



# Education and its Impact on Socio-Economic Development of North-East India

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## ARTICLE INFO

## ABSTRACT

Education plays a pivotal role in shaping the socio-economic landscape of any region, and North-East India is no exception. The region, characterized by ethnic diversity, rich cultural heritage, and unique geographical features, has witnessed significant progress in educational expansion over the past decades. This study examines how education influences socio-economic development across the eight states of North-East India. It explores the linkages between educational attainment and key indicators such as employment patterns, income generation, gender empowerment, human capital formation, and social mobility. The paper also highlights persistent challenges, including infrastructural limitations, regional disparities, issues of accessibility, and quality of education. By analysing these factors, the study underscores the need for targeted policy interventions to enhance educational outcomes and promote inclusive development. Ultimately, the research demonstrates that strengthening education systems in North-East India can act as a catalyst for sustainable socio-economic transformation and greater regional integration.

**Keywords:** Education, Socio-Economic Development, North-East India, Human Capital, Employment, Regional Disparities, Educational Attainment, Social Mobility, Inclusive Development, Policy Intervention.

## INTRODUCTION:

To F.W. Thomas, “education is no exotic in India. There is no country where the love of learning had so early an origin or has exercised so lasting and powerful an influence”. True that country like China, Egypt and Babylonia rank with India as being the cradles of ancient civilizations, but no other country has left behind such an enduring heritage as India. Her art and literature, which survive to the present day, bear eloquent testimony to her cultural institutions of ancient days.

Education in the modern times is being increasingly regarded as an investment in human being and as such is being used more and more as an effective tool for social and economic transformation. Education plays a key role in national development. At its barest minimum, it has to create employable human resources whereas, its creative best would be molding institutions of learning to unearth talent which will create new knowledge, and use existing knowledge in a creative manner to solve problems. General education provides individuals with minimal requirements such as language, literacy and numeracy, communication skills and other foundation skills. It provides individuals with a grasp of basic scientific knowledge and technology to function productively in the workplace. The basic theme, however, has to be the creation of a citizenry that is committed to secular and liberal ideals and has a work ethic with compassionate public consciousness.

There is a large body of literature in the school of education that articulates the key role of education in building human resources and thereby, enhancing growth. A suitably oriented system of education can facilitate and promote social change and contribute to economic growth by creating requisite attitudes for specific tasks of development. Expansion at all levels of education has accordingly been a major problem with planners and administrators. Facilities for universal elementary education are a prerequisite for equality of opportunity and the content and quality of elementary education determine the infrastructure of an entire educational system.

The development of education and how it is being imparted to the younger generation is an ongoing study that researchers have relentlessly been studying. However, our focus in this article is to understand whether education has been able to harmonize the cultural values of the people into the contents and philosophy of

the books that the children are learning. Also, whether the knowledge that they are attaining while at schools is in anyway helping to improve their socio-economic and cultural values?

### **EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT:**

Education is both directly and indirectly interdependent on the economic development of a region. It induces the change and progress of technology that help a region to accelerate their growth in all aspects of development and this progress can be attained with the systematic application of science and specialized knowledge of skills that one attains through education. The way India is growing and is on the verge of becoming a super power is only because modern education aided by the changes one has in their values and attitudes. Thus it is impossible to talk about development without bringing the subject of education. Any lame man knows that when you want a certain person for a certain profession, an intelligent person would be the one you would try to employ rather than an unintelligent one. Education is the primary source of every qualitative change that we want to procure in development. So, the process of learning and teaching, of students attending regular classes, of employing proper guidance, of providing better ambience are few facets that a region needs to focus for a better future ahead. Schooling not just provide a child the basic education but lets them explore the world, express their ideas, puzzle out questions, solve situations and live in a world that doesn't just surround the present world but a world beyond his daily experience, a world that contribute to international view-points.

In today's time, the most critical and important concern of the educators around the world is how to prepare the present generation learners to be future ready. India is a developing country and most of its youth comprises of young generation with around 28 million of youth added to the population every year. Though the average age rate of India will be 29 by 2020 compared to 37 in China and 48 in Japan but the power, energy and the young bones won't be any good if they are not provided proper guidance and universal education.

### **NORTH-EAST INDIA:**

That's the scenario of the entire country and when we come to the north east region of India, the entire region itself is underdeveloped and implementing such universal level education is far more difficult and a futuristic dream. Northeast India consists of the 8 states that lie in the easternmost part of India. They are Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim. Till 2002 they were known as seven sisters with the seven states officially recognized under the North Eastern Council and in 2002 Sikkim formed a part of the NEC thus now known as either 8 sisters or 'seven sisters and one brother'. The whole of northeast comprises of 8% of the total geographical area of India and has about 3.76 % of population in total. The whole region is famous for its flora and fauna, hilly landscape, mountain ranges, plateaus, valleys and the beautiful culture it maintains which is quite different from the rest of India. It has 200 of the total 635 tribal groups that the country has and each has their own culture, ethics, beliefs and customs yet it displays a fine example of unity in diversity.

The literacy rate that the region retains which is 66.95 in Arunachal, 73.18 in Assam, 79.85 in Manipur, 75.48 in Meghalaya, 91.58 in Mizoram, 80.11 in Nagaland, Sikkim 82.20 and 87.75 in Tripura as compared to the all India literacy rate being 74.04 is highly commendable. This is mainly due to the fact that colonial education started in this region before the British rule. Traditional teaching institutions called tols or moktabs were already present for few sections of the society since pre-colonial period. Even mass education was started earlier than the other states of India, maybe because it was not a part of India during that time and only came to being during British rule. The missionaries also played a strong role in imparting knowledge and education to the hilly areas and along with education they also made the masses skilled in arts and crafts as well. The most important and significant contribution that the missionaries started were converting the tribal dialects to written language and the speed in which these region progressed in the last millennium is quite commendable. Arunachal Pradesh is the only state that enjoyed modern education post-independence though the Tawang Monastery used to impart knowledge since ancient times but only in theosophical teachings. Education of woman was also a part of the medieval or biographical books of north-east India.

