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An inquiry into the education system of Meghalaya: A comparative analysis

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Abstract
This paper attempts to analyze the education system in Meghalaya and it is based on secondary data from different sources. This paper analyses the dropout rates, literacy rates, GER, GPI, student-teacher ratio, availability of different infrastructure and facilities in schools such as toilets, drinking water etc., enrolment and number of schools, colleges and universities in Meghalaya. Education is of prime importance for the all-round development of an individual. Education enhances the soft skills, analytical skills and cognitive abilities of the people. It empowered the people to use available information and utilize their acquired knowledge and skills to increase their productivity. The government has played a major role in providing education to the masses. The Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 declared that every child of the age of 6 to 14 years shall have a right to free and compulsory education in a neighborhood school till the completion of elementary education. In order to ensure that every child gets primary education, the Government of India has introduced several programs like District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Mid-day Meal scheme. The achievement in terms of education has immensely increased over the years no doubt. The number of enrolment at the primary, upper primary, secondary and higher education level has also increased over the years. A large number of students now are having access to education as compared to earlier years. This is the result of several programs that have been introduced by the government for providing education. However, the success of these programs is limited by leakages and loopholes in the implementation process. There is rampant corruption in the education system in India.

Keywords: Education, schools, literacy rate, dropout rate, GER, GPI, meghalaya

1. Introduction
Education is of prime importance for the all-round development of an individual. Education fosters the growth of human capital which can help a country in the process of nation-building and in achieving economic growth. The human capital theory focuses on the relationship between the functions of education and economic growth. Education enhances the soft skills, analytical skills and cognitive abilities of the people. It empowered the people to use available information and utilize their acquired knowledge and skills to increase their productivity. Education is one of the tools in bringing about equality in income distribution and removing gender gap. Each and every child has the right to education. Education has been recognized as a human right since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. The UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960) [18] recalled that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserts the principle of non-discrimination and proclaims that every person has the right to education and consider discrimination in education a violation of human rights. In India, the Right to Free and Compulsory Education (2009) declared that every child of the age of 6 to 14 years shall have a right to free and compulsory education in a neighborhood school till the completion of elementary education.

2. Literature Review
A paper by Mohan Gautam *et al.* (2016) [10] analyses the flaws of the Education system in modern India through the five principles of the Capability Approach. It suggests that investing in the education of the huge demographic is the need of the hour to reap the maximum benefit out of the growing young population; the disparities relating to quality and

distribution of educational opportunities need to be resolved within a very short time frame. The conversion of these potential economic assets into destructive liabilities needs to be prevented. A sensible National Education Policy needs to be formulated to check upon the qualitative and also the quantitative growth of institutions, to ensure that education satisfies not only the industrial but also an individual's needs.

Kamlesh Gakhar and Harjeet Kour (2012) [5] analyses the education system of Haryana in comparison to its neighboring states. They try to analyze the prevalent education through indicators such as like Gross Enrolment Ratio, Drop-out rate, number of schools and colleges, number of universities, number of persons who can read English, etc. Gross enrolment ratio of Haryana in the age group of 6 to 11 years is 90.10, which is less than the ratio of India as a whole and all the neighboring states under the study. So far as the drop-out rate is concerned in the age group of 6 to 14 years, Haryana's experience is quite satisfactory because, except Delhi, where the drop-out rate is the lowest, all other states and India as a whole have higher drop-out rates than Haryana. The literacy rate of Haryana was less than the national average at the time of its origin (population census- 1961) but now it has become greater than the national average.

A paper by Dr. K. M. Joshi and Dr. Kinjal Vijay Ahir (2013) [6] analyses the higher education in India. The paper tries to analyze the governance, access, financing, equity, quality and privatization of the Indian higher education. It found out that India has the largest higher education system in the world by the number of institutions with around 634 universities and about 33,023 colleges but it ranks third in terms of enrolments. About 80 percent of the public higher education funding has been sourced from State governments and about 20 percent from the Centre. Trends show that of the various forms of institutes of higher education that exists, the number supported by public funding has stagnated by growth and rather the numbers with private funding have witnessed a speedily rising growth.

Another paper by Mrs. Mukesh Chahal (2015) also analyses the Higher Education in India. The paper tries to study the various emerging issues and challenges associated with higher education and also try to give suggestions. There are many basic problems faced by the higher education system in India. These include lower level of teaching quality, financing of higher education, more concentrated on theories and rather than practical knowledge, traditional methods of teaching, privatization, inadequate facilities, and infrastructure quota system. Other emerging challenges include heterogeneous education system, Interference of political factors, Economic Difficulties and others.

Hill, S. and T. Chalaux (2011) [8] in their working paper entitled, "Improving Access and Quality in the Indian Education System" found out that rising public and private spending has ensured a marked expansion of the Indian education system. Considerable progress has been made in lifting enrolment and reducing gender disparities and the goal of universal enrolment at the elementary level is moving closer to fruition. However, high drop-out rates and low student attendance continue to hold back progress. The Right to Education Act, complemented by other initiatives to encourage attendance, should provide a renewed impetus to rising enrolments. However, introducing other targeted programs, including those designed to improve the health of children, may also be needed.

