

**UNEMPLOYMENT CONCERNS IN UKHRUL: AN OVERVIEW****Phungreishang Chithung****Research Scholar****Department of Sociology & Social Work****University of Science & Technology, Meghalaya****Dr. Maqbul Ali****Assistant Professor****Department of Sociology & Social Work****University of Science & Technology, Meghalaya****ABSTRACT**

*Unemployment is a major social problem, the world over. It is a burning social issue in almost all states of India. Large numbers of youth are not only unemployed but also unemployable. Many youth are willing to work but they are unable get a secured employment. Unemployment has basically become a socio-economic and political problem, wherein every government in the Centre and States encounter at one point of time or the other. Manipur, one of North-eastern of India is not far from such experiences. As per the Socio-Economic Survey 2012-13, the employment in the organised sector in on decreasing trend. As the population grows and when the country too is growing with maximum youth population, large section of our youth population has to struggle for livelihood on many front. Besides this, the youths in the hill district of State are deprived because of less access to opportunities as against their counterparts in the valley districts. Acknowledging the issues and challenges of unemployment faced by the youth, the paper attempts to examine the pattern, incidence and concerns of youth unemployment in Ukhrul district of Manipur.*

**Key Words:** Government, Livelihood, Socio-economy, Unemployment, Youth

**INTRODUCTION:**

Unemployment is a chronic socio-economic problem almost common to every economies of the world. There are 184 million unemployed people around the world, and among them, 47 per cent are young persons. Around 88 million young people between the ages of 18-24 are unemployed worldwide (ILO: 2004). Unemployment is defined as a situation where someone of working age is unable to get a job but would like to be in full time employment. According to International Labour Organization (ILO), a person is unemployed, if the person is (a) not working (b) currently available for work (c) seeking work. On the other hand, youth unemployment is the unemployment of young people, defined by the United Nations as 15–24 years old. In order to qualify as unemployed for official and statistical measurement, the individual must be without employment, willing and able to work, of the officially designated 'working age' and actively searching for a position. Youths in training, unpaid internships or educational programs but not seeking paid work is not counted as unemployed, even though their presence in such programs may indicate a shortage of jobs for young people. Thus, the rate of youth unemployment is undercounted. The global youth unemployment rate rose from 11.8 to 12.7 percent between 2008 and 2009 which is the largest one-year increase on record (ILO's Global Employment Trends for Youth: 2011). In the ten years from 1998 and 2008, youth unemployment increased by a total of 0.2 percent or about 100,000 persons per year; but from 2008 to 2009 it increased by 5.3%, or 4.5 million persons, in a

single year. By the end of 2010, an estimated 75.8 million young people were unemployed (UN, World Youth Report: 2012). At the same time, the labour force participation rate for young people has continued its downward trend declining from 53.8 to 50.1 percent between 1998 and 2008, it fell to 48.8 percent by 2011 (ILO Global Employment Trends for Youth: 2011).

#### **Profile of unemployment in Manipur:**

The problem of growing unemployment is matter of great concern for the state of Manipur. In spite of having huge natural resources, the state's economy largely remains backward and underdeveloped, as these natural resources have not yet been thoroughly exploited. Against the back-drop of increasing poverty, slow pace of economic development and very high rate of population growth, the unemployment problem has assumed chronic and complex character in Manipur. Unemployment is, no doubt, a national problem but the problem has assumed greater significant in the district of Manipur due to the economic backwardness of the State. Manipur has a population of 25.7 lakhs (Census: 2011). Of the total population, 61.54% live in the valley and the remaining 38.46% are in the hill areas. As far as the employment in organised sector of Manipur is concerned, the total number of employees working under the state government was 58,172 as on 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2009. This shows a decrease of employees as compared with 60,982 employees as on 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2006. The number of employees working under the state Quasi Government decrease to 2,459 in 2009 from 7,844 in 2006 (Economic Survey Manipur: 2012-2013). There was a marked difference in the extent and nature of employment between the valley and the hills in the state. The annual average economic growth rate during the period of 1998 to 2005 is 4.3%. The annual average growth rate during the period in the rural and urban areas was recorded to be 4.84% and 3.69% respectively. Among the districts, the highest economic growth rate was found in Churachandpur District which accounted for 13.11% and is followed by Imphal East district which is accounted with 9.71% and where Ukhrul District comes with 3.26% (Economic Survey of Manipur: 2012-13).

