

HIGHER EDUCATION IN NAGALAND: CURRENT STATUS, ROLE, AND CONSTRAINTS

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ABSTRACT

Higher Education in India is the second largest in the world after China. India has the highest youth population in the world, with 66% of its population under the age of 35. Since a vibrant education system is a prerequisite for nation-building and development, using available data and statistical tools this paper focuses on the role of Higher Education. The paper also attempts to understand key economic development indicators like GER and GPI and how they promote socio-economic status and economic equality in Nagaland.

Keywords: Higher Education, HEIs, GER, GPI, Socio-Economy

1. INTRODUCTION

In India, higher education refers to the level of education after attaining a certain level of schooling. In other words, higher education can be understood as university-level education such as Bachelor's Degrees, Master's Degrees, and Ph.D. courses. Higher education is of utmost significance in the whole education system. A robust higher education system is crucial worldwide as it creates human resources with specialization and expertise in various fields supported by a wide range of skills. According to the World Economic Forum, the Indian Higher Education system ranks second largest in the world next to China.

Before independence, there were only 16 colleges in North-East India, most of which were established in the Assam area. Despite the late start, higher education in North-Eastern India has witnessed rapid growth. Currently, there are 79 universities in the North-East Region (NER), with 1,001 colleges and 224 standalone institutions (not affiliated with universities) of higher and technical education. Higher Education began in Nagaland in 1959 when Fazl Ali College was established at Mokokchung. As per the Department of Higher Education's latest reports, currently, there are 69 colleges in Nagaland.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1) To have an overview of the profile of HEIs in Nagaland.
- 2) To assess the role and challenges of HEIs in Nagaland.
- 3) To suggest measures to improve the performance of HEIs in Nagaland.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study is based on secondary data collected from reputed journals, articles, reports, etc published by the government or other relevant sources available on various websites. It makes use of available data and statistical tools to explain the case. The paper focuses on the role of higher educational institutions and their impact on economic development.

4. FINDINGS AND RESULTS

- 1) NUMBER OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN NORTH-EAST INDIA
University (including University level Institutions)

As per AISHE reports of 2021-22, 1,168 Universities were registered, out of which 75 Universities were recorded from the North-East of India. The state-wise distribution of these universities from the seven northeastern states is illustrated in Figure 1.

State-wise number of registered Universities from the North-East states of India

Figure 1

Figure 1 State-wise university distribution

Sl. no	Name of the State	Central University	State Private University	Others	Grand Total
1.	Arunachal Pradesh	1	6	3	10
2.	Assam	2	6	22	30
3.	Manipur	3	2	5	10
4.	Meghalaya	1	8	2	11
5.	Mizoram	1	1	1	3
6.	Nagaland	1	4	1	6
7.	Tripura	1	1	3	5

- 2) Colleges (Private & Government-owned)

There are 45,473 registered colleges belonging to 328 Universities in India. The following table and figure show the distribution of colleges with respect to several Northeastern states.

State-wise number of registered colleges from the North-East states of India

Figure 2

Figure 2: State-wise distribution of colleges

Sl. no	Name of the State	Govt. College	Private College	Grand Total
1.	Arunachal Pradesh	24	19	43
2.	Assam	444	109	553
3.	Manipur	58	45	103
4.	Meghalaya	29	40	69
5.	Mizoram	31	9	40
6.	Nagaland	15	54	69
7.	Tripura	43	11	54

Source: AISHE report 2021-22

The figure shows that Assam has the highest number of colleges in both government and private categories, with a total of 553. The state of Manipur follows with 58 government and 45 private colleges, respectively. Mizoram ranks lowest with 40 colleges.

4.1. PROFILE OF HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN NAGALAND

4.1.1. NUMBER OF UNIVERSITIES, COLLEGES AND AFFILIATED INSTITUTIONS

Category-wise distribution of Universities, Colleges, and Affiliated Institutions as per 2022-23 data for the state of Nagaland are shown in the following table.

Sl. no	Category of Institution	Govt./Central	Private	Affiliated Institutions	Total
1.	University	1	4	1	6
2.	Colleges	15	54	23	92

Source: Directorate of Higher Education, Government of Nagaland.

The affiliated colleges include 10 technical/polytechnic institutes, 3 nursing institutes, and 9 teacher training institutes. The number has increased substantially from 19 in 2021-22 to 23 in the 2022-23 period, where 3 technical/polytechnic institutes were added over one year.

4.1.2. NUMBER OF COLLEGES

Table 1

Table 1 District-wise break-up of colleges during 2022-23							
Sl. no	District	No. of Colleges					Total
		Government		Private			
		General	B.Ed	General	B.Ed	LLB	
1.	Kohima	2	1	15	3	1	22
2.	Dimapur	1		22	3	1	27
3.	Wokha	1		1			2

4.	Mokokchung	1	1	3	1	6
5.	Tuensang	1		2		3
6.	Zunheboto	1				1
7.	Kiphire	1				1
8.	Longleng	1				1
9.	Peren	1		1		2
10.	Phek	2				2
11.	Mon	1		1		2
Total		13	2	45	6	69

Source: Directorate of Higher Education, Nagaland.

It is clear from the chart that, Dimapur district has the highest number of colleges with 26 private and 1 government college. Kohima follows with 19 private and 2 government colleges.

4.1.3. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO STUDENTS

Number of beneficiaries and amount utilized under various scholarship schemes during 2022-23 is shown below:

Sl. no	Schemes	Number of students	₹ in Lakh
1.	CSS-Post Matric Scholarship (ST)	36958	3742.59
2.	CSS-NEC Merit Scholarship	24	5.32
3.	Nagaland State Merit Scholarship	2480	400.99
4.	Nagaland State Research Scholarship	104	28.75

Source: Directorate of Higher Education, Nagaland

4.1.4. RESULTS OF THE DEGREE LEVEL EXAM

The pass percentage of 6th Semester Exams conducted in various categories by Nagaland University from 2019-2023 has been displayed in the following table:

Sl. no	Types of Examination	Pass % (2019)	Pass % (2020)	Pass % (2021)	Pass % (2022)	Pass % (2023)
1.	BA (General)	64.53	87.14	98.37	75.25	78.67
2.	BBA (General)	96.97	100	100	89	87.50
3.	BCA (General)	100	65	100	100	82.76
4.	B.Com (General)	48.33	81.94	94.05	65.88	53.97
5.	B.Sc (General)	73.53	70.37	91.67	83.33	80
6.	BA (Hons)	78.70	93.91	98.89	89.71	86.15
7.	B.Com (Hons)	68.97	92.10	98.94	82.04	80.25
8.	B.Sc (Hons)	84.02	90.19	99.17	94.27	83.86
9.	B.Ed	84.10	88.01	82.49	79.79	83.92
10.	LLB	50	97.55	90.14	79.27	43.43

Source: Nagaland University Result Gazette

4.1.5. GROSS ENROLMENT RATIO (GER) IN HIGHER EDUCATION LEVEL

Figure 3

Figure 3: GER in the age group 18-23 years in Nagaland

Year	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
GER	16.9	14.9	16.6	17.8	18.7	18.5	17.3	18.8

Source: AISHE

As per the AISHE Report, Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in Higher Education in India was 28.4 percent in the 2021-2022. This means that 28.4% of young people in the eligible age group (18-23 years) were enrolled in higher education. Likewise, Nagaland GER for 2021-2022 was recorded at 18.8 %, where 16.5% were males and 21.2% females. With a Gender Parity Index (GPI) of 1.28, females are more advantaged than males.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1. ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Human Capital Formation: Improvement of individual or internal aspects of human capital directly affects the production process. Likewise, the external impact of human capital affects the entire society. Higher education is crucial for a skilled and knowledgeable workforce as it provides specialized training and education, further developing critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication abilities, making higher education more relevant than ever. Higher education offers continuous learning and professional development opportunities, allowing individuals to remain competitive.

