

# INTER-DISTRICT DISPARITY IN EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH: Issues & Challenges

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Main Theme: **Theme V- Challenges of Education**

Sub-Theme: **Policy Challenges & Interventions in School Education**

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**Abstract:** *Arunachal Pradesh has, no doubt, witnessed a progressive growth in literacy, GER and GPI while gender disparities, rural-urban disparities and Dropout Rates (DoR) have witnessed significant reduction at both state and district levels. The increase in literate population and decline in non-literate population at both the state and district levels during 2001-2011 has signaled a positive change in the state. However, the progress in educational attainment in the state is not free from few major setbacks. There are various issues and challenges to educational progress in the state have come up with changing time. It must be remembered that without addressing these setbacks, the state will not be able to sustain the shining pace of educational attainment of the region and consequently, a distorted and imbalanced educational attainment will come up in this strategically important state of India.*

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Key words: educational attainment, disparity, quality education

## **Introduction:**

The study is mainly an inter-district analysis vis-à-vis educational attainment, issues and challenges in education sector of Arunachal Pradesh and is primarily based on secondary data obtained from various reliable sources.

During the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Arunachal Pradesh had no schools at all (APHDR, 2005). In 1918, the first school in the area was established in Pasighat and the second school was established in Dambuk in 1922. At the time of Independence, there were only three schools of primary level in the state. The tribal people were more or less completely illiterates with no scripts of their own. The necessary knowledge was passed from generation to generation through their specific dialects and through learning by doing process. However,

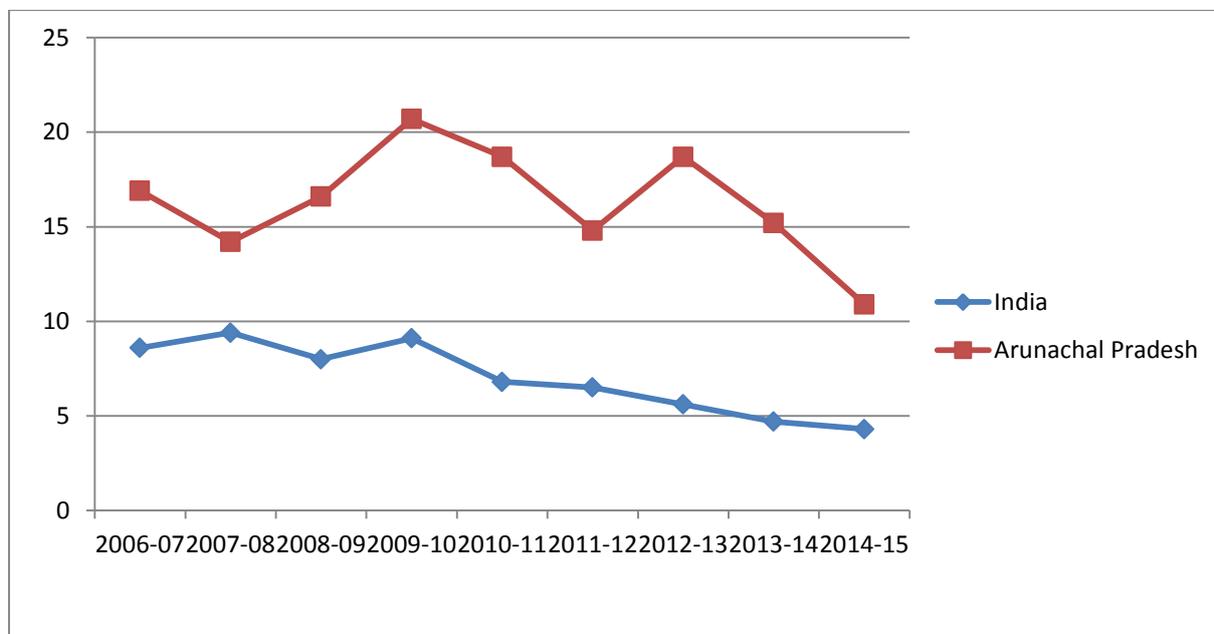
the Buddhist tribes of the Kameng region and the lower Lohit Valley were provided with religious instruction in Buddhist scripts (Tibetan and Tai-Khampti languages).

As per the report of U-DISE (2014-15), Arunachal Pradesh has 3934 schools managed by different organizations-Department of Education, Tribal/Social Welfare Department, Local Body, Private unaided, Central Government, SSA, NGO, State Government and Government Aided. Out of the total schools, 2192 schools are of primary level only, 1147 are primary with upper primary, 63 are primary with upper primary and secondary/higher secondary, 41 are upper primary only, 49 are upper primary with secondary/higher secondary, 221 are primary with upper primary and secondary 38 are upper primary with secondary, 27 are secondary with higher secondary, 4 are higher secondary only and 161 are all other categories. