

A Critical Analysis of Rural Industries in Manipur.

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ABSTRACT: *The economy of Manipur is based on Agriculture, forest products, industries, mining and tourism sector. The state is divided into two geographical areas, i.e. the hills and the plains. The main economy of the hill areas is the agriculture and allied activities and forest products with prospects of tourism. Economically, the hill area which is inhabited by the tribal consisting of the Nagas and the Kukis are more backward, while the valley predominantly inhabited by the Meiteis are more advance and developed. Rural industries, if developed and planned properly will enhance the economy of the hill people of Manipur. The present paper is an attempt to critically analyze the presence of rural industries in Ukhrul District of Manipur. It is also an attempt to study the factors for lack of rural industries in Ukhrul district. The various impacts resulting out of this problem in the economic growth and sustainable development of Ukhrul District is also critically analyze in the present paper.*

KEYWORDS: *Rural industries, Ukhrul District, economic growth, sustainable development.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Manipur, the “Land of Jewels” and “Switzerland of India”, an expression coined by Lord Irwin, is one of the 29 states of India located in the north-eastern part of India. The state shared its border with Nagaland to the North, Mizoram to the South, Assam to the West and Myanmar to the East. The state of Manipur is a home to many ethnic groups for ages. Geographically, the state is divided into two regions: the hill and the valley. The hill occupies 90 percent of the total area of the state and is inhabited by the two major ethnic groups – the Nagas and the Kuki-Chin-Zomi group. The valley occupies about only 10 percent of the total area of the state, which is an area of and is predominantly inhabited by the Meitei and other minor ethnic groups. The hill areas of the state which occupied 90 percent of the geographical areas still remain backward economically even today. As per the 2011 Census of India, the state has a total population of 28,55,794. Until the year 2016, there are 9 (nine) districts in Manipur. They are: i) Bishnupur District, ii) Chandel District, iii) Churachandpur District, iv) Imphal East District, v) Imphal West District, vi) Senapati District, vii) Tamenglong District, viii) Thoubal District and ix) Ukhrul District. Out of the 9 (nine) districts, 4 (four) districts are in the valley and they are Bishnupur District, Imphal East District, Imphal West District, and Thoubal District. The remaining 5 (five) districts, viz. Chandel District, Churachandpur District, Senapati District, Tamenglong District and Ukhrul District are in the hill areas of the state. In the year 2017, the Government of Manipur bifurcated some of the districts and 7 (Seven) new districts were created, namely – i) Jiribam District, ii) Kangpokpi District, iii) Kakching district, iv) Tengnoupal District, v) Kamjong District, vi) Pherzawl District and vii) Noney District. The present study is on Ukhrul district before it was bifurcated in the year 2017. So the area of study includes the present Kamjong District as Kamjong District was carved out of Ukhrul District.

Ukhrul District is one of the hill district of Manipur situated in the north-eastern part of the state and share its border with Nagaland and Myanmar on the North and North-West and Thoubal district and Chandel district on the South-West and South. The district is inhabited by the Tangkhul Naga Tribe. The total area of the district is 4544 Sq.km. which is next to Churachanpur District that has an area of 4,570 Sq.km.¹ According to 2011 Census of India, the district have 213 inhabited villages with a total population of 183,998 of which 94,718 are males and 89,280 are females.

The district is a mountainous and hilly area and is about 6,800 ft. above the sea level. The district has rich floras and faunas. It is a home to many wild animals and birds. The famous Shiroy Lily (*Lilium Macklinea*) is found in the Shirui peak of the district. Shiroy Lily was declared as “State Flower” on March 21, 1989 and the Government of India has declared an area of 100 Sq.km around Shirui Peak as the National Park in 1998.² In addition to varieties of flowers, the district also has many medicinal plants and species. As much as 30 species of spice plants are found in Ukhrul District.³ The Geographical Survey of India (GSI) and State Geology and Mining Divisional report the presence of the minerals like Limestone, Chromites, Nickel, Copper Minerals, Serpentine, Rhodomite, Evaporites, Mineral Waters etc. in the district.

