

Educationally Backward Block (EBB) Schools of Mizoram: Observation

TBC Lalramnghaka*
Prateek Chaurasia**

Abstract

The present study is an observation of schools of Educationally Backward Block (EBB) in Mizoram. These schools were situated in Lunglei District under Tlabung Sub-division in Southern part of Mizoram closed to the Bangladesh border. Secondary schools were the main target for observation and four schools were randomly selected for the study. The researchers went to the field for better understanding and experience for exact situation and observation of the schools was done in the light of selected parameters. The teaching learning process in Educationally Backward Block (EBB) schools in Mizoram was basically child centric. Teachers and students were working hard to catch up other students in different parts of the state.

Keywords: *Observation, Educationally backward block, Schools*

Introduction

Mizoram ranks third in the country in terms of literacy, with a rate of 91.3 percent (Business Standard, 2019). Nonetheless, Mizoram has one Educationally Backward Block, which is not ideal for the state, which is the most literate in the country next to Kerala. The only Educationally Backward Block (EBB) in Mizoram is situated in Lunglei District under Tlabung Sub-division in Lungsen Rural Development Block in the southern part of the state, close to Bangladesh border. Though there is little information, it appears that no research has ever been conducted in the field of Educationally Backward Block (EBB). Thus, a study of the schools in the Educationally Backward Block (EBB) is necessary and important.

Tlabung Sub-division in Lungsen Rural Development Block is Mizoram's only Educationally Backward Block and Mizo people alone do not inhabit that area or block; other community such as Chakma and Bru are also living there. One could say that it is a very mixed area where people use their own mother tongue for communication. For instance,

*TBC Lalramnghaka, Research Scholar, Department of Education, Mizoram University, Mizoram, - 796004

**Dr. Prateek Chaurasia, Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Mizoram University, Mizoram- 796004, Email: prateek.chaurasia100@gmail.com

Chakma people do not know Mizo language and vice versa. Communicating with one another seems really difficult and can be thought that because of language barrier, most students drop out which increases to low literacy rate and that might be the factor of becoming the only Educationally Backward Block (EBB) in Mizoram. Having Research in Educationally Backward Block (EBB) is very important because it will be able to notify their weaknesses and difficulties and once those are identified, steps can be taken to eliminate their backwardness. Research might help and develop their living and that can be a good benefit for the local people and for the nation as well. People living in that area are having a very low income in average and they really need a help from the Government. Even today, some villages are not having link road and instead they use boat for transportation and one can imagine that if there are no roads for transportation and to communicate; how will they receive adequate education. Research should be done so that the State Government will know their difficulties and can take some measures to improve and solve problems in that area so that one day the local people and Mizoram might earn emancipation from Educationally Backward Block (EBB). It is very clear that it cannot be done in a very short time like two to three years, but at least the State Government needs to know the exact situation and the very least, it needs to make some procedure, and start working on that. If not, it will remain as it is always and will still be deformed of Mizoram.

India has a total of 6701 blocks of which 3453 are educationally backward blocks as per the Department of School Education and Literacy under the Ministry of Education. While the elementary education is taken care of by the RTE Act in all the blocks including Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs), secondary and higher secondary education needs special focus. The educationally backward blocks constitute 51.5 percent (Sanghi & Sinha, 2014) of the total blocks in the country and 74 percent (MHRD, 2016) of such blocks are concentrated in the eight states viz. Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh.

Lungsen Rural Development Block is one of the numerous Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs) in India. Because of the importance placed on the Block, the State government opened a new Education Sub Division at Lungsen on November 3, 2008 (School Education: Mizoram, 2016) which is an important step toward educational improvement. Furthermore, when the mid-day meal programme was made available to the Middle School Sections, Lungsen Block was the first to benefit from it. During the tenth Plan, a programme called the Scheme for Upgrading Female Student Residential and Hostel Infrastructure was in place. Lungsen Village was chosen for the establishment of a Model School and Girls Hostel under the Scheme.

Education is the only way for human beings to do more than forage or hunt. Education is the only way civilization survives more than one generation. People living in Educationally Backward Block really need much better education than they have right now in order to improve their backwardness and that can be done best effectively by the state Government.