Kareena Bhatia1 and Manoj Kumar Dash (2010) in their paper try to find out the factors that help in the creation of value-based higher education. Their paper also tries to compare India's higher education with six different countries taken from different continents of the world. These countries are US, UK, Australia, China, Brazil, and South-Africa. The paper found out that in the Higher Education System of India, there is tremendous growth in the number of universities and colleges from the year 1950 to 2006. The gross enrolment ratio for people living in urban areas was almost 20%, while it was only 6% for rural areas. India has one of the lowest public expenditure on higher education per student at 406 US Dollars.

Marie Lall and Chatham House (2005) [9] investigate the Challenges for India's Education System. Since Independence, successive Indian governments have had to address a number of key challenges with regard to education policy, which has always formed a crucial part of its development agenda. The key challenges are improving access and quality at all levels of education, increasing funding, especially with regard to higher education and improving literacy rates. Currently, while Indian institutes of management and technology are world-class, primary and secondary schools, particularly in rural areas, face severe challenges.

3. Objective and Methodology

The objective of this paper is to analyze the education system in Meghalaya in comparison to the other North Eastern States of India. In addition to this, the other objectives include:

i. To study the number of schools and enrolment in Meghalaya.
ii. To study the Dropout rate, Gross enrolment ratio, Literacy rate, and Gender Parity Index in Meghalaya.
iii. To study the availability of different infrastructural facilities in schools.
iv. To study the college and university education i.e. higher education in Meghalaya and other states of North East India.

Although, there have been quite a large number of papers on the education system in India, a very few have been written on the education system in Meghalaya and North East India. The paper is based on this rationale and attempts to analyze the education system in Meghalaya both at the elementary level or primary level and higher education level or college and university education. The present paper is based on secondary data collected from different sources. The sources include NITI Aayog, Open Government Data (OGD) Platform India, Census of India 2011 and Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD). The data is analyzed with the help of descriptive statistics in cases where it is required. The education system in Meghalaya in analyzed through a detailed investigation of different indicators such as the number of schools and enrolment, GER, GPI, Dropout rate, Literacy rate, number of colleges and universities etc.

4. Profile of the State

Meghalaya is one of the smallest states in India with an area of 22,249 sq. km. Under the North –Eastern Reorganization Act of 1971, Meghalaya was granted full statehood on 21st

January 1972. The state share international borders with Bangladesh on the south and about one-fourth of the western border and the rest are shared with Assam. At present, it has 11 districts. Meghalaya is characterized by great diversities in physical features. It is quite rich in natural resources like coal, uranium, etc. It is also known for its tourism potential. Agriculture is the mainstay of the people of Meghalaya. Apart from potential for agro-based industries the state also possesses rich deposits of limestone, coal and granite (R. Kumar and S. Ram, 2013). In 2016-2017, the contribution of the tertiary sector to GSDP is 49.53% followed by secondary sector (26.08%) and primary sector (17.74%). The per capita income is □88,497 (NITI Aayog, State Statistics 2011-12 Series). Meghalaya has a literacy rate of 74% as per 2011 census.

5. Primary, Secondary, and Higher Secondary Education

In order to strengthen a nation, investment in primary and secondary education is very important. Educating the children can contribute a lot to the accumulating asset of human capital of a nation. In order to ensure that every child gets primary education, the Government of India has introduced several programs like District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) launched in 1994 and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) launched in 2001. The goal of DPEP is to attain universal elementary education through district specific planning providing all children with access to primary education. SSA is an umbrella plan for elementary education in India and includes the DPEP. The basic goal of SSA is to provide meaningful and quality education to all children between ages 6 to 14 years. Another program introduced by the government to improve enrolment, attendance and to take care of nutritional needs of the children is the Mid-day meal program launched in 1995.

Table 1: Number of Schools in Meghalaya, Other NE states, and India

State	Year	Total Schools	Goverment Schools	Private Schools	Total Rural Schools	Rural Government	Rural Private
Arunachal Pradesh	2010-11	4,440	4,101	339	4,108	3,895	213
	2015-16	4,012	3,464	518	3,581	3,244	337
Assam	2010-11	53,859	44,371	9,488	50,942	42,051	8,891
	2015-16	65,894	50,143	7,839	54,763	47,764	6,999
Manipur	2010-11	3,760	2,402	1,358	3,176	2,111	1,065
	2015-16	4,865	3,308	1,432	4,110	2,995	1,115
Meghalaya	2010-11	12,377	7,596	4,781	11,646	7,280	4,366
	2015-16	13,277	7,764	5,398	12,374	7,432	4,942
Mizoram	2010-11	2,892	2,338	554	2,039	1,765	274
	2015-16	3,072	2,277	791	2,191	1,711	480
Nagaland	2010-11	2,826	2,101	725	2,397	1,925	472
	2015-16	2,799	2,092	707	2,341	1,895	446
Sikkim	2010-11	1,201	895	306	1,130	869	261
	2015-16	1,279	870	409	1,181	841	340
Tripura	2010-11	4,386	4,217	169	4,088	3,989	99
	2015-16	4,844	4,322	335	4,287	4,055	232
India	**2010-11**	**1,329,307**	**1,064,700**	**264,607**	**1,156,844**	**987,180**	**169,664**
	2015-16	**1,405,027**	**1,043,151**	**324,263**	**1,195,268**	**969,120**	**226,148**

Source: NITI Aayog. Website: http://niti.gov.in

Education plays a very important role in the development of the country. Although growth in the national income, infrastructural facilities i.e., transports and communications, capital equipment and per capita income etc., is an important indicator of the development of the country, in recent years, it is observed that education also plays a major role. The number of schools that a state or country has indicates people's access to education. From table 1, the total number of schools in Meghalaya in the year 2010-11 was 12,377 out of which 7596 are government schools and 4,781 are private schools. A very high percentage of the schools are in rural areas. In 2015-16, there were 13,277 schools in Meghalaya out of which 12,374 are located in the rural areas. This implies that 93.2%. of the schools are situated in rural areas. The total number of government schools is 7,764 i.e., 58.48% whereas the total number of private schools is 5,398 i.e., 40.66%. This shows that the government has a huge share in providing education to the masses. At the all India level the total number of schools is 1,405,027 as on 2015-16. The share of rural school to the total number of schools is 85.1% and that of the government school is 74.24%. Among the other North Eastern States of India, Assam has the maximum number of schools both in the year 2010-11 and 2015-16. Most the areas in North East India are rural and hence we see that maximum number of schools in rural areas and the same case follow for India. We have seen that majority of the schools are run by the government agency. Investment in education does not bring much profit to private party. However, it is the primary duty of the government is to provide education to the masses.

The government actively participates in providing education to the masses to empower them. The Government of India has undertaken several schemes with the motive to educate the masses. Schemes such as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan and the Mid-Day Meal Scheme can be given the credit for the rapid expansion of the elementary education system in India over the last decade. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan -led to the formation of over 200,000 new schools has led to the additional enrolment of over 21 million children. Since the inception of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the percentage out-of-school children came down from 18.4% in 2000–01 to 4.3% in 2009 (Chandrappa, 2014) [4]. The 86th constitutional

amendment by the parliament and article 21A in the year of 2002 made Right to Education a fundamental right. Subsequently, "Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act" was approved by the president of India on 26th August 2009 and got officially published in the Gazette of India on 27th August 2009. According to the Act, every child of India in the 6 to 14 years age group; has a right to free and compulsory education till the completion of elementary education. India became one of the 135 countries to make education a fundamental right for its citizens when the act came into force on 1st April 2010. It put the Right to Education at par with Right to life.

Table 2: Enrolment in Different Types of Schools

	2010-11			2015-16		
State	**Total Enrolment**	**Enrolment in Goverment Schools**	**Enrolment in Private Schools**	**Total Enrolment**	**Enrolment in Goverment Schools**	**Enrolment in Private Schools**
Arunachal Pradesh	331,997	270,295	61,702	322,458	232,903	87,420
Assam	5,143,018	4,097,714	1,045,304	5,432,053	4,140,192	955,449
Manipur	488,523	193,158	295,365	502,596	188,020	301,111
Meghalaya	658,673	336,648	322,025	775,613	379,770	388,651
Mizoram	234,485	154,568	79,917	214,317	112,402	101,818
Nagaland	411,383	191,466	219,917	349,696	166,596	183,100
Sikkim	126,542	102,839	23,703	105,297	73,272	32,025
Tripura	610,098	557,853	52,245	569,512	468,117	84,693
India	**189,166,464**	**130,058,559**	**59,107,905**	**187,625,797**	**111,104,797**	**71,375,786**

Source: NITI Aayog. Website: http://niti.gov.in

Enrolment indicates the number of students that are going to schools. The total enrolment in Meghalaya during the year 2010-11 was 658,673 students which increase to 775,613 students during the year 2015-16. In 2010-11, the number of enrolment was higher in government schools than in private schools while in 2015-16, the enrolment was higher in private schools i.e. 388,651 students as against 379,770 students in government schools. This shows that the parents now prefer private schools over government schools. There are several reasons behind such a shift. Goyal, S. and Pandey, P (2009) [7]. Found out that: Private schools offering primary education have grown at a rapid rate in India. Parents value good quality education and are willing to pay for it. Apart from tuition fees, parents incur considerable expenditure to send a child to a private school spending money on uniforms and textbooks, which they can otherwise avail for free in a government school. Poor quality of education in government schools is considered as a major reason for the rapid growth in the number of private schools. Parents perceive private schools to be more accountable and offering better quality education

The number of enrolment in Meghalaya is higher than all other North Eastern states except for Assam both for the year of 2010-11 and 2015-16. In 2015-16, the number of enrolment in private schools is higher than in private schools for Meghalaya and Assam except for the states like Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura.

6. Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)

Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is the total enrolment in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the eligible official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education in a year. A high GER generally indicates a high degree of participation, whether the pupils belong to the official age group or not. The achievement of a GER of 100% is, therefore, a necessary but not sufficient condition for enrolling all eligible population in higher education institutes. GER can exceed 100% due to the inclusion of over-aged and under-aged pupils/students because of early or late entrants, and grade repetition. The GER of Meghalaya for class I-V (6-10 years) of 195 is the highest among all the North Eastern states of India while the GER for class XI-XII (16-17 years) of about 15 is the lowest. For class I-VIII (6-13 years), the GER at 154 is also high among all other states except Manipur with a GER of 155. Again, the GER for class I-X (6-15 years) of 132 is also highest among NE India states except for the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, and Mizoram. Overall GER for class I-XII (6-17 years) for Meghalaya is 112 which is again high compared to all other NE states except Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, and Mizoram which have a slightly higher GER than Meghalaya.

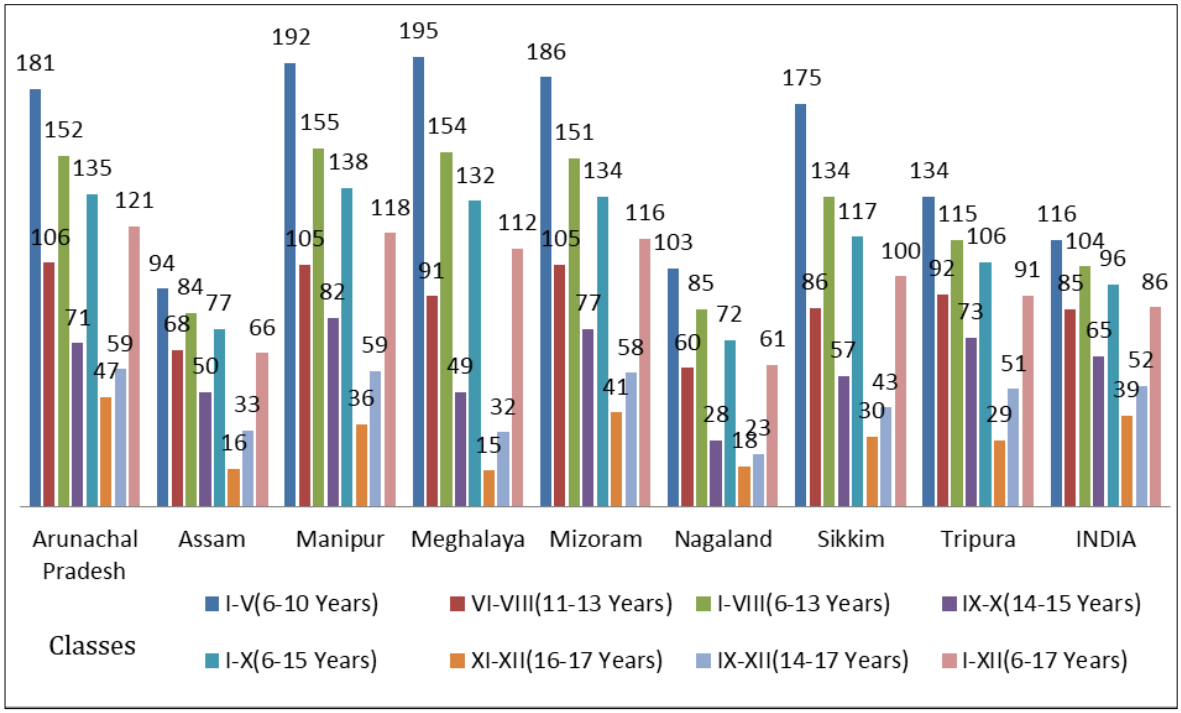

Fig 1: Gross Enrolment Ratio in the different NE States
Source: Open Government Data (OGD) Platform India. Website: https://data.gov.in

Hence, we can conclude that the GER of class group such as class I-V (6-10 years), class VI-VIII (11-13 years), class I-VIII (6-13 years), class I-X (6-15 years) and class I-XII (6-17 years) are satisfactory whereas there is serious concern with regard to class group of class IX-X (14-15 years), class XI-XII (16-17 years) and class IX-XII (14-17 years) where the GER is very low. A very large chunk of students in the age group of 14-17 have a high vulnerability to discontinue their studies and hence the GER is low. The reason behind this may be poverty, family financial problems, contribution to family income, uninterested in continuing their further studies etc. Among all North East India states, Assam and Nagaland seem to have a low GER in all the class groups. At the all India level, the GER for class I-XII (6-17 years) is 86% which indicate that it is quite low and hence lower participation.

7. Drop-Out Rates

A dropout is a pupil who leaves school before the completion of a school stage or leaving at some intermediate or non-terminal point of a given level of education or at different school stage. The drop-out rate is the proportion of children which cease to remain enrolled in the schooling system. In Meghalaya, the drop-out rate among the primary level as of 2014-15 is 9.46%. In the primary level, the dropout rate among the boys is 10.35% and the drop-out rate of girls is 8.56%. In the upper primary level, the total dropout rate is 6.52% and among the boys and girls, the dropout rate is 6.77% and 6.3% respectively. In both the primary and upper primary level, the drop-out rate of girls is lower than that of boys. In the secondary level, the drop-out rate is 20.52%. The dropout rate for the boys is 20.8% are boys and for the girls, the dropout rate is 20.27%.

Table 3: Drop-out Rates in Meghalaya, Other NE states, and India as of 2014-15

State	Primary Boys	Primary Girls	Primary Total	Upper Primary Boys	Upper Primary Girls	Upper Primary Total	Secondary Boys	Secondary Girls	Secondary Total
Arunachal Pradesh	11.51	10.09	10.82	5.31	8.08	6.71	18.33	15.81	17.11
Assam	16.07	14.65	15.36	10.45	10.56	10.51	24.64	29.28	27.06
Manipur	9.5	9.83	9.66	3.61	4.8	4.2	12.94	15.86	14.38
Meghalaya	10.35	8.56	9.46	6.77	6.3	6.52	20.8	20.27	20.52
Mizoram	10.17	10.03	10.1	5.46	4.06	4.78	23.02	20.73	21.88
Nagaland	6.18	5.02	5.61	7.87	7.97	7.92	17.98	18.47	18.23
Sikkim	3.75	0.62	2.27	2.07	1.08	1.57	17.58	14.39	15.89
Tripura	1.37	1.19	1.28	2.37	1.61	1.99	28.03	28.83	28.42
All India	4.36	3.88	4.13	3.49	4.6	4.03	17.21	16.88	17.06

Source: Open Government Data (OGD) Platform India. Website: https://data.gov.in

Among the North Eastern states of India, in the primary level, states like Assam (15.36%), Arunachal Pradesh (10.82%), and Meghalaya have very high dropout rates as compared to the other states. Tripura has the lowest dropout rates of only 1.28%. In the upper primary level, Assam has the highest dropout rate of 10.51%. All the states have very high dropout rates in the secondary level. The drop-out rate is higher in the secondary level as compared to primary and upper primary level and it is interesting to note that in the secondary level the dropout rate is higher among the girls rather than the boys. The primary cause for a low drop-rate in the primary and upper primary level can be attributed to the introduction of the free and compulsory education by the Government of India. Through the Right to Education Act, the government is providing free and compulsory education to all the students from the age of 6 to14 years. In the secondary level, there is a high dropout rate because most of the students cannot effort to continue their studies. The reason behind high dropout rates among the girls can be associated with the social and cultural factors such as marriage, household responsibility etc.

8. Student-Teacher Ratio (STR)

The student-teacher ratio (STR) is an important indicator of class size. The student-teacher ratio is the number of students who attend a school or university divided by the number of teachers in the institution. The smaller the class size the greater the ability of a teacher to communicate and impart good education to the students and vice versa. Smaller class size ensures the effectiveness of the teacher to cater individual needs of the students. Many studies and research also support this view. Since the role of the teacher is immense in shaping the character and outlook of the student, it is, therefore, necessary that the class size is smaller. Amongst the OECD countries, the average class size at the lower secondary level is 23. There are countries like Finland, Iceland, the UK with class sizes of 19 and lower and countries like Turkey, Korea, and China with class sizes of 28, 34 and even 54 (OECD, 2012) [20].

Table 4: Number of Teachers in Schools and Student-Teacher Ratio as of 2015-16

State	Total Teachers	Teachers in Goverment Schools	Teachers in Private Schools	Student-Teacher Ratio		
				Total Teachers	Teachers in Goverment Schools	Teachers in Private Schools
Arunachal Pradesh	21,584	15,331	6,051	15	15	14
Assam	302,001	204,554	73,872	18	20	13
Manipur	38,936	19,803	17,835	13	9	17
Meghalaya	44,148	22,924	20,721	18	17	19
Mizoram	18,482	11,712	6,750	12	10	15
Nagaland	30,320	19,212	11,108	12	9	16
Sikkim	15,077	10,911	4,166	7	7	8
Tripura	46,613	40,293	5,696	12	12	15

Source: NITI Aayog. Website: http://niti.gov.in

Teachers play an important role in educating the students and he/she is the backbone for the success and prosperity of the students. The STR in Meghalaya for 2015-16 is 18. For government and private schools, the STR is 17 and 19 respectively. Among all the states, Sikkim has the lowest STR of 7, i.e. for each teacher, there are only 7 students. From table 4, we can conclude that the STR is quite satisfactory in Meghalaya as well as other states of North East India. The total number of teachers in Meghalaya as of 2015-16 is 44,148, out of which 22,924 numbers of teachers are in government schools and 20,721 are in private schools. The number of teachers in government schools is more than in private schools. Among other states, Assam and Tripura have the maximum number of teachers with a total of 302,001 and 46,613 teachers respectively.

9. Schools with different Infrastructural facilities

The availability of different facilities in schools helps in further enhancing the education process of the students. Facilities such as good roads, playground, toilets, drinking water, mid-day meal, electricity, computers, kitchen sheds, number of teachers in a school is an indication that the school has adequate facilities in providing quality education and in bringing about the overall development of the students. From table 5, it can be seen that the percentage of schools with a single teacher is 6.9% in 2011-12 which increased slightly to 7.5% in 2015-16. About 100% of the schools in Meghalaya are approachable by all-weather roads in 2011-12 and this has fallen down sharply to 56.9% in 2015-16. The percentage of schools with playground facility is very low in Meghalaya where it is only 35.8% in 2011-12 and 33.1% in 2015-16. Not all schools have toilets and about 60% of the schools have separate toilets for boys and girls in 2011-12. This has gradually increased and percentage of boys' toilet has increased to 85.6% and girls' toilet has increased to 87.7%. In 2011-12, only 59.9% of the schools have drinking water facility and this has slightly increased to 62.2% in 2015-16. A very low percentage of the schools have electricity with 14% of the schools in 2011-12 and 20.4% in 2015-16. Similarly, the percentage of schools with computers is also low with 7.5% of the schools have computers in 2011-12 and 9.7% in 2015-16.

Table 5: Percentage of Schools with Infrastructure and Different Facilities

States	Year	Single-Teacher Schools	Schools Approachable by All Weather Road	Schools with Playground Facility	Schools with Girls' Toilet	Schools with Boys' Toilet	Schools with Drinking Water	Schools Provided Mid Day Meal	Schools with Electricity	Schools with Computer
Arunachal Pradesh	2011-12	43.1%	100.0%	32.5%	55%	51%	78.0%	84.3%	22.9%	18.6%
	2015-16	27%	66%	39%	96.50%	95.60%	81.40%	92.50%	34.60%	24%
Assam	2011-12	15.4%	100.0%	52.4%	66%	56%	77.3%	89.9%	12.2%	6.5%
	2015-16	2%	82.50%	56.40%	84.30%	83.40%	85.80%	98.40%	19.50%	8.70%
Manipur	2011-12	10.1%	100.0%	56.9%	93%	93%	94.8%	96.3%	24.1%	20.8%
	2015-16	6.8	83.90%	53.50%	98.80%	98.70%	99.70%	91.10%	32.10%	26.10%
Meghalaya	2011-12	6.9%	100.0%	35.8%	60%	60%	59.9%	89.4%	14.0%	7.5%
	2015-16	7.5	56.90%	33.10%	85.60%	87.70%	62.60%	97.50%	20.40%	9.70%
Mizoram	2011-12	1.5%	100.0%	40.3%	94%	73%	90.1%	93.0%	50.3%	28.5%
	2015-16	2.5	94.30%	64.20%	99.20%	97.70%	92.70%	99.50%	60.60%	29.60%
Nagaland	2011-12	2.0%	100.0%	40.5%	75%	72%	64.6%	74.1%	30.1%	29.4%
	2015-16	1.7	82.10%	45.10%	99.90%	98.70%	82%	90.20%	47.80%	39.70%
Sikkim	2011-12	2.8%	100.0%	61.9%	98%	101%	96.5%	91.1%	56.7%	45.9%
	2015-16	0.2	84.40%	68%	99.80%	99.80%	98.50%	97.90%	80.20%	60.40%
Tripura	2011-12	1.6%	100.0%	60.3%	81%	78%	75.3%	99.4%	15.8%	11.6%
	2015-16	0.2	80.50%	62%	99.90%	99.70%	89.80%	99.10%	28.20%	15.60%

Source: NITI Aayog. Website: http://niti.gov.in

Among all the North Eastern states of India, all schools have a very low percentage of schools with single teacher except Arunachal Pradesh where it had 43.1% of the schools with single teacher in 2011-12 and 27% in 2015-16. In 2011-12, all the schools in North East India are 100% approachable by all-weather roads and experienced a slight percentage decline in 2015-16. It is remarkable to see that almost all the schools in North East India have a high percentage of schools providing Mid-day meal and also with drinking water facility The Mid-day meal scheme is one of the initiatives by the Government of India to encourage the children to attend schools and also to ensure that these children have a good health.

10. Gender Parity Index (GPI)

One of the tools in measuring equality or parity between boys and girls with regard to access to education is the Gender Parity Index (GPI) which is ratio of female to male values. Gender parity means that the same proportions of girls and boys enter and complete schooling. When there is no gender parity, there is a gender gap, and a greater proportion of either boys or girls are receiving the education. If the GPI is 1, the country is at gender parity. A GPI above 1 indicates disparity in favour of girls and a GPI below 1 disparity in favour of boys. Gender parity index (GPI) is measured by taking the ratio of girls to boys enrolled in the primary education. For both years, i.e. 2010-11 and 2015-16, Meghalaya has a GPI exceeding 1. This indicates a gender gap or disparity in favour of girls. However, the GPI is slowly approaching towards 1 from 1.29 in 2010-11 to 1.04 in 2015-16 which depict a movement towards gender parity. The same is the trend with regard to the ST population.

Table 6: Gender Parity Index of Different States

State	All		ST	
	2010-11	2015-16	2010-11	2015-16
Arunachal Pradesh	0.58	0.99	0.66	0.96
Assam	1.01	0.90	0.98	0.87
Manipur	0.86	0.94	0.77	0.88
Meghalaya	1.29	1.04	1.34	1.18
Mizoram	0.96	0.91	0.91	0.92
Nagaland	0.65	1.10	0.98	1.10
Sikkim	0.85	1.05	1.35	1.44
Tripura	0.69	0.70	0.61	0.70
India	0.86	0.92	0.74	0.83

Source: NITI Aayog. Website: http://niti.gov.in

In 2010-11, except for Meghalaya and Assam, the GPI in all other North Eastern states of India is in favor of males. It is very important to note that the gender gap with regard to education is very low for all states of Northeast India as compared to All India level. Three states namely Meghalaya, Nagaland, and Sikkim have a GPI in favor of a female in 2015-16. For India, the GPI value is 0.86 in 2010-11 which increased to 0.92 in 2015-16 approaching gender parity value.

