

Prospects of Higher Education in the midst of challenges in North East India with special reference to Arunachal Pradesh

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Abstract

In the development of an individual and the society as a whole, education has a very significant role to play. Education has the capacity to enlighten the soul of an individual and leads it to the light of freedom. Higher education has a significant role to play in the development of any nation. It has the capability to bring in positive socio economic and moral changes in the society. In spite of the prospects that the higher education sector have for a nation, it has been witnessed that though there have been tremendous increase in the quantity in the area of higher education, the qualitative growth have been somewhat dismal. Many problems are associated with the proper growth and development of higher education in North east India as a whole and in Arunachal Pradesh in particular. She has her own issues that have to be tackled and challenges that has to be met in order to walk in the path of growth and development.

The paper attempts to explain the issues, challenges and the problems of higher education in Arunachal Pradesh and provide some valuable suggestions and help in improvising the system of higher education in Arunachal Pradesh.

Keywords: higher education, Arunachal Pradesh, challenges, development, problems

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I. Introduction

The socio economic development of a country depends on the healthy higher education system. In the present era of knowledge driven economy the role of higher education becomes instrumental in the overall socio-economic development of any region or country. Institutions of higher education contribute to the growth of a nation by providing specialised knowledge and skilled manpower (Alva Amitha, Dr Hans Basil, 2013). Higher education mainly focuses on teaching, research and extension. If we analyze the different concepts of higher education critically, then we can list the various roles higher education plays in the society. Higher education is the source or feeder system in all walks of life and therefore supplies the much-needed human resources in management, planning, design, teaching and research. Scientific and technological advancement and economic growth of a country are also dependent on the higher education system. Development of indigenous technology and capabilities in agriculture, food security and other industrial areas are possible because of our world-class higher education. (Saranggi, Hota, 2018) After independence, India has witnessed a remarkable growth in the Higher Education system both in quantitative and qualitative terms. India's higher education system is the world's third largest in terms of students, next to China and the United States. Gross Enrollment ratio in India as per All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2019-20, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) (enrolment in HE/population of the eligible age group) in higher education has increased from 25.8% in 2017-18 to 27.1% in 2019-20. However it is still far from meeting the Ministry of Human Resource Development's target of achieving 32% GER by 2022. Despite the increased access to higher education in India, challenges remain. Low employability of graduates, poor quality of teaching, weak governance, insufficient funding, and complex regulatory norms continue to plague the sector.

Method of study

The study is based on secondary data collected from reputed articles of research journals, books, prominent sites relevant to higher education, magazines, etc. Second it is based on the experiences and observation of the author herself being a part of the higher education system and personal interview with the respondents.

Scenario of higher education institutions in north east states

Before independence of India, there were only 16 colleges in the north eastern region, majority were located in the Assam area. The establishment of the first University at Guwahati in January 1948 gave a real boost to the expansion of higher education from the pre-university up to the postgraduate and doctoral level in the whole of North East India. (Konwar, Chakravarty, 2013)

Table showing scenario of higher education in North East states

Sl. no	State	University/university level institutions
1	Arunachal Pradesh	03
2	Assam	10
3	Manipur	03
4	Meghalaya	09
5	Mizoram	03
6	Nagaland	04
7	Sikkim	05
8	Tripura	03

Total 40

Source: University Grants Commission, New Delhi (2012).

Comparison with mainland India

Higher education institutions were set up late among the region such as first college Cotton College in Guwahati was established in 1901 and the first university Guwahati University was set up in 1948 in Assam while universities in cities like Calcutta, Madras and Bombay were established in 1857, nearly a century earlier (Bala, Rina, 2016). During these present time also the disparity in the development of higher education in North East Region and the mainland India can be observed. North East is still lagging in the area in terms of Nos. Higher education institutions being established in the region. The following table is a reflection of this.

Sl no.	State	University/University Level institutions
1	Andhra Pradesh	46
2	Bihar	21
3	Chhatisgarh	15
4	Delhi	25
5	Goa	02
6	Gujarat	36
7	Haryana	22
8	Himachal Pradesh	18
9	Jammu & Kashmir	11
10	Jharkhand	12
11	Karnataka	42
12	Kerala	19
13	Madhya Pradesh	28
14	Maharashtra	44
15	Orissa	19
16	Punjab	17
17	Rajasthan	48
18	Tamil Nadu	59
19	Uttar Pradesh	58
20	Uttarakhand	19
21	West Bengal	26
22	Chandigarh	03
23	Puducherry	04

Source: UGC, New Delhi(2012)

Scenario in Arunachal Pradesh

The establishment of J N College, Pasighat during the year of 1964 marked the beginning of higher education in Arunachal Pradesh . it was established by the initiative of dr. Daying ering during the then North east Frontier Agency (NEFA) and is the premier institution of Higher learning (Prof Degi. Kesang, yaying, 2022). The college was initially affiliated to Guwahati university but after the establishment of Rajiv Gandhi

University (erstwhile Arunachal Pradesh University) in the year 1984 it got affiliated to RGU. The following table reflects the present educational institutions of Arunachal Pradesh

Table Showing the number of higher educational institutions in Arunachal Pradesh as on 1st January, 2020.