II. METHODOLOGY

The design of the study is descriptive and analytical. The study adopted both Qualitative and Quantitative method with a central premise that combination or mixed method approaches proves to be very useful in many situations, and solve many of the problems, which arise from adopting a single methodological approach. An open-ended Questionnaire is used as Open-ended questions yield detailed responses from the respondents. An unstructured interview is adopted in this study, as this type of interview is more informal and any other information can be drawn in course of the interview. Simple Random Sampling was used to distribute 150 Questionnaires in the district headquarter Ukhrul Town, of which 110 were answered and returned.

III. DISCUSSION

Industry is a sector that produces goods or related services within an economy and it is a leading sector to economic growth and development. Rural industries refers to small scale activities that took place in communities where the dominant economic pursuits revolve around agriculture or natural products extraction and where industry support these activities and processed their output. As per the report of the Government of India, Ministry of MSME (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) there is no small, medium and large industries in Ukhrul district. Ukhrul district is a rural district having 213 villages and the main occupation of the people in this district is agriculture and allied activities. The rural industries in this district will help in the growth of village economy by increasing their income, capital formation, generating employment opportunities etc. The district have a major exportable items like food and fruit based products, handloom and handicraft items, cane and bamboo products, wood craft items and pottery etc but there is no rural industry in the district that can generate products and goods out of these. The saddest part is that available items remained wastage and could not be properly manage by the villagers to generate income. For instances, Kachai village in Ukhrul district is famous for a particular type of lemon which also have received Geographical Indication (GI) Tag, but due to failure on the part of the government to provide cold storage and initiate necessary food processing industry, huge lemon lay wastage. Similarly, the village of Sirarakhong in Ukhrul district is famous for particular type of Chilly and the village even hoisted a Chilly festival every year where people from different part of the districts also would come for the Chilly festival. But due to lack of chilly based industry in the village, the people cannot meet the demand of the people. The similar case is with the Longpi village of the district, where the famous Longpi Pottery (black earthen pot) is made by the villagers. The government even today could not set up any pottery industry in this village, which could have boosted the village economy and growth of not only the district but also of the whole state of Manipur.

It is a sad thing that the only Industrial Estate of Ukhrul District at T.M Kasom village which has been started with the assistance from Ministry of Small, Micro Enterprises (MSME) and by the state government in the year 2016 is still under progress and has not start functioning even today. The rural industries deficit in Ukhrul district is one of the main socio-economic issue faced by the people of the district and this remain one of the reason for economic backwardness and for halting sustainable development in the district.

IV. FINDINGS

Demographic information: Out of the 150 Questionnaires that were sent out, 110 Questionnaires were answered and returned back. Out of 110 respondents, 64% of the respondents were male and 36% were female as shown in the table 1 given below.

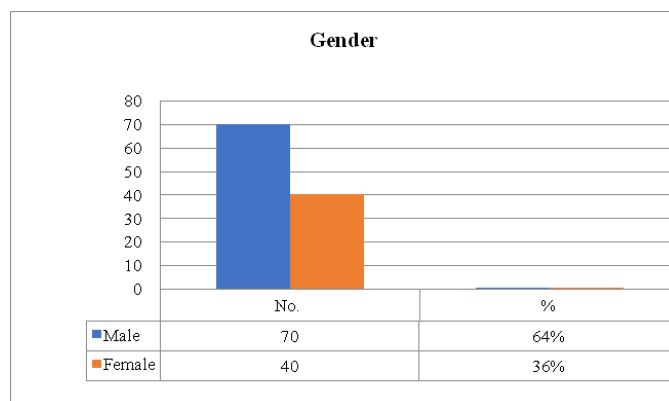


Table 1: Gender of respondents

Age group of the respondents: The age group of the respondents is between 18-65 years. The highest respondents is the age group 46-55 with 36% followed by the age group 36-45 with 28%, and the age group 26-

35 with 18%. Respondents with the age group 56-65 are 13% and the least belongs to the respondents with the age group 18-25 with 5%. Table 2 below shows the distribution of age in the research sample.

