

NAGALAND

# COMMUNITISATION OF EDUCATION

The Nagaland Experience

*A Thematic Report*



सत्यमेव जयते



*Strengthening of State Plans for Human Development*  
A GOI-UNDP PROJECT



Government of Nagaland  
Department of Planning and Coordination  
Nagaland - Kohima 797 001



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A THEMATIC REPORT

# 2009



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COMMUNITISATION OF EDUCATION : THE NAGALAND EXPERIENCE  
*A Thematic Report*

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Government of Nagaland

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Please convey errors, if any to the Department of Planning and Coordination, Government of Nagaland*

# Foreword

Education is one of the basic essence for human development. Free and compulsory education to all children upto 14 years of age is a constitutional commitment. The objective of all educationists and education planners is to achieve this target. However, to achieve this objective, the role of service providers and the delivery mechanism at the grassroot level is critical. Through the communitisation of the education sector, Nagaland has made quest for improving the delivery mechanism in the education sector. Partnership between Government and the community involving transfer of ownership of school facilities, control over service delivery, empowerment, decentralization, and delegation of responsibilities has led to increase in school enrollment, reduction in school drop-outs, better attendance of teachers and improved school facilities. Communitisation of education gave an opportunity to the community in the management, in investment and in owning the delivery of education. It calls for a high level of commitment initiative and voluntarism.

The thematic report on 'Communitisation of Education' reflects the level of success of the communitisation programme in the education sector and role played by the stake holders and the Government for the success. It also brings out the areas where specific policy interventions are required for improving the system.

It is through the efforts of Shri. Sanen Imchen, Executive Director, Benchmark Education Initiative, Smt. Banuo Z. Jamir, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary, Government of Nagaland and Shri. Charles Chasie, social worker and freelance journalist and with inputs from Professor Manoj Pant Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi this report has materialized. Educationist, NGOs, the community and those interested in educational planning and administration will find the report very useful. I hope insights will be drawn from the report.

**Alemtemshi Jamir, IAS**

*Addl. Chief Secretary & Development Commissioner  
Government of Nagaland*



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Last but not the least we are thankful to the United Nations Development Programme and the Planning Commission, Government of India for the technical and financial support, without which the publication of this report would not have been possible.

***Kevileno Angami, IES***

*Officer on Special Duty & Nodal Officer for SSPHD  
Planning and Coordination,  
Government of Nagaland*



# Abbreviations

CEC	:	Common Education Committee
DCC	:	District Coordination Committee
GMS	:	Government Middle School
NBSE	:	Nagaland Board of School Education
SCERT	:	State Council of Educational Research and Training
SSA	:	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
UN	:	United Nations
UNICEF	:	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
VDB	:	Village Development Board
VEC	:	Village Education Committee
WEC	:	Ward Education Committee



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# Preface

Good governance is now recognized as a critical issue in development. This is particularly important for developing countries which are still evolving their governance forms. In addition, given the vast diversity, developing countries like India need to evolve decentralized methods of governance which avoid the costs and inefficiency of a centralized “one size fits all” model for the country as a whole. This also allows one to address issues of regional diversity and grassroots planning. In particular, decentralized governance systems allow a large country like India to ensure efficient flow of information from the Central Government to districts and vice versa. This allows the national planning model to incorporate grassroots aspirations. However, given its poverty, it is unlikely that such decentralized governance models will work in India without availability of Government funds. While free market methods of governance do ensure efficient delivery, use of Government funds in decentralized schemes raises again the question of accountability, measurement of outcomes and so on.

Nagaland’s Communitisation Act of 2002 not only envisaged this decentralized mode of governance in areas like power, health, education etc. it also worked out the modalities of transfer of Government funds to local bodies. At the same time, by ensuring that local bodies also contributed (in cash or kind), a unique kind of Government-local body partnership system was evolved.

In this paper the author shows how this decentralized model has worked in the field of elementary education. The paper also shows how the model has built upon traditional system of local village bodies. Implementation issues like the process of training, the system of accountability in use of funds and performance of teachers are discussed along with some preliminary impact assessment. The paper clearly outlines how a decentralized system of governance can work which builds on existing local systems.

**Prof. Manoj Pant**

*Jawaharlal Nehru University*

*Lead Author & Coordinator, Thematic Studies*



# Executive Summary

Decentralization of authority from Government and making the community responsible for their own development is considered in development circles as the hallmark of “people’s empowerment”. The defining characteristic of communitisation is a unique partnership involving sharing of ownership between Government and the user community in the management of public institutions and delivery of their services.

The communitisation model in the education sector in Nagaland, initiated in 2002, is rooted in this approach. Following the enactment of the “Nagaland Communitisation of Public Services and Institutions Act,” all Government-run Primary and Middle Schools were “communitised”. This, in essence, transferred day-to-day management responsibilities of elementary schools in all aspects -academic, administrative and financial into the hands of the local community.

More than five years later, the overall management of communitised schools show marked improvement through key indicators. There is also substantial qualitative evidence of the community voluntarily contributing towards the management of local schools. Clearly, a primary reason for the positive outcomes is that the programme has been able to tap into the social capital of Naga society, evoking widespread response from the community in the management of a public resource. The State Government has also played a key role in not only conceptualizing the communitisation model into a workable one but also maintaining its upkeep through training and capacity building services. However, areas of concern remains, these include the problems of teacher shortages in rural areas, as well as the absence of a systemic monitoring framework.

The “empowerment” of the local community in the education sector occurred at the most fundamental level of the Naga social fabric -the village. It has now also extended to urban areas in the State. The daunting task of sustaining the momentum of this unique and creative system depends on the extent to which the system can dynamically adapt and fine-tune itself to the ever-evolving requirements of local situations.