#### **AREA AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY:**

The area of study is Ukhrul district of Manipur. It includes five blocks namely Ukhrul, Phungyar, Chengai, Kasom, Kamjon. The district has garnered momentum of unemployment and other related social problems such as insurgency, drug addiction etc. The extent and nature of unemployment is not properly known for this district. In fact, very few attempts have been made in the past to explain the various facets of unemployment at block levels in Ukhrul. Thus effective steps have to be taken in earnest to arrest the growth of unemployment and other related social problems. The growing unemployment problem in Ukhrul District is continued to be a matter of great concern. The Paper intends to examine the pattern, incidence and concerns of youth unemployment in Ukhrul district. The paper is an outcome of the research survey conducted in the month of October to December, 2014.

#### **METHODOLOGY:**

##### **Operational Definition:**

As a working definition, the definition of unemployment provided by the 66<sup>th</sup> Round of NSS, i.e. "If a person was not engaged in any 'work' even for 1 hour on a day but was seeking/available for work for 4 hours or more, he was considered 'unemployed' for the entire day. But if he was 'seeking/available for work' for more than 1 hour and less than 4 hours only, he was considered 'unemployed' for half day and 'not in labour force' for the other half of the day."

**Research Design:**

The study was carrying out to explore the causes that lead to unemployment in the Ukhrul district. The study followed an exploratory and descriptive research design. The study area was divided into strata of five (5) subdivisions. These subdivisions are further divided into strata of Revenue Circles which was then stratified into villages. The Primary data was collected through a set of Interview Schedule. Secondary data such as books, government documents, reports, internet etc were used to support the primary data. In order to determine the sample size, represent-able number of villages was selected using statistical tool. From the specified villages, youths belonging within the age group of 18 to 35 years were considered for sample. The researcher used Non Probability Random sampling method in order to collect the data. A sample size of One fifty (150) samples has been drawn from the entire Sub-divisions of Ukhrul district in Manipur.

**FINDINGS:**

The data collected from the research survey has been analysed and interpreted. In Ukhrul district, 68% of the youths were found to be unemployed with only 32% engaged in government, private and non-government jobs. The youth (46%) were in search of job through Consultancy/Agents whereas 32% were looking for jobs through newspaper and other forms of advertisements while the rest 22% were looking for employment at Employment Exchange. Among those employed youths, as many as 60% earns an income within the range of Rs. 5000 – 10000. Only 4% were earning an income ranging from Rs.10001 to 15000. There were 2% youths earning within the income range of Rs.15001 to 20000. As against this, 10% of population were earning Rs.20001 and above. Thus the findings highlight poor earning capacity of youth.

The education status of the youth in Ukhrul district is encouraging with 90% graduation and 10% of the youth found to drop their degree course. This means the youth population is well qualified to work in any sector which is not happening in reality. It was also found that 100% of the population stop their education after graduation to start a work or be employed in government, private sector and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) for their livelihood. The respondents (30%) were of the opinion that computer knowledge would be useful to find a good job in the present job scenario. 50% felt that vocational education would be better option. Only 4% of population are of the opinion that graduate is a useful qualification and 16% of the population are of the opinion still there that a postgraduate is also a quality in finding a good job. Thus 80% respondents had preferences of vocational and computer education. This shows that graduate with general degrees remain unemployed for longer period of time. This phenomenon not only frustrates youths' ambitions but socially disturbed the aspirations of parents mind as most of the youths are general graduates. The importance and the value of youths seem to decline in the district because unemployment has lead to the formation of gang culture in Ukhrul.