11. Literacy Rate

A person is considered literate if he is able to read, write and do simple arithmetic calculation such as addition and subtraction. Literacy is usually understood as the ability to

read, write and the ability to do numerical calculations in written form. If a person is able to do these functions in any language then he is considered literate. In a country like India with a huge cultural and lingual diversity, language is not taken into consideration. A similar definition is used by different international bodies.

In 2003, UNESCO gave the definition of literacy as:

Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve his or her goals, develop his or her knowledge and potential and participate fully in community and wider society. (UNESCO, 2013, p. 21)

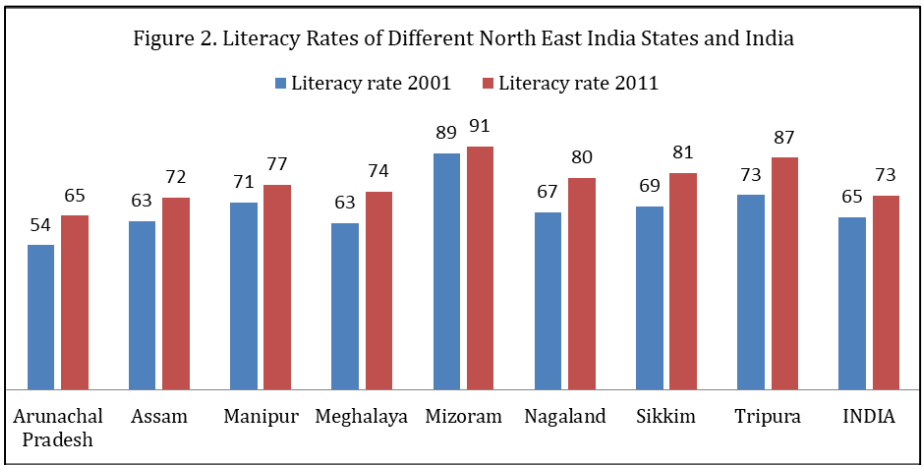

Fig 2: Literacy Rates of Different North East India States and India
Source: NITI Aayog. Website: http://niti.gov.in

The literacy rate of Meghalaya as per 2001 census is 63%. In 2011, the literacy rate is 74% which is slightly higher than the national level which is 73%. The literacy rate has increased considerably over the years. Among other states of North East India, Mizoram (91%) has the highest literacy rate followed by Tripura (87%) and these two states occupied the 3rd rank and 4th rank among all the states in India with Kerala (93.9%) occupying the 1st rank (Census of India, 2011).

12. Higher Education

Higher education is of immense importance for the development of a country. Investment in higher education can bring about a huge potential gain for a country. The main constituents of higher education in India include college and university providing education ranging from general, vocational, professional and technical. In India, the university is usually set up either by an Act of Parliament or of a State Legislature. Colleges are affiliated to a university. India's higher education system is the world's third largest in terms of students, next to China and the United States. In future, India will be one of the largest education hubs (Sheikh, 2017). The growth of higher education in India has experienced a tremendous growth since its independence. Tables 7 analyze the college level education in Meghalaya and other states of North East India including India.

Table 7: Different College Indicators of Meghalaya, India and the Other NE States

State	Average Enrolment per College		College per lakh population		Number of College	
	2010-11	2015-16	2010-11	2015-16	2010-11	2015-16
Arunachal Pradesh	1943	1356	11	17	19	28
Assam	1009	942	13	15	485	539
Manipur	1796	1070	23	30	78	87
Meghalaya	1107	1087	16	18	61	63
Mizoram	698	653	21	22	29	29
Nagaland	766	416	20	26	52	65
Sikkim	814	580	14	20	11	16
Tripura	1086	1097	8	12	36	51
India	700	721	23	28	32974	39071

Source: NITI Aayog. Website: http://niti.gov.in

The total number of colleges in Meghalaya as of 2010-11 is 61 which increase only to 63 colleges in 2015-16. Again the availability college per lakh population is very low which is only 16 in 2010-11 and 18 in 2015-16. The average enrolment per college is 1107 students in 2010-11 and 1087 students in 2015-16. Among the states of North East India, Assam has the maximum number of colleges with a total of 539 colleges followed by Manipur with 87 colleges. The rate of increase in the number of colleges is very low in Meghalaya as well as in Sikkim and Mizoram. It can be seen

that the average enrolment per college is high in the states of Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Tripura as of 2015-16. The number of colleges is very less and more colleges need to be set up in the coming years to take care of the demand for colleges.

Table 8: Number of Universities in Meghalaya & Other NE States.