APPLE



BALL



CAT



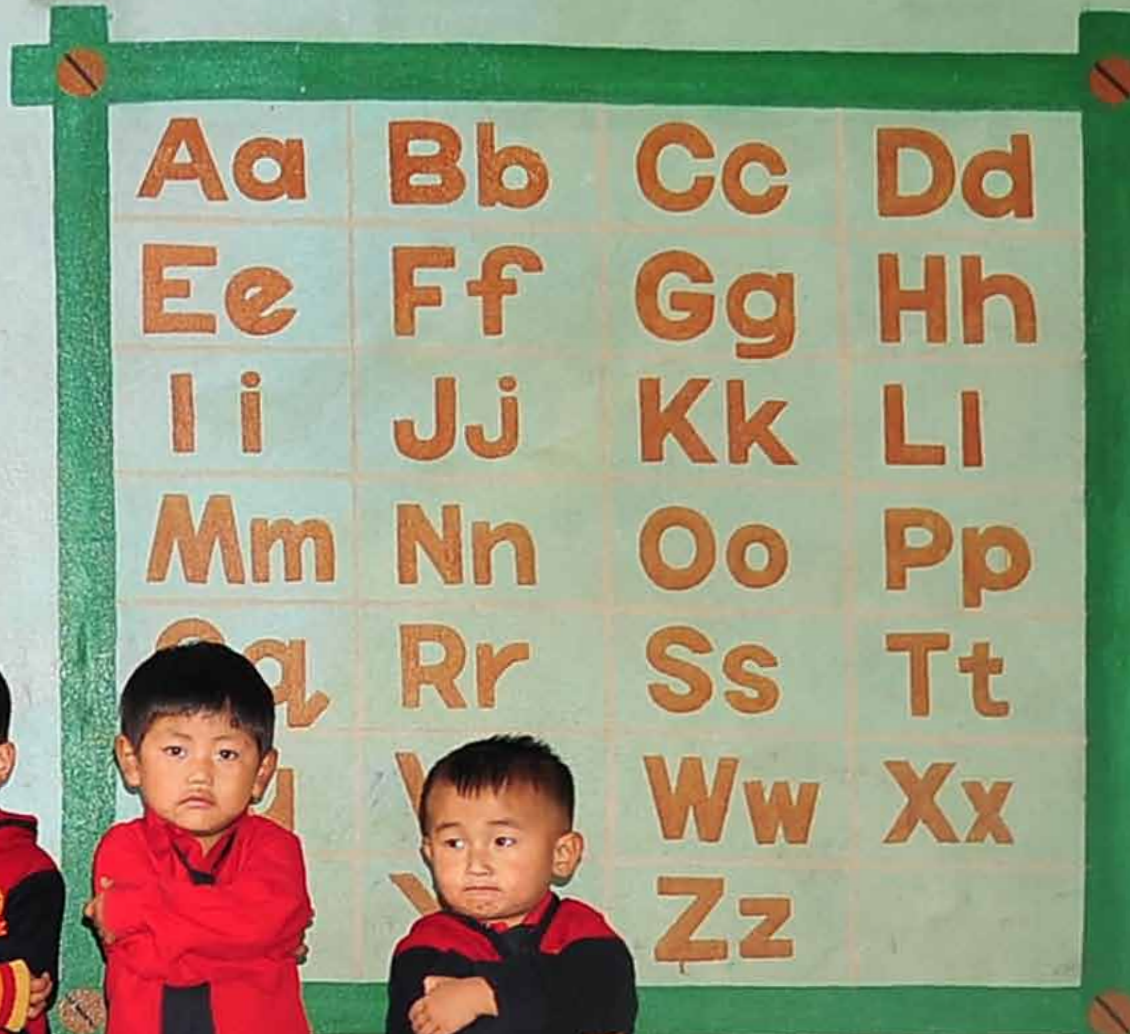
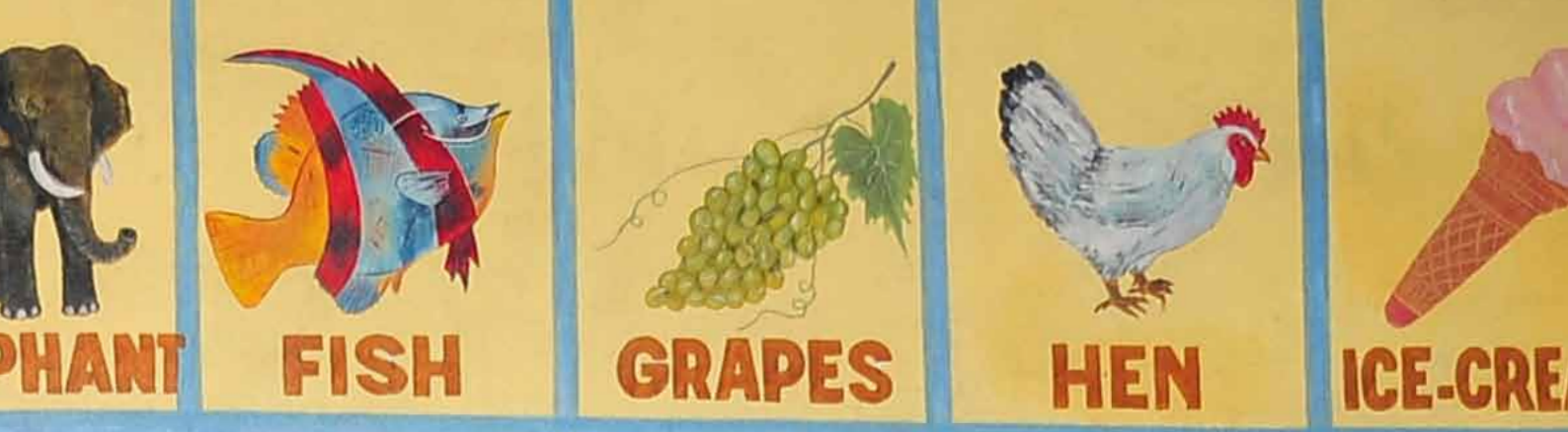
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ELEPHANT

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*Introduction*



*“It takes a village to raise a child.” – African Proverb*

## 1.1. COMMUNITISATION: THE CONCEPT

The concept of decentralizing authority from Government and making the community -the real stakeholder responsible for its own development, is considered in development circles as the hallmark of “people’s empowerment”. A system of “communitisation”, as it were, thus represents a paradigm shift from the model of governance where authority lies wholly in the hands of the Government. Its defining characteristic is a unique partnership involving sharing of ownership between Government and the user community in the management of public institutions and delivery of their services. Empowerment of the community is central.