In Ukhurul district, only 4% of population felt that the government was providing a vocational training for unemployed youths. On the other side, 48% of population opines that the government does not give vocational training at all. Another 48% of the population are of the opinion that the government could not fulfil the real objectives of vocational training. It was found that 70% of the population were ready to work on full time basis on any job which gives surety to earn with proper salary. 10% would like to work on part time basis but 20% of population would like to work for any job that maybe full time or part time which shows that there are population which really needs jobs urgently. The youth population (80%) felt that the main factor of unemployment was due to lack of work available, absence of Service provider, insufficient technical and vocational training, in-efficient human resource. 86% of the

population had blamed the government for the unemployment in a state and 14% of the population did not know whether to blame or not to blame the government for the present scenario of unemployment.

Majority (94%) of the unemployed youth were not receiving unemployment benefits with only 6% receiving such benefits through various schemes of the government. It has also been learnt that 36% of the youth prefer to start their own business. 42% respondents prefer to work with the government or public sector and 22% population prefers to work with the Non Profit Organisation. The analysis shows that majority of the population prefer for Government and public sector as their main goal. In the remote areas, youths are unemployed because of absence of marketable skills as opined by 14% of the population. 8% of population felt ignorance of human resource as one of the problems for unemployment among the rural youth. Whereas 6% of population are of the opinion that untapped available human resources was one of the reason for youth unemployment. 72% of population favours promotion of untapped available human resources, systematic education pattern along with marketable skills will bring better employment.

Government should open more institution that can provide training in the diverse discipline has been opined by 14% of the population. Another 16% comes up with the suggestion that government should encourage more involvement of Public Sector Undertaking (PSU). Whereas 8% of the population comes up with the idea that government should give more incentives to NGO's. 62% youth are of the opinion that government should open up more institutions, encourage more involvement of PSU and also provide more incentives to NGO's.

#### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It has always been said that youths are the future of a country. Development of youth denotes development of the country or state as a whole. Educating and training the young generation is an approach of creating job opportunities and improving the economy of a state. Ukhrul, because of various geographical constraints, is economically underdeveloped as compared to the other district of the state. It nonetheless has potential in terms of its resources. In the recent years, unemployment has become an endemic problem in Ukhrul district. Unemployed youths are engaged in alcoholism, drug addiction, gambling, insurgency related activities etc. It also has lead to the formation of gang culture. The lives of people have become miserable because of unemployment, underdevelopment and insurgency. Due to lack of job opportunities in the district and the state, youths are in search of jobs outside the state. They look through newspaper, Consultancy services / Agents and Employment Exchange as mentioned above. There were also incidence of youths especially girls being lured by fake Consultancy for good jobs and salary packages in big cities which later turned to be for evil pursuits of agents. There are concerns that the educated youths are not employed as per their qualification, which is very alarming. The number of unemployed graduates is increasing year after year. Unemployment is experienced worst by general degree holders and the differences between degrees holders and non-degree holder is diminishing. General degrees from the universities have not fulfilled their aims to earn better livelihood. Even among those employed, the meagre income level makes their livelihood difficult in most cases. Those working in the private sector are likely to get less than the government sector. Youths had to engage in petty agricultural work which is seasonal in character.

To solve the problem of unemployment and several other social evils, measures should be taken from time to time. On the educational front, more stress need to be laid on technical and vocational training to meet the need of the market. Another primary reason for under development of the district is of lack

of quality entrepreneurs who can utilize the opportunities. Government can open more institute and also encourage involvement of public sector undertaking and NGO's. The chief employer remains the State governments. Thus the government should vigorously pursue industrialization by asking big companies to invest over the state. Schemes and loans can be provided to establish cottage and small-scale industries to promote avenues for employment of the youth. The government can also set up industries, which will have a sustainable impact on the development of the state from a backward state to a modern developed state. The government can promote youth entrepreneurship. The youths can be motivated and inculcate leadership qualities by employers. Such initiatives can help youth in realizing their potential in the workplace.

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