Innovation and Research: Universities and colleges immensely contribute to research and development (R&B) and innovation. It is here that new ideas and technology are developed. Universities often serve as centres for interdisciplinary research, bringing together experts from various fields to solve complex problems.

Socio-economic Status and Economic Equality: Scholarship schemes, stipends, grants, and stringent policies ensure higher education accessibility to students belonging to underprivileged groups. Such measures bridge the gap between different socio-economic groups and create an inclusive higher education system that fosters social mobility and reduces economic inequality.

5.2. CHALLENGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN NAGALAND

Infrastructure

Huge capital investment is a prerequisite to modernizing educational infrastructure like buildings, resources, technology upgradation, etc. However, in Nagaland, the majority of the colleges lack proper infrastructure. Most colleges, especially the private colleges in Nagaland, are not NAAC accredited. As per reports, out of 69 colleges in Nagaland, 35 colleges (50.72%), 13 government (86.67%) and 22 private (40.74%) colleges are NAAC accredited. Lack of assessment leads to insufficient funding and grant opportunities. Furthermore, lack of proper transportation, communication, technology, maintenance of student-teacher ratio, etc, are also hurdles in developing higher educational institutions.

Faculty

Quality of teaching is realized by the availability of qualified teachers. Faculty shortage and the inability of the state educational system to attract and retain well-qualified teachers remain an ongoing challenge.

Remuneration

In violation of UGC guidelines, most of the private colleges in Nagaland allot minimum salaries to the faculty, resulting in a lack of motivation, lowered productivity, and minimal to marginal output generation.

Research and Innovation

Most of the higher educational institutions (HEIs) in Nagaland lack technological teaching aids which are essential for effective teaching-learning outcomes. In other words, there is a lack of focus on research and innovation. Thus, the government should enhance fund allocation for R&D activities in the education sector.

Funding

Higher educational institutions in Nagaland are underfunded. As a result, technological advancement and research-based activities are restricted. The state government's funding of private colleges is negligible.

Enrolment and Equity

In Nagaland, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education is lower than the national average of 28.3%. Thus, district-wise and rural-urban distribution-wise improvement in enrolment is required. The Gender Parity Index (GPI) in higher education in Nagaland indicates that the female GER is higher than the male GER. Male student enrolment in higher education needs improvement in Nagaland.

5.3. SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN NAGALAND

- 1) The number of HEIs offering degree courses in various disciplines needs to increase to meet the growing demands and to match the quality of education provided by other major institutions in the country.
- 2) The state government must formulate policies that attract investors and stakeholders to build an effective platform for HEIs. Such investments should focus on need-based R&D, extension activities, etc., in addition to covering a specific academic curriculum.
- 3) The state government can also come up with programs & schemes that encourage educational institutions to go for NAAC accreditation.
- 4) Grants allotted for Research work can be increased to motivate quality research.
- 5) Public Private Partnership (PPP) is crucial for improving the quality of higher education in Nagaland. The state government can adopt the PPP model by enacting suitable policies. The state government can also get assistance from the UGC and the Ministry of Education.

6. CONCLUSION

The higher education system in India has been ranked as the second largest in the world. Considering this growth, the country with its robust knowledge bank and enhanced information technology (IT) sector needs to hone the skill base of our youths, thereby, fostering optimum employment and self-sufficiency. Likewise, Nagaland needs to relook at the financial resources, access, equity, infrastructure, quality standards, degree of responsiveness, etc, so that the state's higher educational institutions can adapt to changing economic and social landscapes to remain effective and relevant in promoting economic development. Nagaland allocated 16.1% of its expenditure on education in 2023-24, increasing over the years. However, more should be done to encourage path-breaking innovations and technological advancement. Apart from Kohima and Dimapur, to sustain the growth in degree-level literacy, there is a need to increase the number of institutes and the quality of higher education in these districts. National and Global education policies should create the best quality assurance systems. By setting up an inclusive and holistic educational system, higher education can continue to be a powerful tool for economic growth and societal progress.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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