State	Central University	Central Open University	Institute of National Importance	Others	State Public University	Institute under State Legislature Act	State Open University	State Private University	State Private Open University	Deemed University-Government	Deemed University-Government Aided	Deemed University-Private	Grand Total
Arunachal Pradesh	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	5	1	1	0	0	9
Assam	2	0	2	1	11	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	21
Manipur	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Meghalaya	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	10
Mizoram	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
Nagaland	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	4
Sikkim	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	7
Tripura	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
All India	43	1	75	13	329	5	13	197	1	32	11	79	799

Source: Ministry of Human Resource Development. Website: http://mhrd.gov.in

From table 8, it can be seen that among the North Eastern states, Meghalaya has 10 universities and Assam has the maximum number of universities with 21 universities. Out of 10 universities, 2 universities are run by the government and the other 8 universities are state private universities. Of the two government-run universities, one is a Central University i.e. North Eastern Hill University and another one is the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) which is an institute of National importance. Although Meghalaya has a total number of 10 universities when compared to the number of students, it still needs more universities to meet the demand. This shortage in the supply of university is tackle by the private sector. Meghalaya has the largest number of State Private University compared to other states of North East India. The reason behind this growth of private university can be attributed to the large inflow of students from other states. Meghalaya is regarded as an educational hub for the other states of North East India. Some private universities do not provide quality education and are mostly established with a profit motive which has greatly affected the education system. The CMJ University located in Shillong was shut down in 2013 for awarding fake Ph.D. certificates to about 4000 candidates for a sum of Rs. 2 to 5 lakh each ("Fake Theses Seized from CMJ Office", 2013). Many students were affected by it as different bachelors and masters certificate awarded by this institution was regarded invalid ("Thousands of Chandra Mohan Jha University degrees to be invalid", 2014). The government must impose strict laws and regulations for setting up the private institution and it should see that these institutions serve the purpose of providing quality education to the masses and do not run purely on the basis of profit motive.

Table 9: Student Enrolment at Various Level of Education in North East India

State	Year	Ph.D.	M.Phil.	Post Graduate	Under Graduate	PG Diploma	Diploma	Grand Total
Arunachal Pradesh	2010-11	1051	43	4646	33401	87	7689	46917
	2015-16	498	111	7568	35889	213	1766	46452
Assam	2010-11	1807	89	33332	457914	2595	5050	503238
	2015-16	3874	214	79553	464621	2957	11608	570955
Manipur	2010-11	862	7	5603	116613	153	218	123497
	2015-16	618	14	7499	89810	346	922	99340
Meghalaya	2010-11	766	56	4638	56867	185	1714	65282
	2015-16	810	203	9016	59854	193	1312	71567
Mizoram	2010-11	63	35	3341	24627	75	1705	29846
	2015-16	555	124	3651	23195	34	3815	31463
Nagaland	2010-11	157	12	10475	44001	279	1422	56389
	2015-16	161	0	5818	29241	101	1560	36892
Sikkim	2010-11	0	0	4941	12953	17	904	19005
	2015-16	58	142	10428	17007	36	1219	29550
Tripura	2010-11	111	0	14161	45913	231	3434	64172
	2015-16	472	0	8447	60955	144	3408	74035

Source: NITI Aayog. Website: http://niti.gov.in

Table 9 examines the enrolment of students at the different level of education. It can be seen that the number of enrolment in higher education in Meghalaya is showing an increasing trend wherein 2010-11, the total enrolment is 65282 students and it increases to 71,567 students in 2015-16. A maximum number of students is enrolled in the Under Graduate level and Post Graduate level. Out of the total number of students enrolled in 2015-16, 83.63% are Under Graduate states and 12.60% are Post Graduate students. The enrolment in the Post-Graduate level is very less due to the fact that a very few numbers of the university are available in Meghalaya compared to the number of students. Assam, Manipur, and Meghalaya have the maximum number of enrolment in both years i.e. 2010-11 and 2015-16 as compared to other states of North East India. Assam, Manipur, and Meghalaya have the maximum number of enrolment at the Ph.D. level as of 2015-16. The government and the private agency have to play an immense role in establishing an additional number of colleges and universities so that the students have access to higher education.

13. Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that the education system in Meghalaya needs improvement and reconstruction to a great extent. The government has played a huge role in providing education to the masses both at the primary level, upper primary and higher education level. The expenditure of the government has experienced an increasing trend over the years. The total expenditure on education by the education department and other departments both by the centre and as well as the states as a percentage of GDP was 3.68% in 2001-02 which increases to 3.95% in 2009-10 and further to 4.29% as of 2012-13 (BE) (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2014). The achievement in terms of education has immensely increased over the years no doubt. The literacy rate has increased steadily from 63% in 2001 to 74% as of 2011. The number of enrolment at the primary, upper primary, secondary and higher education level has also increased over the years. A large number of students now are having access to education as compared to earlier years. This is the result of several programs that have been introduced by the government for providing education. However, the success of these programs is limited by loopholes in the implementation process. There is rampant corruption in the education system. Misuse of school funds as well as recruitment of relatives and friends as teacher is not uncommon. There is a market in public employment in India, where positions can be bought by means of social connections and bribes (Bajpai and Goyal, 2004). The involvement of politics in education has severely affected education system leading to corruption and education scams ("HC scraps teachers appointment in 2008-09 in Meghalaya", 2017). The number of colleges and universities in Meghalaya is quite less compared to the number of students. The government and private agency have to established additional number of colleges and universities so that the students have excess to higher education.

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