

Distinctiveness: Minority Institute

Lilong Haoreibi College is the only higher educational institute located at the heart of the socially, economically and educationally backward minority Muslims concentrated district in Manipur. It may be declared as '**Minority College**' yet the population status, despite of its geomorphological factors, as compared to other states, deprived of facilities extendable to a minority college. However, the state government is looking into the matter of **minority status** of the college with provisions for opening post graduate courses in selected disciplines. The most distinctive feature lies in the fact that the Minority Affairs is also paying special attention for the development of the college. Two 50 bedded capacity hostels were developed with funding from the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment through the minority affairs. The two hostels - one for the boys and another for the girls located at the separate sites have been functioning from 2019-20 sessions with the accommodation of students belonging to the economically backward and BPL families from remote areas. The college not only captures local students, but also other minority concentrated villages such as Sangaiyumpham and Yairipok in Thoubal District, Khetrigao and Keirao in Imphal East District, Mayang Imphal and Wangoi in Imphal West District, Wabagai and Sora in Kakching District, Bora Yangbi and Kwakta in Bishnupur District. Muslim girls from these villages prefer this college as they think it a safer place for their higher learning. Communication is also easily accessible as it is located near the Indo Myanmar International Highway, only 8 kilometres down from Imphal, the capital city of Manipur.

Looking back to one decade from now, the literacy rate of Manipuri Muslims was recorded at 58% only which was much below the state's average of 70.5%. Female literacy was still far behind with only 41.6% the Males with 75%. The college has been focussing on boosting up more number of female students in academic activities. More than 90% of the State's Muslim girls had been given higher education in the college with quality and competency. More than 2,000 students enrolled in all the semesters of BA/BSc in the current academic session with nearly 800 girls in 15 different subject disciplines. B Voc. degree programme in Agriculture has also been introduced from the academic session 2020-21 under the UGC scheme as most of the local people practice kitchen gardening and other agriculture and allied fields. Women vegetable vendors are seen in the markets where Muslim girls are also practicing in large number assisting their parents in economic activities. In order to provide the local needs, the specialised trade in agricultural sector has been opened in the college. In a nutshell, the college is specially designed to meet the requirements of the minority community in the state and hence, it may be regarded as a unique college distinctly different from any other colleges in the state.

The following table highlights the male and female students enrolled in the BA/BSc first semester annually since the last five years which indicates the uniqueness of the college.

Sl. No.	Year	Enrolment : Community wise				Grand Total	Muslims%			
		Muslims			Other communities		M%	F%	T%	Other%
		Male	Female	Tot						
1	2015-16	317	173	490	20	512	62%	34%	96%	4%
2	2016-17	426	196	622	16	643	66%	31%	97%	3%
3	2017-18	424	230	654	23	679	62%	34%	96%	4%
4	2018-19	334	129	463	09	475	70%	27%	97%	3%
5	2019-20	565	289	854	08	864	65%	34%	99%	1%
6	2020-21	728	373	1101	12	1116	65%	34%	99%	1%

Table I: Community wise enrolment in Lilong Haoreibi College

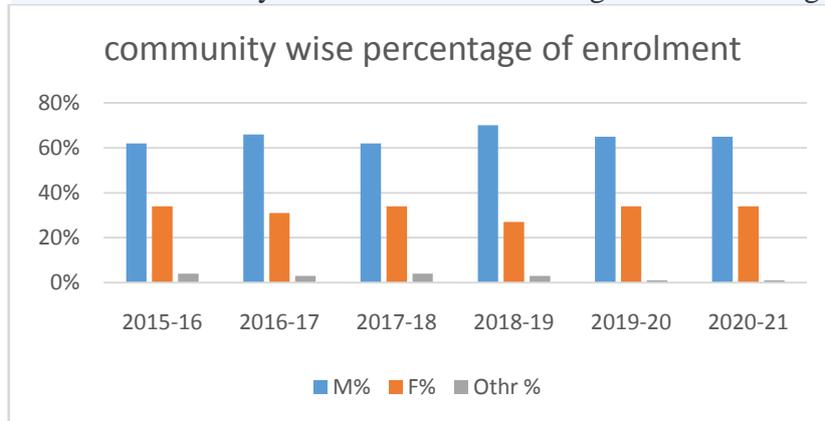


Figure 1: Bars representing percentage of Muslim male, female and other communities

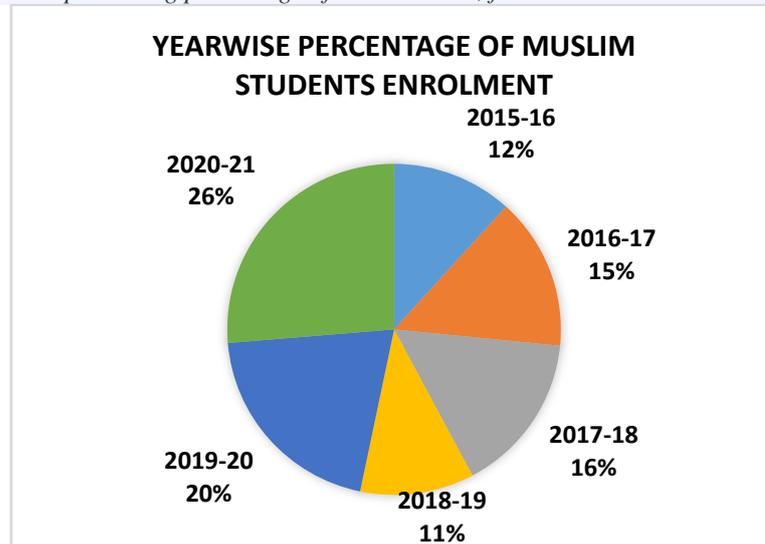


Figure 2: Pie-Chart showing annual percentage of Muslim male, female and other communities

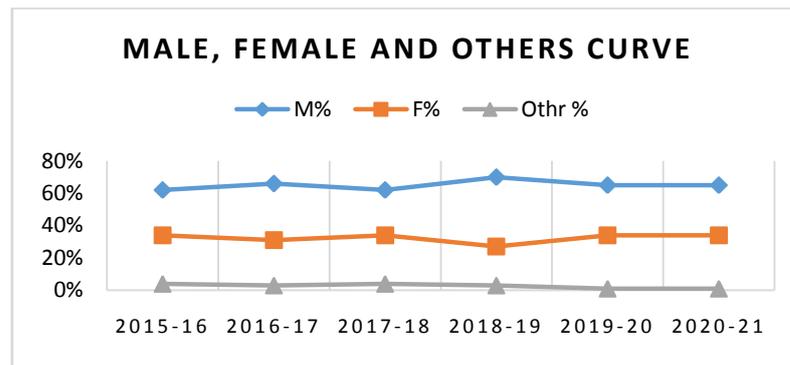


Figure 3: Curves showing enrolment of Muslim male, Muslim female and other community students.

From the above, it is evident that the average rate of girls' enrolment increases in a very slow rate over the last a couple of years whereas, that of boys' decreases almost at the same pace. The situation is alarming and policies would be framed based on the above statistical picture. The college needs to focus specially on the girls' education and planning has to be adopted accordingly. Many factors contribute to the increasing number of Muslim girls of which, the location of the college is the most important. Other factors include provision of special facilities - career counselling cells, women grievances cell, hygienic girls' common room, gender equity initiatives, special sports events for girls, personality development club where 50% of the activities reserved for girls. Many PhD's / NET /JRF have been produced from amongst those who passed out from this Institute. It has been observed that more number of girls are participating in the competitions held at the college, state, national and international levels. Most of the top positions in academics and other activities are captured by the girls. The pie chart shows annual growth of enrolment, the minimum enrolment being in the 2018-19 sessions and the maximum in 2020-21. In the previous years, the enrolment were below 1000 whereas it crossed 1000 in the current session because of COVID 19 pandemic, more seats were demanded by the local minority students.

In fact, Muslim society paid less attention to girls' education, more particularly, the higher education for girls. Religious leaders hardly encourage girls in general education other than the Islamic education. Because of lack of communication gap between two sections of the community, poor economy and religious constraints, many girls had to drop out after the higher secondary level. The College has a dedicated team of teachers association, students union and alumni who are in constant dialogues with the spiritual leaders in bridging the gap by organising inter disciplinary academic seminars and workshops where the modalities of joining girls in the higher education sector are minutely discussed and adopted. It is because of this coordination the number of girls in the college has been increasing over the last five years.