

Reservation Policy of Government Issues in Manipur University

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Abstract

The Reservation Policy in India is centered on the Constitutional Framework for reservation. The Constitution of India provides reservations in (political, educational and employment). Reservation is a form of affirmative action in which a percentage of seats are reserved in educational institutions, Government services and Political bodies of the State and Central. In this paper, policies of reservation of the Government of India (GoI) in higher education has been highlighted. In addition to that, the various policies related to reservation of seats and issues related to reservation in the Manipur University are also analysed and discussed. Further, the paper discusses the need to understand those issues and problems of reservation policies in higher education of Manipur University.

INTRODUCTION

Reservation in our country is a form of affirmative action to improve the well-being of the backward, underprivileged and under-represented communities defined primarily by their caste or tribe. The reservation policies under the Constitution of our country, the beneficiaries are primarily Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Other Backward Classes

(OBC). The policies of reservation in admission and recruitment of staff at Manipur University have been an issue (Leisangthem, 2017). The problems and issues related to reservation of seats in admission need to be resolved in time to retain and maintain the academic atmosphere of the University in long run as well as for the future career of the students. In 2008, there has been problem of reservation in the recruitment of

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teaching staff (Leisangthem, 2017) and issues of reservation of seats in admission of students in the Manipur University after the implementation of the Central Educational Institutions Act, 2006 (CEI, Act, 2006) and Amendment Act 2012. The issue of reservation became worse in 2016 resulting in the total shut down of Manipur University for a few weeks after protest by students regarding reservation of seats in admission. So, there is a need to understand this issue and problems of reservation policy in the University.

EARLIER RESEARCHES IN RESERVATION POLICIES

There have been many researches and policy analysis of the Government reservation policies by the researchers across different disciplines. The aim of the Indian reservation system is to boost the opportunities for improved social and instructive position of the underprivileged communities and, thus, allow them to take their equitable place in the conventional Indian society (Jangir, 2013). The underlying theory is that the under-representation of the identifiable groups is a legacy of the Indian caste systems. The Constitution of India listed some erstwhile groups as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Yesu and Gokulraja, 2015). Reservation has today become a major social issue and therefore needs a more in-depth solution (Rathod, 2012). The reservation policy was only for 10 years after the

independence, for upliftment of SC and ST but no step has been taken to amend or revise or change it. Nearly 33 per cent voting is done by SC and ST so if the Government make change in reservation policy then they have to suffer a lot for the same (Jangir, 2013). In 1982, the Constitution specified 15 per cent and 7.5 per cent of vacancies in public sector and government-aided educational institutes as a quota reserved for the SC and ST candidates respectively, for a period of five years, after which the quota system would be reviewed. This period was routinely extended by the succeeding governments. The Supreme Court of India ruled that reservations cannot exceed 50 per cent (which it judged would violate equal access guaranteed by the Constitution) and put a cap on reservations (Jangir, 2013). Reservations are intended to increase the social diversity in campuses by lowering the entry criteria for certain identifiable groups that are grossly under-represented in proportion to their numbers in the general population (Yesu and Gokulraja, 2015). Scholars have argued that the low caste movements first arose in the south because of the greater ritual repression there by the Brahmins, compared to the north (Rathod, 2012). The goal of reservation in India is to bring about an improvement in the welfare of people who are economically and socially depressed. But, who should be eligible for reservation, the criterion has been a

person's caste rather than his income or wealth (Jangir, 2013). These reservations are also dividing Indians in the name of castes or groups which are a sign of a concern for our nation in the long run. Caste-based consciousness will further caste divisions (Rathod, 2012). During the Vedic period, a person's '*Varna*' (not 'caste') was determined by their socio-economic duties which were assigned by the local superintendent or of their own accord, and '*Varna*' was originally not defined by one's birth into any exacting family. Over the years caste has been defined by one's birth (Jangir, 2013). In 1990, the whole process of reservations got intensified with implementation of recommendations made by the Mandal Commission (Rathod, 2012). Caste is the most used criteria to identify under-represented groups. However, there are other identifiable criteria for under-representation: gender (women), state of domicile (North Eastern States, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh), rural people, etc. are under-represented, as revealed by the Government of India sponsored National Family Health and National Sample surveys (Yesu and Gokulraja, 2015). When, in 2006, the government announced its decision to extend reservations for OBCs to higher education, the criticisms became even sharper and was accompanied by the belief that the policy would adversely affect the country's economic growth (Mahajan, 2008). The Act, (CEI Act, amendment

2008) has not had a significant positive impact on OBC participation in states that have introduced the policy (Basant and Sen, 2016). Researchers have found that political representation of socio-economically marginalised groups generate positive policy and welfare outcomes, and the presence of these leaders can impact children and students to improve educational aspirations, attainment, and performance through a role model effect (Cho, 2014).

RESERVATION POLICY OF GOI AND UGC GUIDELINES FOR RESERVATION POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The Legislative Department under the Ministry of Law and Justice, has published the Gazette of India, the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Admission) Act, 2006 passed by the Act of Parliament. It is an Act to provide the reservation in admission of the students belonging to the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes of citizens, to certain Central Educational Institutions established, maintained or aided by the Central Government and for the matters connected therewith and incidental thereto. The reservation of seats in admission is 15 per cent seats for the Scheduled Castes, 7.5 per cent seats for Scheduled Tribes and 27 per cent seats for Other Backward Classes are reserved out of the annual permitted strength in each branch of study or faculty. The CEI Act, 2006 was amended in 2012. The Central

Government (MHRD, Department of Secondary and Higher Education) has issued the directions to the University Grants Commission in 2006, which states the following: The Article 46 of the Constitution, which states that, "The State shall promote, with special care, the education and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, in particular of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of social exploitation. The policy of the Central Government is that in the Central Universities receiving grants-in-aid from the public exchequer, the percentage of reservation in admissions and recruitments in teaching and non-teaching posts is 15 per cent for SC and 7.5 per cent for ST. The Government has directed the UGC to ensure effective implementation of the reservation policy in the Central Universities and those of Institutions Deemed to be Universities receiving aid from the public funds except in minority institutions under Article 30 (1) of the Constitution. The UGC has the mandate of maintaining the standards of higher education regarding adequate representation of teaching and non-teaching staff as well as of students belonging to SC and ST communities in all the Universities, Deemed to be Universities, Colleges and other grant-in-aid or research Institutions and Centres. So, UGC has issued policy guidelines to all the Universities, Deemed to be

Universities, Colleges and other grant-in-aid or research Institutions and Centres, directed to adopt the guidelines by appropriate resolution by the respective Governing/Executive Bodies/Syndicate/Senate etc. for effective implementation of those guidelines. The reservation of SC and ST communities is applicable to all admissions to Undergraduate, Postgraduate, M. Phil. and Ph. D. courses of educational institutions.

The relaxation and concession in respect of educational qualification, age, experience and qualifying marks/standard etc. will be as per existing government rules in all cases of admissions, recruitments, appointments, promotions and other assignments of entitlements to the members of SC/ST. All the educational institutions have the extent of reservation applicable as 15 per cent for SC and 7.5 per cent for ST. Without prejudice to the provisions of 15 per cent for SC and 7.5 per cent for ST in all the educational institutions, and functioning within any State will follow the percentage of reservation prescribed by the respective State Government. No restriction of per centage is applicable while filling-up of back-log/short-fall vacancies of SC/ST.

PROCEDURE IN MATTERS OF RESERVATION FOR ADMISSION AS PER UGC GUIDELINES

Those SC/ST candidates who have appeared in national or state/common or University or Institution tests held

for the purpose of admission can seek admission or claim reservation in order to avail the quota of seats reserved for them. In cases where test does not prescribed as necessary for selecting candidates for admission, a merit list should be arranged among the SC/ST candidates based on the marks obtained in the qualifying examination. Rules of reservation are applicable for under-graduate as well as post-graduate levels and research degrees. Each academic year should have a percentage of reservation applied separately and not whenever interviews take place, or recruitment is made. Rules of interchangeability among SCs and STs are applicable, wherever necessary to fill-up the number of vacant seats. The vacant seats in the reserved quota should not be filled by any non-SC/ST candidates in case no eligible reserved candidates are available. All institutions (Universities, Deemed to be Universities, Colleges and other grant-in-aid or research Institutions and Centres) should give the maximum possible encouragement and support to girls of SC/ST in admission. Each University/Institution should appoint a Liaison Officer, who will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of reservation under those guidelines. All the Universities/Institutions should establish an SC/ST Cell in order to process the grievances of the members of these communities. An Advisory Committee with Vice

Chancellor or Principal as Chairman should be constituted to review the implementation of reservation policy in admission and capacity programmes for successful passing of SC/STs in examinations. The Universities should initiate action to effect necessary amendments to their Acts/Statutes for the statutory support for reservation in admission, appointments to teaching and non-teaching posts and representation of SC/ST in their bodies like Syndicate, Executive Council, Academic Council, Selection Committees, etc. The Ministry of Human Resource and Development has directed the Registrar of universities to follow the reservation policy in admissions in all courses as provisions contained in the Central Educational Institutions Act, 2006 and as amended in 2012 (Reservation in Admission).

RESERVATION POLICY OF ADMISSION IN MANIPUR UNIVERSITY

In the Manipur University, seats for candidates belonging to SC/ST/OBC/PWD are reserved as per Government of India norms (B.Ed. course prospectus, Manipur University, 2017). The SC/ST/OBC candidates who have secured marks above the level up to which general category candidates are selected then they will not be counted towards reserved quota and will be included in the general merit list of admission. Two seats are reserved for the candidates who have participated in the events

representing the State/University at the inter University/National/International competition of sports or other co-curricular activities. They should have participated when they were at the post 10+2 level. In case of PG courses, only one seat is reserved in each disciplines of Biochemistry, Biotechnology, Adult Education, Mass Communication, Anthropology, Forestry and Environmental Science, Earth Sciences, Dance (Manipuri) and Library and Information Science and two seats are reserved in each of the other disciplines for such candidates.

In each discipline, three per cent of the seats are reserved for PWD candidates that can be availed by producing a certificate from the competent authority. If suitable candidates are not available, reserved seats are deemed to be unreserved as per Government of India norms. In case of PG courses, if the Defence Service personnel fulfil the prescribed qualifications for admission to the discipline concerned then one supernumerary seat will be given. Five per cent of seats are reserved for the wards of the Indian workers in the Gulf out of the 15 per cent supernumerary seats for foreign students. For the displaced Kashmiri migrants, two supernumerary seats will be provided. The Myanmar students subject to the nomination by the Government of Myanmar, two supernumerary seats in the Department of Teacher Education may be given. The candidates may

not appear in the admission test and special concession may be given in tuition and lodging fees. In case of PG courses, the Myanmar students subject to the nomination by the Government of Myanmar may be given two supernumerary seats in different departments under the school of Humanities and Social Sciences.

The children of the regular employees of the University will be given two supernumerary seats in the Department (BA Dance and BA Music). In case of PG program, the child of the regular employees of the University will be given one supernumerary seats in each Department with laboratory component and two supernumerary seats in each department without laboratory component. At least 20 per cent of the total seats preference will be given to the students of other states (domicile) in the Department (BA Dance and BA Music). In Ph.D. and Master's program in the Department of Life Sciences, Chemistry, Physics and Manipuri, preference may be given to the students of other states by domicile to the extent of at least 20 per cent of the prescribed seats under the Special Assistance Programme of the University Grants Commission.

ISSUES OF RESERVATION POLICY OF MU AFTER UPGRADATION INTO CENTRAL UNIVERSITY

Manipur University was a State University till 2005 and it has been upgraded into a Central University

in December 2005. When, it was a State University, it had followed State reservation policy. According to the State norm, 31 per cent of seats were reserved for the candidates belonging to ST and 2 per cent of seat reserved for the SC candidates in admission. According to the Central University norm, 7.5 per cent of seats should be reserved for ST candidates and 15 per cent for SC in admission of students and the recruitment of vacant post of teaching staff.

When the University was State University, the reservation of a seat in admission for ST candidates in each discipline was thirty-one per cent and two per cent for candidates who belong to SC category. It has been following the State University reservation norm. The unfilled seats, if any, reserved for SC candidates will be filled up by admitting ST candidates and vice-versa. As per the Government of India Gazette No.5 of 2006, capacity expansion for OBC reservation is implemented from the 2008-09 session. Reservation of OBC student on admission as per Central University norm is 27 per cent. This 27 per cent of seat were to be covered within three years, so, nine per cent is covered in the academic session 2008-2009 (Leisangthem, 2017). Those who have secured marks above the level up to which general category students are admitted, should not be counted towards reserved quota at all and should be included in the general merit list of admission. One seat is reserved in each of

the disciplines of Anthropology, Earth Sciences, Biochemistry, Adult Education, Dance (Manipuri), Mass Communication, Library and Information Science for candidates who have represented State/ University at the Inter-University National/ International competition of sports or other extra-curricular activities and two seats are reserved in each of the other disciplines for such candidates. Such when, candidates should have participated in the events when they were at post 10+2 level. Three percent of seats in each discipline are reserved for disabled persons. One supernumerary seat was given in every discipline of the University to the Defense Services personnel in case they fulfill the prescribed qualifications for admissions to the discipline concerned. Five per cent seats out of the 15 per cent supernumerary seats for foreign students were reserved for the wards of Indian workers in the Gulf. One supernumerary seat also may be provided to the displaced Kashmiri migrants. Preference may be given to the students of other States (by domicile) on at least 20 per cent of the prescribed seats in the Department of Life Sciences under the Special Assistance Programme of the University Grants Commission. Reserved seats were deemed to be unreserved if suitable candidates were not available.

In the month of September and October 2008, the reservation issue hampered the academic atmosphere

of the Manipur University. This issue started when the Vice-Chancellor of the Manipur University tried to recruit three Guest Lecturers of the History Department as per Central University norm. In 2008, the Tribal union met the then Prime Minister regarding reservation policy in the Manipur University, the State Government's reservation norm should be allowed to follow instead of Central Government's reservation norm. Manipur University has been following State reservation norm since it was a State University which had 31 per cent seats reserved for ST candidates and after upgradation

to Central University status, it has been reduced to 7.5 per cent seats reservation. The Tribal Union were against this new reservation policy which has reduced the reserved seats for tribal candidates (Leisangthem, 2017).

When University was a State University, the seat reservation system for SC was two per cent, 31 per cent for ST and 17 per cent for OBC. After, it has been upgraded into a Central University, the reservation of seat is 15 percent for SC, 7.5 per cent for ST and 27 per cent for OBC (Leisangthem, 2017).

Table 1 A
Students Enrolment in Manipur University Teaching
Departments (2015-16)

Course	GENERAL			SC			ST			OBC			PWD			Total	
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F
UG	69	72	141	16	8	24	22	28	50	70	76	146	-	-	-	177	184
PG	268	237	505	77	69	146	473	398	871	383	549	932	4	-	4	1205	1253
Diploma	43	25	68	2	4	6	23	12	35	48	41	89	-	-	-	116	82
PhD	75	86	161	48	38	86	78	59	137	136	123	259	3	3	6	340	309
Total	455	420	875	143	119	262	596	497	1093	637	789	1426	7	3	10	1838	1828
Grand Total: 3666																	

Source: Manipur University Website

M-Male F-Female T-Total Male and Female

The above table shows the enrolment of students in Manipur University in different level of courses and categories of students both male and female. There are five categories of students ie, General, SC, ST, OBC

and PWD. The grand total of both male and female students enrolled in the academic year 2015-16 is 3666 and there is not much gap in the number of male and female enrolment.

Table 1 B
Students Enrolment in Manipur University Teaching
Departments (2015-16)

Course	GENERAL		SC		ST		OBC		PWD		Total
	M F	%	M F	%	M F	%	M F	%	M F	%	M F
UG	141	39	24	7	50	14	146	40	-	-	361
PG	505	21	146	6	871	35	932	38	4	0.1	2458
Diploma	68	34	6	3	35	18	89	45	-	-	198
PhD	161	25	86	13	137	21	259	40	6	0.9	649
Total	875	24	262	7	1093	30	1426	39	10	0.2	3666
Grand Total: 3666											

Source: Manipur University Website

MF-Both Male and Female T-Total Male and Female

This table is same as above Table no. 1A but in this table, number of per cent enroled in each categories of students (both male and female) is calculated. The PWD students' enrolment in UG and Diploma course for the academic session 2015-16 is nil. The percentage of students enroled in OBC category is higher

than General category of students for all level of courses in the academic year 2015-16. ST category students enroled in UG course is 14 per cent and in PG course is 35 per cent. SC category students enroled in Diploma course is 3 per cent and in Ph.D. course is 13 per cent.

Table 2 A
Students Enrolment in Manipur University Teaching
Departments (2011-12)

Course	GENERAL			SC			ST			OBC			PWD			Total	
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F
UG	8	11	19	4	3	7	8	1	9	19	31	50	-	-	-	39	46
PG	126	167	293	68	95	163	352	190	542	480	668	1148	-	-	-	1026	1120
Sub Total	134	178	312	72	98	170	360	191	551	499	699	1198	-	-	-	1065	1166
PhD	175	195	370	51	21	72	77	49	126	130	117	247	-	-	-	433	382
Total	309	373	682	123	119	242	437	240	677	629	816	1445	-	-	-	1498	1548
Grand Total: 3046																	

Source: Manipur University Website

M-Male F-Female T-Total Male and Female

This table shows the students' enrolment of all the categories for the academic session 2011–12 both male and female for UG, PG and Ph.D. courses. The grand total of students

enrolled in the University for this academic session 2011–12 is 3046. There is not much gender gap in the total enrolment (male number is 1498 and female number is 1548).

Table 2 B
Students Enrolment in Manipur University Teaching Departments (2011–12)

Course	GENERAL		SC		ST		OBC		PWD		Total
	M F	%	M F	%	M F	%	M F	%	M F	%	M F
UG	19	22	7	8	9	11	50	59	-	-	85
PG	293	14	163	8	542	25	1148	53	-	-	2146
Sub Total	312	14	170	8	551	25	1198	54	-	-	2231
PhD	370	45	72	9	126	15	247	30	-	-	815
Total	682	22	242	8	677	22	1445	47	-	-	3046
Grand Total: 3046											

Source: Manipur University Website

MF – Both Male and Female T – Total Male and Female

In this Table 2 B, per cent age of students enrolled in different categories are added to the above table number 2 A. In the academic year 2011–12, there were no students enrolment in PWD category and SC students enrolled is eight per cent for all courses. Only twenty-two per cent of students enrolled are general category for all courses and OBC category has highest number of enrolment in UG (59%) and PG (53%) courses. There is variation in the number of percentage of students enrolled in ST category in UG (11%), PG (25%) and Ph. D (15%).