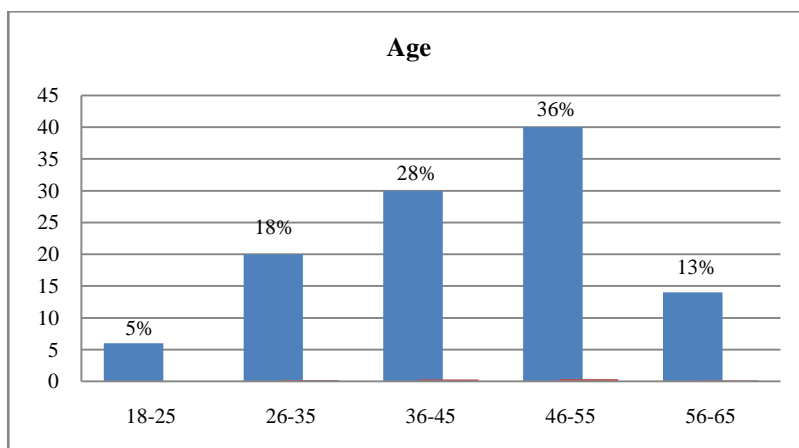


Table 2: Age of respondents

Occupation of respondents: The Questionnaire was answered by people pursuing various occupations and includes students, Farmers, Self employed, Unemployed youth, Government employee, social workers and village chief. The highest respondents are the Cultivators with 32%, followed by self employed with 18%, Students and Government employee with 14% each. Unemployed youth made up 11%, social worker with 9% and the least is the village chief with only 2%. The occupation of the respondents is shown in the table 3 given below.

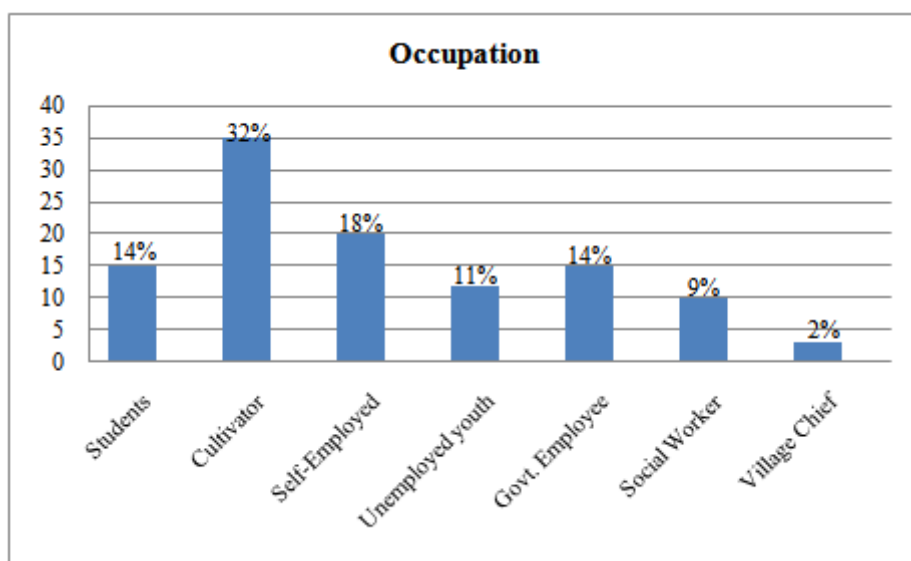


Table 3: Occupation of the respondents.

Factors for lack of industries in Ukhrul District, Manipur: The study found that many factors are responsible for the total absence of industries especially the rural industries in Ukhrul district, which is one of the major sector for economic growth and development for rural districts of Manipur. The various factors as responded by the respondents for lack of rural industries in Ukhrul district are Poor infrastructures (27%), lack of planning and policy by the government (18%), lack of marketing facility (18%), Corruption and poor governance (14%), lack of knowledge about rural industries by the farmers (9%), lack of technical know-how, skill and training (9%), lack of initiatives, encouragement and support from the government (5%). These data are represented in the table 4 given below.

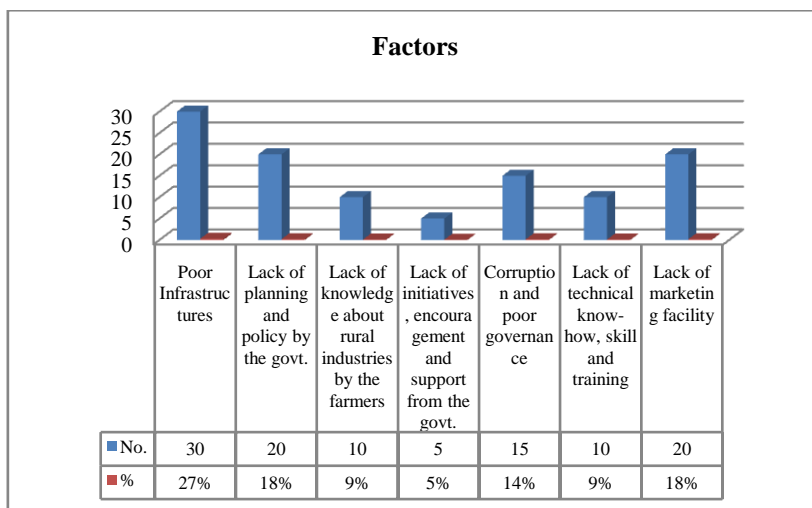


Table 4: Factors for lack of rural industries in Ukhrul district, Manipur

Impact of lack of rural industries in the economic growth and development of Ukhrul district, Manipur: The present study identified that lack of rural industries in Ukhrul district, Manipur greatly affected the economic growth and sustainable development of Ukhrul district in many ways. According to the responses of the respondents, it leads to Increase Unemployment and decrease job opportunities (27%), Increase youth migration in search of job (18%), Low income and Poverty (14%), Increase dependence and predominance of agriculture (9%), Retard economic growth and sustainability (9%) and decrease investment and business opportunities (9%). These data is shown in the table 5 given below.

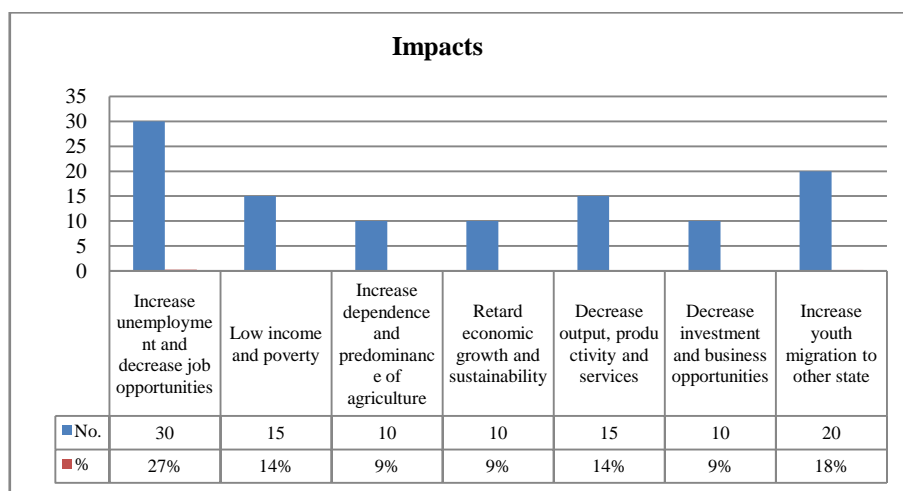


Table5: Impact of lack of rural industries in the economic growth and development of Ukhrul district, Manipur.

Suggestions: India is a Socialist State and so the state is the major actor in taking care of its citizens by bringing economic growth and development in order to make the citizen enjoy social and economic freedom. Thus, in the context of Ukhrul district Manipur, the government should play a major role to improve the life and economy of the people. The establishing of rural industries in the district will help in achieving these objectives. Rural industries should be set up at least in every blocks of the district by the government which will greatly enhance production, trade and commerce, generate income and provide employment opportunities to the people in Ukhrul district. The factors responsible for the lack of rural industries in Ukhrul need to be address properly by the government. This includes improving the infrastructures like road and transportation and communication, electrification, proper drinking water supply, improve technology etc. The awareness, knowledge, skill and training about rural industries and how it will boost their economy should also be imparted to the farmers through seminar, talks and lectures by the eminent experts in the field. In addition, the government should take up steps to combat corruption and work according to the rule of the laws instead of taking laws at their hands.

In addition to the role of the government, the Non-Government Organization (NGO's) and Civil societies in Ukhrul district also have supplementary role to play in this matter. They can also initiate and encourage the farmers to practice small scale rural industry by providing credit or loan facilities and also give training and skill for self generating income, employment through rural industries.

V. CONCLUSION

There is a need for rural industries in Ukhrul district of Manipur to improve the village economy. Many factors are responsible for lack of rural industries in Ukhrul district and this problem has affected the village economy in many ways. There is a need of intervention from the government to solve this issue and the NGO's and civil societies in Ukhrul district also have supplementary roles to bring successful rural industries in the district which would enhance the village economy and bring sustainable development in the district.

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