While India has seen case studies of some successes in its experience with decentralization and community empowerment, there have also been some miserable failures. The case of the “communitisation” of the education sector in Nagaland, however, is one that can claim with some credibility to belong to the former category.

Far from stemming as a grassroots movement of the community (which perhaps the term “communitisation” connotes), the case of Nagaland’s communitisation programme is one that was initiated by the Government, based on a Triple T” concept:

- *Trust the user community*
- *Train the user community on discharging new found responsibilities*
- *Transfer of Governmental powers and resources.*

It is thus necessary to view the Nagaland communitisation model more as a new approach to governance, enlisting the active agency of the user community, rather than a case of complete decentralization where the power rests solely on the community.

The roots of this model were first laid in 2000, when the State Government initiated an “Imagine Nagaland” dialogue exercise, where various community stakeholders extensively discussed a vision of a better Nagaland. Improving the delivery of Government services in sectors such as education was clearly seen as an area that needed urgent addressal<sup>1</sup>. Following this, in 2002, the “Nagaland Communitisation of

<sup>1</sup> Pandey, R.S. 2007, “Power to the Common”. *Gfiles Inside the Government*, Volume 2, Issue 4: 14-15.

Public Services and Institutions Act”, a first of its kind in India, was passed by the State Assembly. The Act aimed to create a more responsive community, who, through intensive partnership with the State Government, would take greater responsibility in the management of public institutions in certain sectors. The Act covered elementary education, grassroots health care and power sectors.

In the education sector\*, the Department of Education in 2002 framed the “Nagaland Communitisation of Elementary Education Institution and Service Rules” (henceforth referred to in this report as the Rules) following the enactment \*\*. The Rules declared all Government-run Primary and Middle Schools in the State to be communitised. This, in essence, transferred day-to-day management responsibilities of the schools in all aspects – academic, administrative and financial -into the hands of the local community<sup>2</sup>. The “empowerment” of the local community occurred at the most fundamental level of the Naga social fabric -the village. To operationalize the Rules, every village with a (communitised) Government school(s) set up a Village Education Committee (VEC), which was the legal authority to manage elementary education within its jurisdiction.

It is important to mention at the outset that this analysis of “communitisation” in the education sector in Nagaland is carried out within certain parameters. First, it pertains only to elementary education, and not high schools and higher secondary schools which are not covered by the programme.

Second, it should be noted that although communitisation relegates the Government to a supervisory and supportive role, the overall system still remains under the aegis of the Government. While VECs undoubtedly form the basic building block of the programme, the overall charge of elementary education in the State rests with the Directorate of School Education, State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), and the Nagaland Board of Secondary Education (NBSE). Thus, an analysis of this communitisation model necessarily requires an examination of not only the role of community, but also -in equal measure -that of the State Government as an enabler.

\* Since the objective of this report is to examine the education sector in the context of communitisation, all references henceforth in this report to “the communitisation programme,” applies only to the education sector (and not the other unit sectors, where analyses and results may vary).

\*\* This was done under the exercise of powers conferred by section 3, read with section 4 and 11, of the Nagaland Communitisation of Public Services and Institutions and Services Ordinance.

<sup>2</sup> Government of Nagaland 2003, *The First Year of Communitisation of Elementary Education in Nagaland 2002-2003*, Education, p 18.

Against this backdrop, this report asserts that the communitisation story of the education sector is more of a success story than not. More than five years after its initiation, the overall management of communitised schools show marked improvement through key indicators:

- *steady increase in enrolment rates*
- *decrease in drop-out rates*
- *improvement in teachers' attendance and corresponding improvement in attendance of students*
- *timely disbursement of employee salaries*
- *weeding out proxy employees*
- *qualitative changes in school curriculum with active inputs from the community, in some cases*

Most importantly, there is wide-spread qualitative evidence of villages with communitised schools, willingly and voluntarily making contributions (through money, labour and other services) towards the management of their schools. This is the key indicator of a growing sense of community ownership over a public resource, which hits at the essence of the communitisation process.

Propelled by the success of the programme in the rural areas, the communitisation programme has now been extended to the urban areas in the form of Ward Education Committees (WECs). Commendation on the programme has arrived from many sectors, including media, experts and national dignitaries. Former President of India, Dr A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, has commented that “once the whole State is brought under the Communitisation programme, it would be a model for the whole country to follow<sup>3</sup>.” In 2008, the United Nations honoured the Nagaland Communitisation Programme with the UN Public Service Award. This is not to say that the system is free of loopholes. Areas of concern remain, such as shortages of teachers in rural areas, as well as a systemic monitoring framework, now that the programme has passed its first five-year period.

<sup>3</sup> Kalam, Abdul APJ, Speech during his visit to the Communitised Khuzama Village in Nagaland, October 26 2002.

