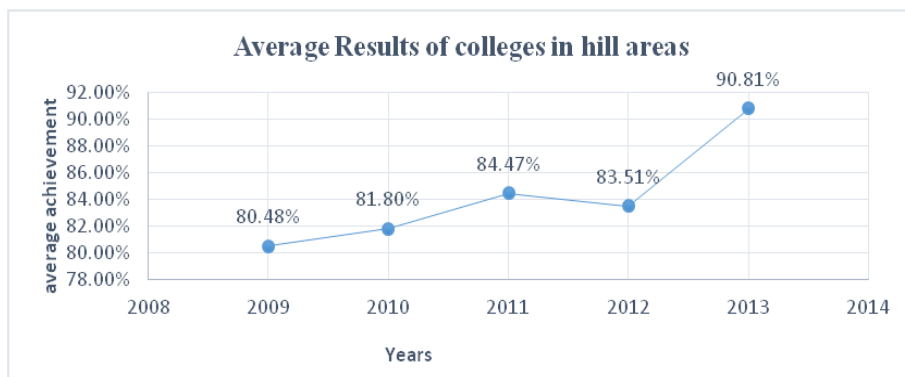
Figure No. 7. Percentage of pass percent in hill colleges



The trend of pass percentage of public (Government colleges) and private colleges move closer toward a unifying point. This can be observed from the high pass percentage of private colleges remaining close to constant while the public colleges soar upward closing in near to the point where the percentage of the private colleges stands. This improving condition of the public colleges can be attributed to public pressure, students' competitiveness, more devoted teachers recruited in recent times, improving management and infrastructures, availability of accessible study materials etc. The recent trend of people's awareness of the need for cost effective higher education possibly available at their reach in their places have given the impetus to push these institutions toward better quality and output.²

Analyzing the overall average of the pass percentage of colleges in hill areas put together, the trend showed a steady increase in the pass percentage. The increase went up to 90 per cent as the average is a matter of pride for the colleges.

Figure No. 8. Average output of colleges



Source: Compiled from reports of colleges during field survey

The achievement of some colleges in hill areas in term of college result is 100 per cent passed out from the college. Beside this, there are also occasional rank holders from these hill colleges. For instance, Rayburn College in 2010 produced the first Rank holder (topper) in English. Meanwhile the lowest recorded achievement of a college was 36.05 per cent passed out from a college. So, study of individual colleges gives diverse results of their outputs. Taking the trend on the average together, it can be seen that the passed out average increases every year, which is a very encouraging and promising trend. Within the span of five years the average has increased to about 10 per cent in the overall achievement of the colleges put together.

Beside the university examination results of these colleges, mention may also be made of the college students' achievements in the form of being successful in various fields of endeavors and careers. Many of the colleges made public display of their former students being successful in various competitive examinations and career courses. Rank holders and award winning students are also often displayed in public places for attracting potential new students too.

Concluding Remark

The trend of enrolment as well as achievement in higher education in the hill areas of Manipur looks very encouraging similar to the report of Sharma (1977), there was growth of enrolment in higher education. In the same manner UGC Annual Report for 1982-83 (1984)³, Tripathi (1996)⁴ Malhotra (1991)⁵ Nurul Hasan (February 1974, p. 261)⁶ have reported similar findings of increasing enrolment in higher education. The increase in enrolment in higher education also can be viewed at two angles, positively and negatively. As the largest democracy in the world, democratization in education especially higher education is a big challenge as large section of the population live in rural areas under extreme poverty, where higher education is just a dream. Increase in enrolment will mean we are heading toward democratization of higher education. Development and economy can be raised to higher level when everyone is conscious of the need and are well-informed with the skill and mental preparedness to stand their own ground to achieve something worthwhile. Negatively, rapid growth of enrolment and number of institutions of higher education and increase in enrolment compromises the quality of higher education in many cases. Many scholars have argued that lowering the standard of higher education to accommodate everybody and allowing maximum enrolment is not going to solved the problem, rather, it will ushered in new problems questioning the quality of graduate degree education.

However, the case in the present study is on the safe side as the achievement rate corresponds well to the enrolment. The high pass percentage in the university examination seemed to have rescued the above state problems and skeptical views about increasing enrolment because the rate of wastage is low in the case of higher education in hill areas. The enrolment and achievement and achievement discussed here is limited due the absence of institutions of professional and technical education in these hill areas.

Suggestion

There is need to democratize higher education in the hill areas of Manipur as the number of colleges are still very less. The increasing enrolment indicates greater demand for higher education. There is also an urgent need to diversify different courses and subjects. The concern authorities need to make a positive note of this issue. A case study of successful colleges in the hill areas should be made to be model for other colleges. The state government must initiate a policy to introduce professional and technical institutions in the hill areas at the earliest possible time too to help develop the region.

Notes

¹ For understanding ethnicity and ethnic politics in Manipur, read Haokip 2015, 2016, and 2017.

² Derived from verbal discussion with the two principals of public colleges.

³ UGC. (1984). *Annual Report 1982-83*. New Delhi: UGC.

⁴ Tripathi, V. J. (1996). *Dimensions of financing of General Highereducation in Uttar Pradesh*. Jhansi: A thesis submitted to the Bundelkhand University.

⁵Malhotra, M. a. (1991). *Higer Education in India : A comprehensive bibliography*. New Delhi: Concept Publilshing Company.

⁶Hasan, S. N. (February 1974). India restricting enrolments in higher education. *ACU Bulletin of Current Documentation*, 20-21.

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Appendix

Table No. 2. Colleges in the hill areas of Manipur

Sl.No.	Colleges	Types	Yr. Est.	
1.	Churachandpur College	Government	1964	Govt. colleges = 7
2.	Pettigrew College	Government	1965	
3.	Bethany Christian College	Private	1971	
4.	Presidency College	Government	1973	
5.	Lamka College	Government	1977	
6.	Hill College	Government	1978	Grant in aid colleges = 3
7.	Tamenglong College	Government	1979	
8.	United College	Government	1980	
9.	South East Manipur College	Grant in Aid	1981	
10.	LMGM Law College	Private	1982	Private colleges = 8
11.	Damdei Christian College	Private	1987	
12.	Moreh College	Grant in Aid	1992	
13.	Rayburn College	Private	1994	
14.	Kanggui Christian College	Private	1995	
15.	Mount Everest College	Private	1999	
16.	Don Bosco College	Grant in Aid	2000	
17.	Mount Pisgarh College	Private	2008	
18.	Azufii Christian College	Private	2011	