

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH: AN OVERVIEW.

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Abstract *In term of education, Arunachal Pradesh is a late starter compare to the rest of the country. Before independence, very few schools had been established. The teachers were predominantly Assamese and consequently, the medium of instruction was also Assamese. In the later part, the medium of instruction was changed to Hindi in schools and English for Higher Education. Arunachal Pradesh. The state first college was established in Pasighat in 1964. Today higher education of Arunachal Pradesh has made significant progress. However, for the various reasons, this sector continues to face challenges. These study aims to identify these specific problems and challenges.*

Keywords: *North-East Frontier Agency, Treaty of Yandaboo, vocational course. No-connectivity, physical infrastructure, ethnic factor, demographic problem, curriculum, evaluation, learning resource.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Human capital is one of the most important assets of a country and a key cause of a nation's economic performance. The strength of a nation is dependent on its intellectual and skillful citizens. Education is regarded as one that contributes to political, social, cultural and economic transformation of a country. The prosperity of any nation is fully linked to its human resources and Higher education provides specialized knowledge and skilled persons for national development. Higher Education today is one of the pillars of success for any Nation. India's higher education system is the world's third largest in terms of students. Higher education in India has phenomenal expansion since independence. In the history of education, India has produced academicians, Scholars, scientists, engineers, technologists, doctors, and teachers who are in great demand all over the world. Higher Education provides opportunities to the people to reflect on the critical cultural, moral, social, economic and spiritual issues facing humanity.

In the case of education, Arunachal Pradesh is late starter in compare with the mainland India. The issue of education was vital and important, for, at the dawn of independence, all the tribes, excepting two Buddhist tribes; the Monpas and the Khamptis were without any written script. Unlike the neighboring hills states, the Christian missionaries did not venture into this area to spread education during the time of British rule. Many scholars pointed out the state were almost a static society, left to itself, cut away from the rest of the world. The modern period of Arunachal Pradesh begin with the advent of British in Assam after the Treaty of Yandaboo in 1826. The entire state of Arunachal Pradesh is almost wholly a rugged mountainous terrain, with beautiful green valley drained by innumerable rivulets and mighty rivers cascading down from upper elevation. All this mentioned circumstances are the hindrance of education in the olden days. Education made considerable advance in the state after the Chinese aggression of 1962.

At present, the land of rising sun "Arunachal Pradesh", earlier known as North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA) cover a geographical area of 83,743 Sq. km which roughly cover 2.55 of the

total area of India. On 20th February 1987, it became a full-fledged state of Indian union. At present the state consists of 25 districts. According to the 2011 census, the state has a total population of 13,82,611, out of which 7,20,232 are males and 6,62,379 are females. The literacy rate of the state is 66.95% out of which males' literacy rate is 73.69% and female's rate is 59.57%.

The state has total 56 higher educational institutions for a population of over 13.5 lakh and out of that only 35% of the higher educational institutions in the State are accredited with the NAAC while 65% are yet to be accredited. The quality of education depends on several fundamental factors like teaching learning, curriculum, infrastructure facilities, evaluation, learning resources, managerial India and organizational efficiencies and innovative approach to cope with the emerging challenges. Similarly the growth and development of higher education depends upon a number of extraneous factors like; geographical factors, climatic factors, ethnic factors, demographic problems, transport and communication, socio-cultural and economic factors have great influence in the development of higher education. An understanding of these parameters is essential for evaluating the present educational scenario of Arunachal Pradesh. At present, the State Higher Education has facing many challenges, and some of them are discussed below.

2. INSUFFICIENT NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS

To cater to the requirement of higher education in the Arunachal Pradesh, there are enough institutions to meet the demand, resulting in mass exodus of students to places outside the state in their pursuit of the same.

3. LACK OF EMPLOYMENT GENERATION AVENUES

The above reason is strong enough for investors to shy away, resulting in nonexistence of employment generation avenues; the insufficient of vocational training institute and low quality of existing vocational institutes in the state. Higher education institute give more emphasis on career oriented vocational courses need to be supplemented to the regular BA/B.Com/B.Sc courses with vocational Courses.

4. INADEQUATE PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Quality education is possible when facilities, resources and technologies are upgraded with adequate funds. Most of the colleges are not accredited by NAAC. In the state only 35% of the higher educational institutions are accredited with the NAAC while 65% are yet to be accredited. 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. In the state, many of the colleges don't have adequate infrastructure or facilities to teach students. Internet and Wi-Fi facility is still out of reach of many students.

The System of Examination: Academic standard and adequate coverage of the syllabi need to be ensured while framing of question papers. Professionalism and computerization for the timely declaration of the results is too much required in the higher educational institutes of Arunachal Pradesh. Utmost care, seriousness and accountability in the scrutiny of answer scripts is also need of hour.

Internet connectivity problem in Arunachal Pradesh-The Internet is important for a huge variety of reasons, and it affects and facilitates nearly every aspect of modern life. The Internet

is extremely important in many fields, from education and healthcare to business and government. Almost all the towns and villages of Arunachal Pradesh are suffering from the disease of non-connectivity. Many parts of the State lack basic online connectivity, which is hampering numerous people especially students community. During Covid-19 pandemic, classes have been suspended in Arunachal Pradesh to enforce social distancing and educational institutions have shifted to online method of teaching and evaluation. To attend online class, many times students had to trek for a few kilometers in certain areas to get a proper signal or to submit their assignment online.

About the issues and challenges of higher education, the then Education minister ShriHonchunNgandam highlighted in a workshop 'Best Practices in Higher Education Institutions for quality management in Arunachal Pradesh' held at Itanagar on 28th November 2018. He admitted that Arunachal is facing quality challenges in higher education in general and in technical and management education in particular. He also said the fundamental changes require greater accountability, transparency, and morality (ATM), more important than ATMs of any bank. The minister also said that the challenge of quality education with globalization as an opportunity calls for change in the mindset of all the stakeholders. "Quality in technical education is an indication of the quality of society and country and its economic growth and the quality should be imparted in all aspects of a technical institute," he said and called for a holistic approach to design the quality of an academic organization.

Although, there has been remarkable growth in the availability of educational institutions in the Arunachal Pradesh but state was found to be lagging behind in quality education and lack of constructive higher educational institutions as compared to other regions of India. Absence of adequate institutional and physical infrastructure has slowed down the state development process. Though there are number of colleges and universities, the quality of education imparted is not up to date. The state has been witnessing rapid expansion of higher educational institutes, but due to lack of attention in systematic educational planning, it demeaned the value in quality higher education. Due to lack of industries in the state, majority of the educated youths remain unemployed.

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