This report is thus written with clear objectives. The first section aims to provide a clear and detailed picture of the constitution of the communitisation - what it is and how it works - specifically examining the set up of the VEC. It is hoped that such information could provide as a guide to interested parties from the Government and non-governmental sectors. Following this, the paper discusses the early implementation process of the programme, examining not only the challenges but also factors that aided in overcoming practical hurdles of the early phase. A third section presents available data indicating the “success” of the programme. A fourth section presents analysis of certain factors, in the specific context of Nagaland, which may have played a key role in contributing to the positive outcomes. The concluding section examines the way forward for some of the challenges in the system which needs to be addressed.







*It takes a village*

THE VILLAGE EDUCATION COMMITTEE (VEC) MODEL

## 2.1. STRUCTURE FOR COMMUNITISATION

When the Communitisation Act came into being, the State's education system was completely centralized. The State Government oversaw all responsibilities for running the system, placing a disproportionate amount of burden on its overworked State-level machinery. Responsibility and accountability at the lower levels were virtually nil. Not surprisingly, the education administration was also a breeding ground for leakage, corruption and inertia. The need for reforms could not have been clearer<sup>4</sup>. The transfer to a system of shared ownership with the community was a complete change; more so because it occurred at the most basic, village level through the VEC mechanism.

Under the communitisation framework, a VEC constituted by the Village Council takes responsibility of the management and supervision of school(s) within its jurisdiction, including the implementation of a “No Work, No Pay” policy for errant teachers. The purpose and functions of the VEC range widely at the administrative, academic and financial levels<sup>5</sup>. More specifically, in a human development context, ensuring universal enrolment and retention in schools of children up to age 14 or Class VIII is one of its key functions.

*Table No. 2.1.*

### *Powers And Functions Of The VEC*

<i>ADMINISTRATIVE</i>	<i>ACADEMIC</i>	<i>FINANCIAL</i>
<p>Ensure regular and effective running of schools.</p> <p>Ensure discipline and regularity of teachers by withholding pay or enforcing 'No Work, No Pay'.</p> <p>Recommendations in transfer and retention of teachers.</p> <p>Construct and maintain school buildings.</p> <p>Compile and furnish annual reports of schools.</p>	<p>Ensure universal enrolment and retention in schools children up to the age of 14 or class VIII.</p> <p>Ensure daily running of classes and implementation of annual plans.</p> <p>Make available free school uniforms, free text books and other learning materials.</p>	<p>Receive grants from Government, generate resources and operate an education fund.</p> <p>Disburse monthly salary of teachers and other staff, deduct salary not due, based on a “No Work, No Pay” principle.</p> <p>Maintain proper accounts of income and expenditure, assets of the school.</p> <p>Get accounts audited and bring out authentic report of the same.</p>

Source: *Hand Book on Communitisation of Elementary Education, Directorate of School Education, Government of Nagaland 2002*

<sup>4</sup> Government of Nagaland 2003, *The First Year of Communitisation of Elementary Education in Nagaland 2002-2003, Department of Education, p 17.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid, p 18.*

## 2.2. HOW IS IT CONSTITUTED?

Since the primary objective of constituting VECs was to ensure the participation of the community and create within it a sense of ownership, the model incorporates diverse stakeholders as its members. This includes, besides a chairman elected by the Village Council, the following:

- Village Development Board (VDB) Secretary
- Head Teacher of the communitised school
- Three parents/guardian representative (with at least one woman)
- Two teacher representatives
- One Village Council member
- One representative from different church denominations in the village
- Two members from the village community (preferably an educationist, at least a woman nominated by the village community)
- Sub-Inspector of the school area
- Head teacher of the Government Middle School (GMS) or senior-most teacher where GMS does not exist <sup>6</sup>

Members are enrolled for a term of three years, and meet at least once in three months. In cases where more than one village share a communitised middle school, a Common Education Committee (CEC), which include the VEC of the host village and three representatives from each VEC served by the school, is constituted.

<sup>6</sup> Government of Nagaland, 2002, *Hand Book on Communitisation of Elementary Education*, Directorate of School Education, pp 16-17.



## 2.3. HOW IS IT FUNDED?

The VEC was mandated by the Rules to open two bank accounts: a current account for salary transaction; a savings account for transactions related to the development fund. All grants by the State Government and other incomes are credited to the savings account. This includes funds for functions such as purchase of text books, furniture, construction of buildings and such. Since the entire amount for the school(s) are remitted to these accounts, the chance for leakage during financial transactions is greatly reduced.

The VEC accounts are subjected to an annual audit by a team instituted by the Government at the district level. The accounts are also open to internal audits by the State Government. An overall District Coordination Committee (DCC), at the district level, monitors and reviews the exercise of communitisation programme in the villages, as well as to improve upon its implementation<sup>7</sup>.



<sup>7</sup> Government of Nagaland, 2002, *Hand Book on Communitisation of Elementary Education*, Directorate of School Education, pp 16-22, 25-27.







*Implementation*  
FIRST STEP

### 3.1. FUNCTIONING OF COMMUNITISATION

In order to raise awareness of the programme, the State Government conducted publicity activities through print and electronic media before implementation began. The implementation of the programme occurred in phases and within a voluntary framework. Only schools of those villages that volunteered to be part of the programme were communitised.

In 2002, on a pilot basis, 205 elementary schools in 90 villages were identified for the project. In 2003, 197 additional schools in 182 additional villages were incorporated voluntarily into the system. (Table No.3.1)

**Table No. 3.1.**  
**Early Communitisation Programme**

First Phase 2002-2003		Second Phase 2003-2004	
Total Schools	1566	Remaining Schools	1361
Communitised	205	Communitised	197
Non Communitised	1361	Non communitised	1164
Total Communitised Schools between 2002-2004 = 205+197 = 402			

Source: *The First Year of Communitisation of Elementary Education in Nagaland, 2002-2003, Government of Nagaland 2003.*

Not surprisingly, the implementation process faced distinct challenges. Skepticism about the new system came from not only teachers and Government administrators, but also the communities themselves. The State Government was accused of “passing the buck” and engaging in diversionary tactics from the dysfunctions of the existing system<sup>8</sup>. A readers’ column in a local daily opined

*...Under the communitisation programme the failure of the management of institutions like Education is likely to be shifted to the villagers as if the Authorities have not done anything wrong... Now, the teachers and the villagers are geared to throw the nets into the pond. If this programme is to be successful, and if authorities really mean what they say, we will be an example for other States..<sup>9</sup>*

<sup>8</sup> Pandey, R.S. 2007, “Power to the Common”. *Gfiles Inside the Government, Volume 2, Issue 4: 14-15, p15.*

<sup>8-10</sup> Government of Nagaland, 2003, *The First Year of Communitisation of Elementary Education in Nagaland, 2002-2003, Department of Education, p 27 & p 28.*

Some villages were reluctant to shoulder responsibilities associated with the programme, suspicious about the “motives” behind it. A few communitised villages which expressed acceptance of the system, wanted to forego the responsibility (and potential headache) of managing financial transactions of the programme, given the prevailing “unsafe” circumstances<sup>10</sup>.

On the other hand, however, two factors seem to have greatly aided the programme’s implementation. These factors, for which the credit goes to the State Government, went a long way in eliminating practical hurdles that may have further exacerbated the teething process.

First of all, the State machinery worked hard during the preparatory stages to have in place new procedures for carrying out the financial transactions that were required by the new system. A series of planning meetings and consultations -involving concerned Government departments, office of the Accountant General, bank officials -were held, at the end of which the following resulted:

- Central Treasury Rules were amended to enable drawal of pay and allowances in advance for up to three months.
- The Delegation of Financial and Cognate Power Rules (1964), were amended to give full power to the Deputy Inspector of Schools to convert, when applicable, amounts deducted from salaries into grant-in-aid for VECs.
- The State Bank of India relaxed its rules and waived the initial deposit during the opening of VEC accounts.

Such financial streamlining took place before implementation of the programme, and contributed to its efficient functioning once it was underway. Secondly, extensive training programmes, encompassing all those involved in management of schools under elementary education-officers of the directorate, field officers, resource persons from the Directorate of School Education, SCERT, NBSE and VEC members were held during 2002-2003. This was intended to sensitise stakeholders to the objectives and benefits of the programme.

<sup>9</sup> Koko Angami, 2002, “Your Page” in *Nagaland Page*, November 29, cited in *Government of Nagaland 2003*, p 30.

<sup>10</sup> *Government of Nagaland, 2003, The First Year of Communitisation of Elementary Education in Nagaland 2002-2003, Department of Education, pp 21-25*

Not only were new rules and procedures explained thoroughly during the training sessions, but practical training regarding different functions of the new system, such as opening bank accounts, drawing and depositing money, filling various forms to convert deducted amount into grants under the ‘no work, no pay’ policy, took place in simulated conditions for field officers and staff. For VEC members, the training laid emphasis on the concept, rules and procedures of the programme.

A ‘Hand Book of Communitisation of Elementary Education’, brought out by the Directorate of School Education, was distributed to villages and schools as a resource guide<sup>11</sup>.



<sup>11</sup> Government of Nagaland, 2003, *The First Year of Communitisation of Elementary Education in Nagaland 2002-2003*, Department of Education, pp 21-25



*Early Result*  
FROM 2002 - 2003





## 4.1. THE OUTCOME

Encouraging trends emerged within the first year itself. A review by the Department of Education of the communitised schools indicated the following trends:

- Increase in class attendance by both students and teachers, and in student enrolment
- More systematic record maintenance
- Encouraging trends in community participation
- Decrease in drawal of pay, indicating elimination of “ghost teachers”

The ‘No Work, No Pay’ policy, in particular, seems to have made an impact. In most of the communitised schools, no salary deductions were made, indicating the deterrence posed by the implementation of this policy. The highest amount of salary deduction for errant teachers in the first year came from Tangnyu village in Mon district, of an amount for ₹ 10, 095<sup>12</sup>.

Mr. Matthew, a teacher in a communitised school in Khonoma village in Kohima district, indicated the early qualitative change in the system. According to Matthew, it was the norm for teachers in Government schools to rarely take their jobs seriously -since authorities failed to take any action -communitisation led teachers to become more attentive and, indeed, apprehensive of delinquency, to their duties.

*“In fact, our sense of professionalism has been revived and encouraged, and today teachers too feel more important and have started dedicating to their jobs...,”* stated Mr. Matthew<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p 48.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p 56