DISCUSSION

The State Legislature of Manipur passed the Manipur University Act, 1980 and the University came

into existence on 5th June, 1980. Since then, it has been a State University, the norms of reservation of the Manipur State was followed in the University for the admission of students in different courses. The Manipur University was State University, therefore, it was following the State reservation norms, the percentages of reservation for ST, SC and OBC were 31 per cent, 2 per cent and 17 per cent respectively for admission to various courses in the University which were applicable prior to upgradation of Central University status and prior to implementation of the Central Educational Institutes Act, 2006 and its amendment Act, 2012. By the Act of Parliament in 2005, the Manipur University Act was passed and the University became

a Central University on 3rd October, 2005. In 2006, CEI Act (Reservation in Admission), 2006 was passed and came into implementation in 2007-08. The CEI Act, 2006 and its amendment Act is applicable to the Manipur University for the reservation of seats in the different courses of the University which is governed by the clauses (i), (ii) and (iii) of Section 3 of CEI Act of 2006 which leads to the percentage of reservation for the candidates of SC, ST and OBC at 15 per cent, 7.5 per cent and 27 per cent respectively. The Manipur University being a Central University has been open to all the eligible candidates of the country for admission and norms for reservation of seats provided in part of Section 3 of CEI Act, 2006 is applicable but it is unrealistic to the demographic population of the State. The State of Manipur has a high tribal population, a very small SC population and lower OBC population as compared to all India demographic status. The CEI Act, 2006, seat reservation percentages of ST, SC and OBC are completely different from the actual existing demography of the Manipur. This reservation policy of CEI Act, 2006 and its amendment Act, 2012, completely side-lines the actual needs of the people of Manipur and the students of higher education in Manipur State in particular.

The State Government of Manipur, the Manipur University's governing bodies and decision-making bodies should understand the demographic reality of the State rather than

following the Central Government reservation norms which creates problems among the students and issues of reservation has always been hampering the academic atmosphere of the University time and again, in 2008 then, in 2016. The reservation issue was started way back from academic session 2008-2009, when the then VC tried to recruit three Guest teachers for History Department according to the Central University reservation norm CEI Act, 2006 (Leisangthem, 2017). The ST students and Tribal Union were protesting against the University for following the CEI Act, 2006 which has deducted the reservation seats for the ST candidates. The reservation problem has been worsening the academic atmosphere of the University since upgradation into Central University status. The Manipur University following the CEI Act, 2006 and the amendment Act, 2012 has created problems among the students due to unrealistic approach of the University without considering the demographic status of the State. It has deprived the rights of tribal students of higher education in the State and as a result they have protested and the University was totally shut down for few weeks in 2016. If Manipur University continues to follow the CEI Act, 2006 and its amendment Act 2012, reservation of number of seats in the admission of different courses, then it will effectively deprive higher education in Manipur University to most of the

tribal students in Manipur and nearby regions which also have huge tribal populations. The implementation of reservation policy in accordance with the Manipur University's central status is primarily incompatible with the ground reality of the State. This need is specifically relevant provided the fact that Manipur University is the main university providing general education to the students of higher education and it has also affiliated 90 Colleges which are existing in Manipur which provides higher education in the State (Leisangthem, 2017).

CONCLUSION

The Manipur University was established as State University in 1980, since then it has been following State Reservation norms in admission of students. The University has followed the State Reservation Policy of 31 per cent for ST and 2 per cent for SC for admission into various courses of the University, in keeping with the demographic reality of Manipur. Subsequently, the Manipur University was upgraded to Central University status in 2005. In 2006, the Manipur University has to implement the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Admission) Act,

2006. This resulted in a reservation distribution that gave 15 per cent for SC, 7.5 per cent for ST and 27 per cent for OBC, as in prevalent in all Central Educational Institutions of the country. The problem with these numbers is that these percentages are completely different from the actual existing demographic reality of Manipur. The population of Manipur is 28.56 lakhs according to the 2011 population census of India. Out of this population, 3.41 per cent is scheduled castes communities, 40.88 percent are of scheduled tribes, 55.71 per cent are other communities (Economic Survey Manipur, 2017). Manipur is a State with a high tribal population and a very small SC population, these new reservation numbers completely side lines the actual needs of Manipuri society in the context of the Manipur University.

Since, education is included in the concurrent list of our constitution, it is the responsibility of both the State Government and Central Government to solve this issue of reservation of seats in the Manipur University. A proper measure to resolve the issue of reservation for long term is the need of the hour.

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