### **EDUCATION IN NORTH-EAST:**

The regions though is a part of India but is isolated from the rest of the country and so do not enjoy equal benefits when it comes to development and progress. This has given rise to various political and social disturbances since decades. Despite being the largest producer of tea and 2<sup>nd</sup> largest producer of crude oil and rubber, it does not have enough industrial and agricultural development. The most crucial problem that India faces are the pedagogical innovations that the country is adopting which is only helping the urban civilizations while the rural learners and their education are being neglected and they are not gaining anything out of it. Especially in the northeast region which is anyway neglected by the government in all aspect deserves more attention and much better benefits depending on the way it has nurtured the education system.

The basics of a primary education system consist of three aspects; universal enrollment, minimal drop-outs and enhanced learning achievement. Though in the matter of enrollment the entire region is above average but when it comes to drop-outs and enhanced learning, there is a lacking gap between what the region has achieved and the rest of the country. The number of drop-out the region has is totally alarming and even drop-outs of girls are higher though it is less than the rest of the country. The kind of learning experience and quality of education that the children are achieving is also a cause of concern. The whole region is living an extremely disastrous primary education which can be seen during the secondary and higher education stages. A student is sent to the school to learn things that they cannot understand or implement in their regular life at home and the pillar of the education system starts with teachers. But the most crucial problem this region is facing is the standard of teacher training which is astoundingly lacking. Dearth of teachers, abnormal absentees, poor classroom facility, insufficient teachers and poor quality of teachers is making the matters worse. Most primary and secondary education in this region comprises of government run institutions where mostly teachers are ad-hoc instead of permanent ones and they are paid barely enough salary compared to the full time graduate trained teachers. Moreover there is a near-to-nil motivational career prospect that eventually turns potential candidates leave for permanent jobs and create dearth of teachers. There is no government supervision on the regularity of teachers, though in the last two years they are trying to implement regularity by installing bio-metrics but how far they have been successful is another topic to be discussed later. Another dilemma of the government run school teachers are the non-teaching duties that are shoved upon them every now and then, like election duty or NRC duty which keeps them away from the school and the children away from knowledge.

Apparently, the government though after repeated promises has failed to turn the northeast into a corridor of prosperity and growth. Also the lack of proper education and better scope of employment has driven the young youths to other states to gain better knowledge, enjoy good facilities and have much more opportunities than their own state could provide. Lack of good institutes is one thing and the other being the present affairs of the state, the inter-ethnic political issues, the administrative problems and the rise of distrust, partiality and hatred towards the government is making the environment far worse than one can imagine. There is an urgent need of taking long term and immediate measure which in the first place would improve the educational environment, 2<sup>nd</sup> would provide better training facility to the teachers and future career prospects and last eradicate the drop out situation that the region is facing.

The scope of employment is really at a pathetic stage. Due to lack of better education and no scope of employment when the students go to other states, it is really difficult for them to cope up with the highly competitive market and also come in terms with change of cultural and social aspects. Those who stay back because of no money or opportunity eventually end up being aimless and only a burden to the job market. Such situations are the result of the rise of faithlessness towards the government and slowly the frustration creeps in. Soon the anger ensues and the negativity brings in illegal activities, extortion and terrorism.

### **NON-FORMAL EDUCATION:**

In contemporary age, the rapid growth and development of science and technology has created a revolution in the whole world. To cope with the developing and changing society properly, people have to increase their range of knowledge. That is why non-formal education has become part and parcel of our present society. Non-formal training institutions or vocational education is a much needed source to provide a second chance to the drop-outs as it would ensure they acquire necessary skills to survive in the running market. It is suggested that part-time courses should be organized for the drop-outs and separate courses of study be designed for girls as per their requirement. As already stated, primary education is not enough in today's world where every other day new innovations are made, new technologies are developed and new opportunities are offered. It is highly essential to be at par with the knowledge driven economy and access to quality education and development are two sides of the same coin, it always goes together.

### **GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES:**

Though in this present scenario the government is taking up initiative to develop the educational scenario in the northeast region but how far it would be successful will only be known in the future. Few of the schemes started recently are IshanUday which provides scholarship facility to 10000 students whose parents have income below 4.5 lacks per annum and would be providing them 3500-5000 per month for undergraduate study in any college. Another is IshanVikas where few selected students of northeast are introduced and interacted by IIT, NIT, and IISERs during vacation for exposure or gaining knowledge of the engineering field. A visit of 10 days for a group of 32 students and one teacher to the said institutes is planned twice each year.

### CONCLUSION:

Thus, we can easily claim that education plays the biggest role in the development of the northeast region. Because good schools means more educated citizens means qualified people for jobs means more jobs being generated means more money is being made in the country means creating a strong financial base. So basically education does not just improve the economic health but also the standard of living is upgraded. The region can be self-sufficient with capable doctors to look after the people, engineers to build industries and also well-suited politicians to make better decisions on behalf of the people. Schooling also makes the community safer with useless minds wandering off to do wrong deeds and everyone being capable and trained to find efficient ways to farm, transport, produce, decide and make money so that the whole region benefits.

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