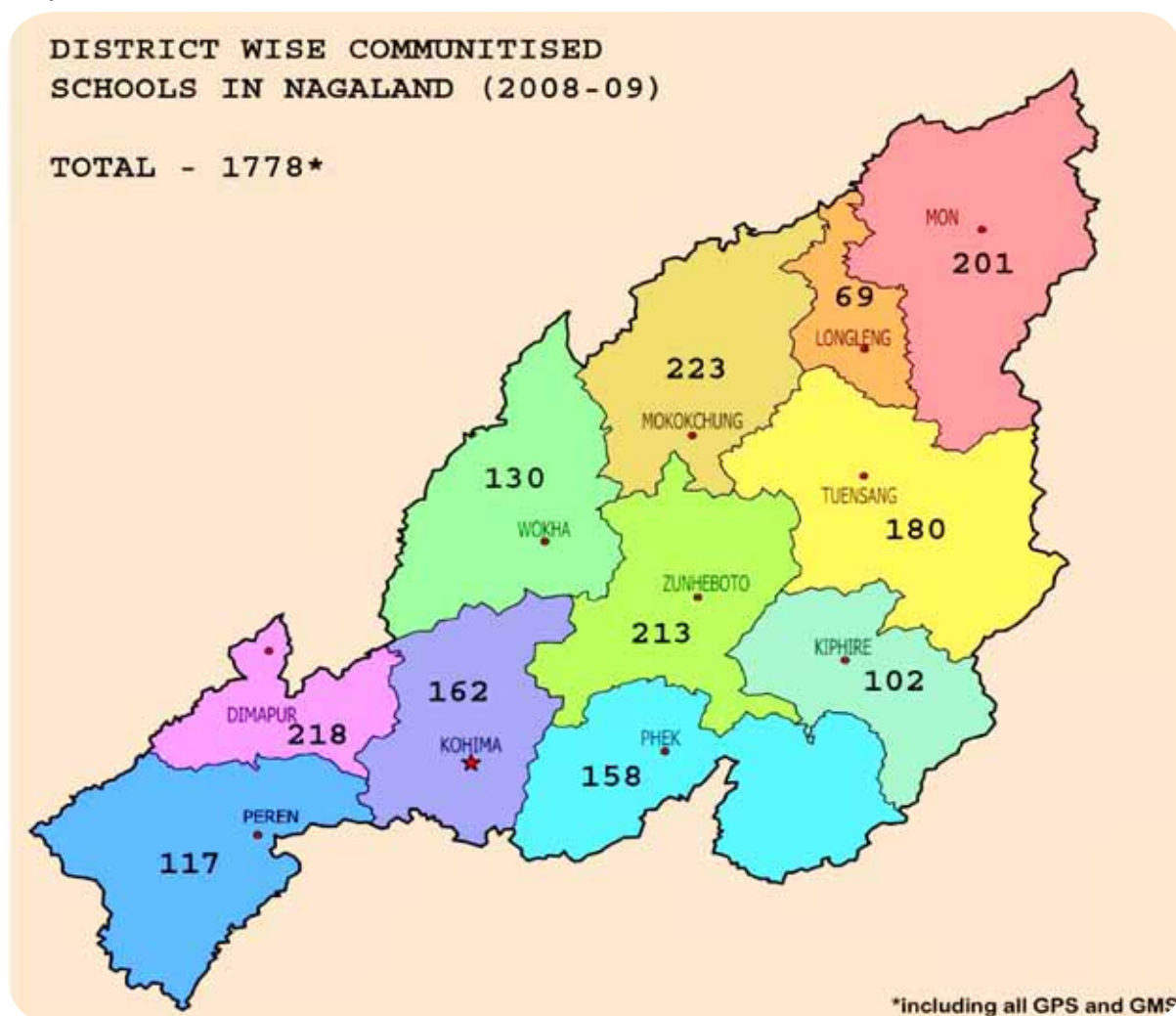
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*The Story so Far*  
OUTCOME AND INDICATORS

## 5.1. CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMMES FOR COMMUNITISED SCHOOLS IN NAGALAND

The momentum generated in the early stages of the communitisation programme has kept up till date. Besides the extension of the programme into urban areas through WECs, the State Government in 2003 mandated the communitisation of the entire elementary education sector with effect from 2004 (*Map 5.1*).

*Map. 5.1*



Source: Directorate of School Education, Government of Nagaland

Training of stakeholders has continued to be central to maintaining the momentum of the programme. Besides training sessions at the district level which are carried out annually, a massive, intensive State level “Community Mobilization” training programme, intended to build capacity of stakeholders, was carried out in 2008. The total turnout of attendees at the State level was 83.20 percent<sup>14</sup>.

Other work-in-progress activities include developing modalities and guidelines for assessing the performance of VECs and WECs in their implementation of the programme. The Department of Education has identified that it would award “best performing” VEC/WEC schools (or individuals who have made significant contribution) -based on several criteria -from each district, as incentive<sup>15</sup>.

## 5.2. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

In terms of assessing the performance of the communitisation programme through indicators, the latest available statistical data comes only from 2004. Both Governmental and non-governmental sources, however, suggest a clear story.

In an exercise, 199 VECs covering 400 communitised schools were asked to submit their report, which was compiled by the Department in the form of booklet titled ‘VECs Speak’. The report, which was released by the Chief Minister, Shri Neiphiu Rio, on May 31, 2004, contains impressive results:

<i>Enrolment</i>	: 90 percent villages reported improvement
<i>Academic performance</i>	: 80 percent villages reported improvement
<i>Dropouts</i>	: 75 percent villages reported reduction
<i>Student attendance</i>	: 90 percent villages reported improvement
<i>Teachers’ attendance</i>	: 80 percent villages reported improvement
<i>Receipt of Government grants</i>	: 100 percent villages reported receipt
<i>Community contribution</i>	: 100 percent villages reported receipt in cash, kind or labour

<sup>14</sup>Government of Nagaland, 2009, *Success Story of Capacity Building & Community Mobilization on Communitisation of Elementary Education 2008-2009*, Communitisation Section, Department of Education, 2009, p 88.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, p 91.

Another study carried out by a third party shows results that correspond to the Government findings. In 2004, a UNICEF-funded impact assessment study of the State's communitisation programme, covering 50 villages from seven districts, was carried out by the Chennai-based Organizations Development and Excellence Consultants. Some highlights from the findings in the education sector are startling:

- *Improvement in enrolment of both boys and girls in all communitised schools, with 0 percent drop-out rate in 23 of the 28 villages covered.*
- *Improvement in teacher attendance to about 90 percent in 18 of the 28 schools studied; 80-90 percent in five schools; and 70-80 percent in the remaining eight.*
- *Passing rates of children improved from 75-100 percent in 24 out of the 28 communitised schools.*
- *Data from 17 of 28 villages showed a trend of children shifting from private schools to Government schools indicating growing confidence in the quality of Government schools. Private school closed in one village.*
- *Improved availability of textbooks with 100 schools receiving textbook grants in time<sup>16</sup>.*

In fact, going by the data available, linkages can be directly drawn between each key component that make up the system of communitised schools, and outcomes as a result of the change in system. Table No. 5.1 exhibits some of these linkages.