In the present observational study, four different schools of Educationally Backward Block (EBB) were selected randomly as a sample. They are as follows:

1. RMSA Secondary School, Tuichawng.
2. Baptist Mission School, Tuichawng.
3. Government high school, Tlabung.
4. Mahabodhi Residential School, Tuichawng.

Observation I: Challenges of schools in Educationally Backward Block (EBB) of Mizoram with respect to the teachers and students.

a) Observation of RMSA Secondary School, Tuichawng.

This school is located in the Tuichawng village. It faces lots of problems in communication with the students since almost all the students are Chakma and out of six teachers, only one teacher is from the local and the rest are non Chakma teachers who cannot speak Chakma language and students on the other hand do not understand Mizo and also students are very weak in English as well, so learning the local language is a great challenge for the teachers and vice versa. Also the students' lack of previous knowledge was also an issue during the teaching learning process.

b) Observation of Baptist Mission School, Tuichawng

This school is also situated in Tuichawng Village. In this school, language and communication among the students and teachers are a problem similar to the RMSA School. Without proper communication, teaching and learning are adversely affected. Learning the local language for the teachers and learning Mizo language for the students still remain a great challenge. In this school the teachers are well qualified and they try to provide the appropriate learning experiences but still the lack of students' previous knowledge and communication seems to be challenge for the teachers for teaching and students to learn effectively.

c) Observation of Government High School, Tlabung

This school is one of the oldest High schools in the state located in Tlabung Village and the teachers - students interactions are found satisfactorily throughout the teaching learning process. In this school, teachers are found to have enough experience as well as they do not face communication problems. The main challenge of this school is non-availability of regular teachers as well as lack of proper academic and infrastructural facilities. The teaching learning process in the school does not suffer severely due to the availability of guest teachers.

d) Observation of Mahabodhi Residential School

This school is purely private school run by people following Buddhist religion and is located in Tuichawng Village. This school is in the local village and is a good residential school and all the students and teachers used to be Chakma and communication is not the problem. The major challenges in this school are related to the teaching learning process. In this school, teaching and learning process needs to be shifted from memorizing to understanding especially in Mathematics and Science subjects. Since it is a private school, teachers are not properly qualified and also untrained (some of the teachers do not have their

B.Ed degree) and if this aspect can be improved, then ultimately teaching learning process will be enhanced. Apart from this, teaching learning process in this school needs to be more child centered and activity based as compared to others schools. The schools follow the CCE pattern to promote the students in the class and their overall learning. Lack of teaching learning materials during the classroom teaching seems to be one of the barriers in the learning process of the students. Therefore, these issues are troublesome for the teachers and students to overcome the challenges of schools in EBB.

Observation II: Teaching leaning practices in the schools of EBB of Mizoram

Students are at the centre of the educational learning process in Educationally Backward Blocks schools, and teachers have a thorough comprehension of the kids. They are also given full attention, and students receive assistance and support from all sides. The teaching learning process is same as others in the state but the difference is the students. Lack of previous knowledge is immense issue for the teachers. Teachers are also highly qualified and have great experience as well but problem arises because of inadequacy of basic knowledge especially in the field of science and mathematics.

Observation III: Infrastructural challenges of schools in the EBB of Mizoram

a) Observation related to RMSA Secondary School Infrastructure

The school have nice infrastructure facilities in order to enhance the teaching learning process and provide the support to the overall teaching learning process. This school can improve some of the infrastructural facilities like creating learner corners and developing the garden within the school premises in order to improve the overall infrastructural facilities. The overall existing infrastructural facilities in the school are listed in the following table.

Table: 1

RMSA Secondary School Infrastructure

S.No.	Infrastructure	Numbers
1	Class-Rooms	2
2	Library	1(well functional)
3	Learning corners	0
4	Laboratory	1
5	Play Ground	1(volley ball court)
6	Toilet	8
7	Drinking water availability	1 (filter)
8	Garden	0
9	Electricity	Good Electricity connection

b) Observation related to Baptist Mission School Infrastructure

Baptist mission school has good infrastructure facilities in order to improve the teaching learning process and teachers and learners are making full use of the infrastructure. The school has good class rooms but some of the facilities are missing like learning corner. This needs to be improved so that the learners will have much more interest in their learning. Following are the existing infrastructure facilities of the school:

Table: 2

Baptist Mission School Infrastructure

S.No	Infrastructure	Numbers
1	Class-Rooms	3
2	Library	1(well functional)
3	Learning corners	0
4	Laboratory	1
5	Play Ground	1(Badminton court) & (1)Table Tennis
6	Toilet	4
7	Drinking water availability	1 water cooler
8	Garden	School surroundings
9	Electricity	Good electricity collection

c) Observation related to Government High School, Tlabung Infrastructure

The school has a good infrastructure which is utilised very well by the teachers and the learners. Also, the location of the school is perfect i.e. it is situated in a place near the main road. If the school can improve some of its infrastructural facilities then they can enhance their teaching learning process and learning. Government High School, Tlabung has the following infrastructural facilities:

Table: 3

Government High School, Tlabung Infrastructure

S.No	Infrastructure	Numbers
1	Class-Rooms	6
2	Library	1 (well functional)
3	Learning corners	0
4	Laboratory	1
5	Play Ground	2 (Volleyball courts)
6	Toilet	5
7	Drinking water availability	1 water cooler

8	Garden	School surroundings
9	Electricity	Good electricity collection

d) Observation related to Mahabodhi Residential School Infrastructure

The school has a good infrastructure and a good study environment which supports the overall teaching learning process to be satisfactory as compared to other EBB schools of Mizoram. Mahabodhi Residential School has the following infrastructure facilities:

Table: 4

Mahabodhi Residential School Infrastructure

S.No	Infrastructure	Numbers
1	Class-Rooms	4
2	Library	1(well functional)
3	Learning corners	0
4	Laboratory	1
5	Play Ground	1 (volley Ball court)
6	Toilet	8
7	Drinking water availability	3 filter
8	Garden	School surroundings
9	Electricity	Good electricity collection

The schools in Educationally Backward Block also have good infrastructure like the class room condition are really good and some schools are using green/white board instead of black so that the students can have a clear sight and all the schools are having good electricity connection, proper drinking water, library, laboratory, toilets, etc. It is pretty fair to say that they got what they need in term of infrastructure.

Observation IV: Observation of the school in the EBB of Mizoram with respect to

• **Community Ownership**

Among the four schools, only Baptist Mission School is lack of SMDC and the other schools - RMSA Secondary School, Government High School, Tlabung and Mahabodhi Residential School have active SMDC and activities done by SMDC are as follows:

- a) Building construction
- b) Purchasing
- c) Policy making
- d) Repairing in needs

- **Innovative and best practices in schools.**

RMSA Secondary School has a ramp for disabled person and also has special toilet for them. This clearly reflects the inclusiveness set up of the school which is quite unique and appreciable.

Baptist Mission School also conducts remedial classes for weaker students to improve their achievements. In this school unique provisions are there for hosteller students in terms of their study in the night.

Government High School, Tlabung is a school in which teachers adopt and practice modern technique of teaching like collaborative learning and brainstorming learning for better understanding of the students. Teachers seem to be highly motivated in terms of teaching the various concepts with the help of specific teaching materials.

Mahabodhi Residential School is a residential school; here disciplines among the students in the school premises are excellent. The school administration is very effective in order to maintain learning and overall discipline.

Some of the key practices of the schools are as follow:

- a) Extra classes in the subjects where students are weak.
- b) Conduct of weekend test/exam regularly
- c) Conduct of morning assembly
- d) Provision of awareness regarding cleanliness, fire prevention and care taking of environment.
- e) Effective use of TLMs for teachings.
- f) Interactive classroom teaching.
- g) Night study for all hostellers.

Conclusion:

As can be seen from the preceding few paragraphs, teachers and students in Mizoram's Educationally Backward Block are working hard to catch up with pupils in other regions of the state. Students at the EBB School in Mizoram attend remedial sessions to improve their academic performance. Despite the fact that some schools have obstacles in terms of communication between students and teachers owing to language barriers, others face infrastructure issues as well as a lack of ICT assistance for teaching and learning. One school in EBB of Mizoram is also suffering from the lack of SMDC, which appears to be one of the reasons affecting school operation. With the exception of a few schools, all schools in Mizoram's EBB have enough certified instructors. In addition, teaching learning processes in EBB Mizoram schools must be enhanced and new and relevant teaching approaches must be used. The learning atmosphere in schools is well-disciplined and welcoming.

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