SL. No.	TYPE OF INSTITUTIONS	NUMBER OF INSTITUTION
1	Central University	01
2	National Institute of Technology	01
3	Regional Institute (Deemed University)	01
4	National Open University (IGNOU)	01
5	Private Universities	09
6	Other Central Institutions	03
7	Government Degree and Model Colleges	18
8	Govt. Law College	01
9	Private Degree Colleges	08
10	Private Professional Colleges	03
11	Teacher Training and Education (B.Ed) Colleges	09
12	Govt. Polytechnic	06
13	Private Polytechnics	01

Total

62

Source: Dr. Kesang Degi, Prof. dept. of Education, RGU,

The Problems

Infrastructure

One of the main challenge faced by Higher education institute in Arunachal Pradesh is the problem of shortage of physical infrastructure. Many Model colleges are being established in the remote areas along with the regular ones. These colleges faces the problem of the shortages of classrooms, faculty quarters, no proper facility to attend nature's call for the students, frequent power cuts prevents the use of ICT in the classrooms. There is shortage of Laboratory facilities for the science students and much more. Quality education is possible when facilities, resources and technologies are upgraded with adequate funds. Most of the colleges are not accredited by NAAC. Those colleges which are accredited by NAAC get woefully lower grade due to such issues as low quality input, inadequate teacher-student ratio, poor communication, etc. As a result, prospective grants are also curtailed. (Kaushal, Tamanna, 2016)

Shortage of Teachers

The positive outcome of teaching learning process depends on the availability of adequate and qualified teacher. Quality teachers always prefer better colleges/Universities in the sense better input, standard teacher student ratio, better communication, better physical facilities, better research facilities etc. and due to which the sometimes highly qualified teachers are not interested to work in a remote place like Arunachal Pradesh. Even the best minds of Arunachal also prefer administrative Jobs to a Teacher's Job. After the introduction of CBCS system in colleges, a teacher has to take at an average 3 to 5 paper per semester and besides that the internal test copies is being evaluated and doing invigilation duty becomes a herculean task. The teacher students ratio is worsening over the time and at an average it is 1: 350 students in JNC Pasighat.

Lack of Standard Technical Institutes

There is lack of good and standard technical institutes. The numbers of high class and excellent technical institutions like IIT and IIMs are not there. The students from the remote areas from Arunachal Pradesh has to go out of the state to other parts of India to get a technical education

High cost of higher education

The cost of getting higher education is getting dearer. During 2001 to 2006 the number of public institutions – both government and aided institutions has increased only marginally, whereas, private institutions have increased significantly. Nearly 30 per cent enrolment is in private unaided institutions, which do not receive any grants from the government. (Agarwal, Pawan 2006) There have been exorbitant rise in the fees of private colleges. Some sections of people are running higher education to earn profits. Privately managed college which provides professional courses like Bed charge 50 thousand to around 2 lakhs. The admission fees of these colleges are also very high which prohibits the students from poor background to pursue the courses

due to high cost of education (Gemur Nangkar). The poor and deserving students are denied of education as they are not able to afford the high cost of education Today in India the ambition of middle class and poor students to undergo higher and technical education is becoming a dream due to the huge amount of fees charged by the money minded private colleges.(Dr. Hiremath & Albal)

Research and Development

Qualitative research and development is an area which needs a proper attention. The research and development activities has to be given topmost priority since .The problem lies in not having proper infrastructure like laboratory to conduct experiments Science laboratory with high class facility is the need of the hour.

There is problem of accessibility, practices of corruption etc. The economic survey, 2019-20 reported that the proportion of GDP spent on Higher education was only around 3% between 2014-15 to 2019-19. Whereas, the National policy on education 1968 and NEP 2020 recommends the spending on education to be 6% of GDP. Budget allocation for 2022-23 has allocated rs.218.66 crore for research and innovation which is only 0.53% of 40,828.35 crore allocated for the higher education sector i.e less than 1% of the total allocation of fund in higher education.(Ndtv,Education)

Less facility for the women faculties

The numbers of Lady faculty have been increasing over these years and the ratio of female to male faculty is going up which is a healthy sign for the society. The women are equally working side by side with their male counterpart in building human resources and building human capital in the higher education sector. However it is very disheartening to see that the facilities which is being given to the lady faculties is not upto the mark. Basic facility like proper washroom, crèche facility for the mothers, no childcare leave provided etc. This problem significantly affect the efficiency and productivity of a lady teacher and consequently may affect the quality of teaching.

Locational problems

Arunachal Pradesh is located in the easternmost part of India. The location of our state sometimes become its own enemy. The transport cost of coming to the place becomes very high due to the distance from the mainland.Being one of the remotest part of India as well as of North East states also qualitative teachers from other part of India hesitate to come here due to the remoteness of the region.

Concluding remarks

The significant place of higher education in the growth and development of a region cannot be ruled out.In order to promote The higher education promotes socio- economic and industrial development in a country, by increasing capacity to develop skilled manpower of good quality in adequate number. The prospect of higher education and its capacity to fuel the economic growth of a region is limited by the challenges and problems associated to it which is reflected in the above paper. The various problems that have been highlighted in the paper ; problem of infrastructure, problem related to shortage of teachers specially needs to be addressed by the Government. Better and high class infrastructure, regular appointment of more teacher is the need of the hour. Paying extra incentive to the teachers coming from outside of Arunachal Pradesh, sticking strictly to the norms of catchment area during admission time and increasing the government expenditure in research and innovation.

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