Besides statistical data, however, there are also more encouraging, qualitative instances which clearly indicate a response from the community to the idea of ownership and participation. This is reflected in myriad examples, such as the local communities contributing materials to repair schools, or sponsoring additional teachers, at their own expenses. In some districts, civil society organizations like the Tribal Hohos (tribal bodies), students' unions, and church groups have provided concrete assistance in cash, kind and in form of free labour to their communitised schools<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> Pandey, R.S. 2007, "Power to the Common". *Gfiles Inside the Government*, Volume 2, Issue 4: 14-15.

<sup>17</sup> Bansal, <http://mdoner.gov.in/storiesdetails.asp?sid=18>.

**Table No. 5.1.**

**Linkages Of Key Components In A Communitised School**

CHANNELS OF IMPACT	NATURE OF OUTCOME
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance improvement</li> <li>• Timely receipt of salaries</li> </ul>
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased enrolment</li> <li>• Improved attendance</li> <li>• Reduction in drop-out rates</li> <li>• Increased pass percentage</li> </ul>
Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systematic maintenance of records</li> <li>• Improved infrastructure with more channelized funding through SSA</li> </ul>
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better monitoring of funds</li> <li>• Local inputs in schooling process</li> <li>• Strengthening of Parent Teachers Association</li> <li>• Active participation</li> </ul>

*The community of Imrongtema Khel, Khar Village in Mokokchung District contributing free labour service at the GPS construction site*



*Photo Source :Nodal Office, Communitisation, Directorate of School Education, Government of Nagaland*



**Box 5.1*****Instances Of Direct Community Involvement***

In MOPUNGCHUKET village, Mokokchung District, the village community has, on its own, employed a Hindi teacher on a monthly salary to remedy the inadequacy in teaching Hindi.

In KHUZAMA village under Kohima District, village college students assist in teaching and keep a vigil on children attending schools. The village youth organization has electrified one school building themselves.

In MAIKHAM Village in Peren District, the GMS building (7 rooms), seen here, was constructed by the village community by contributing financial assistance, free labour service and building materials in addition to two rooms extension sanction granted under SSA civil work.

While the nature of community responses to the programme is diverse and disparate, collective assessment of qualitative data from across the State clearly indicates a marked increase in community ownership over local schools. This perhaps marks as the true indicator of the success of the communitisation programme in Nagaland.

In the light of these positive outcomes, the key question is: what was/is the recipe for success? There are three key factors, two of which are rooted in a State-specific context, that seem to have been instrumental.



*Photo Source : Nodal Office, Communitisation, Directorate of School Education, Government of Nagaland*







# *The Nagaland Context*

KEY FACTORS

## 6.1. COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Communitisation began out of a quest to improve the functioning of a grass root level public institution through the inputs of social capital. The communitisation of elementary education, for the most part, won strong support from local communities in the State. In many districts, village elders, students' unions and other social groups have come forward not only with verbal encouragement but also assistance in cash and free labour during the implementation process<sup>18</sup>. The momentum of community support has only grown over time and this has been the primary reason for the success of the communitisation experience.

It is important to discuss this crucial issue of community support within a cultural context. In Naga society, across rural and urban environments, and across tribes, “the village” is the real and symbolic basis of individual identity. With its well-organized



<sup>18</sup> Government of Nagaland, 2003, *The First Year of Communitisation of Elementary Education in Nagaland, 2002-2003*, Department of Education, p 46.

tribal bonds and institutions that serve as social capital, “the community” based on the village, has always played a central role in preparing citizens become contributing and valued members. In traditional Naga society, education, through oral instructions on practical daily living, has been understood as the community’s responsibility. Even before the British rule in the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when Naga villages functioned as self-sufficient, self-governed republics, institutions such as the “morungs” (youth dormitories) existed in these republics to instruct clan/community members on their history, culture, politics and nurture them into adulthood as members of “a community.”

The communitisation programme has clearly been able to tap into this traditional, culture-specific social capital, which no doubt played a strong role in the response that it received from the people. Indeed, specifying this very objective, an early Government document on communitisation in the State states:

*The spirit and the system of communitisation is expected to re-generate...an awareness and a desire to strengthen and bank upon the social capital of the community that was, but dormant and untapped.*

*The act of community involvement and participation revives the spirit of ownership of the schools and a sense of belongingness.*

*It is hoped that the process of Communitisation would ultimately bring about an education relevant to the people, restoring them to a position of self-reliance<sup>19</sup> .*

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p 15.

## 6.2. A GOVERNMENT AT WORK : ROLE OF THE STATE AS ENABLER

The Nagaland communitisation story is reflective of what can be achieved if only a governance system contains hard-working bureaucrats with vision, determination and planning. This key ingredient was what transformed a mere concept into reality in Nagaland.

The role of R.S. Pandey, then Chief Secretary of Nagaland, in mobilizing support and conceptualizing the communitisation model into a workable one, was key. It was Pandey, who first coined the term “communitisation” in 2001, and circulated a concept paper on promoting Government-community partnership and channelising Naga “social capital” into management of social services. The early stage of transforming the vision into reality was a widely consultative process, seeking inputs from not only concerned Government departments, but also retired education officers who contributed with their institutional knowledge<sup>20</sup>.

Moreover, a high level of motivation and coordination among key functionaries seem to have marked the preparatory phase of the programme<sup>21</sup>. The capacity building training sessions that took place in 2002-2003, and the procedures that were set in place for financial transactions, as discussed earlier, indicate a high level of preparedness and organization on the part of the State Government.

The work of officers and staff in the State Department of Education has been particularly laudatory. The Department not only played a key role in getting the programme off the ground, but has brought out publications (in 2003, 2004, 2007 and 2009) documenting various aspects of the communitisation programme. These serve as valuable resources for public information that may otherwise not have been available.

While the capacity of the State machinery to evolve and deal with future loopholes in the system remains to be seen, there is no doubt that the Nagaland example is a case study of how an active State Government can be instrumental in bringing about real systemic reforms.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, p 17-18.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, p 21.

### 6.3. SYNERGY WITH SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

Thirdly, the synergistic support the State received from national programmes, in particular the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), has been key in taking forward the work of communitisation in the education sector. The SSA, initiated at the national level to universalize elementary education through community-ownership in a partnership involving the Central, the State and the local Governments, was launched in Nagaland in 2003<sup>22</sup>. The intervention by SSA -in the form of resources and funds -provided the communitisation programme with much needed support<sup>23</sup>.

The use of the aid provided by SSA in the communitisation programme is varied and substantial. It ranges from provision of free text books and school bags, and teachers' grants (utilized for the purposes of purchasing teaching materials), to infrastructural support such as constructions of school buildings, water tanks, toilet facilities, computer aided learning facilities and numerous education block resource centres<sup>24</sup>.



<sup>22</sup> Government of India, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, A Programme for Universal Elementary Education Framework for Implementation, Department of Secondary and Higher Education, [http://www.education.nic.in/ssa/ssa\\_1.asp#1.0](http://www.education.nic.in/ssa/ssa_1.asp#1.0).

<sup>23</sup> Government of Nagaland, 2007, Achievement of Communitisation of Elementary Education through Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in the Year 2005-2006, Department of Education.

<sup>24</sup> Government of Nagaland, 2003, The First Year of Communitisation of Elementary Education in Nagaland, 2002-2003, Department of Education, p 59.







# *Conclusion*

CHALLENGES AND THE WAY FORWARD

## 7.1. CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

Clearly, communitisation initiatives have enormous potential to make the best use of the available social capital in Nagaland through decentralization, accountability and developing a sense of responsibility in its citizens. Each VEC, in particular, has its own unique quality and developing its own road map for excellence must be encouraged. There is also a need for the programme to become more inclusive and dynamic, and attract various forms of community-private partnerships. Initiatives such as the “SOCHUM” project present an encouraging trend. (Box 7.1)

### Box 7.1.

#### *The Sochum Project*

*The word “SOCHUM” is extracted from the Chang dialect meaning Dormitory, a centre of learning for upcoming generations. The Sochum project was being initiated by an NGO -the Eleuthorus Christian Society -in Tuensang district. Under the project, school going children from Class II to V are taken care of by the Society to promote quality education and impart life skills to the children. An MoU has been signed between the State Mission Authority (SMA) and the Eleuthorus Christian Society on a pilot basis. The project is purely residential and is being implemented in five villages. Depending on the success of this project, the SMA and the implementing agency is contemplating to extend it to other districts of the State<sup>25</sup>.*

While the overall outcomes of the communitisation programme in Nagaland give cause for cheer, it is important to highlight key discrepancies that are present. Some of these relate to:

- Inadequacy of teachers
- Transfer of teachers with posts
- Non-posting of Vocational Teachers and Grade IV staff, particularly, to Government Middle Schools (GMS)
- Non-reporting/non-joining of teachers. Very often teachers are transferred (in their own interest) and the reliever does not report or join his new posting, affecting the smooth functioning of the school
- Problem of monitoring and evaluation
- Instances of discrepancies in fund utilization by VECs under SSA.

Shortage of teachers in almost all the schools in rural areas is the most common problem plaguing the system. Many schools function without adequate teachers. There are many single teacher schools, where a single teacher has to look after five to six classes at a time. This poses a major problem for the schools’ administrative functioning and the quality of education that is imparted.

<sup>25</sup>Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Nagaland, 2009, *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in Nagaland, Volume 1, Issue 1.*

A cause for this problem is that most of the teachers appointed to their sanctioned post are transferred to an urban area along with the post. These transfers crowd the schools at the district headquarters which become over staffed, while the rural areas suffer from the deficiency. When the Department tries to re-deploy excess teachers to their original postings, it often turns out that every teacher (posting) is backed by a politician. Political intervention prevails even during recruitment of teachers, which compels the Department to appoint teachers who are unwilling to go to their allocated postings, other than those in an urban location<sup>26</sup>.

The current trend of appointing private candidates of VIPs as teachers has to end, if the communitisation programme in the education sector is to realize its full, rich potential. Pleasing vote banks for immediate political gains will be detrimental to the future of our children and the society at large. To meet the standards of the new pedagogy system, a serious re-examination of the recruitment process of teachers is required. This should be conducted only on the basis of well-defined criteria, completely excluding the “criterion” of political connections and fictitious appointments. The need to attract teachers who are willing to innovate according to the demands that arise out of ground challenges, could not be greater.

At the administrative level, to sustain the programme effectively, a proper system of evaluation, monitoring and feedback has to be articulately worked out. A 2007 exposure visit and inspection of communitised schools by nodal and field officers to conduct interaction meeting with VECs, WECs, teachers and parents was a positive exercise. However, there is a clear need to expedite a clear-cut process of identifying agencies or officers, even at lower levels, to whom the responsibility of evaluation and monitoring should be entrusted.

The management of quality education is a daunting task. In a system like the communitisation programme, it is all the more so because dynamic adaptation and fine-tuning (of the system) to local situations are required. To what extent the current programme absorbs and responds to this need, will be a key factor in sustaining the momentum of this unique and creative system.

<sup>26</sup>Government of Nagaland, 2007, *Achievement of Communitisation of Elementary Education through Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in the Year 2005-2006*, Department of Education, p 8.

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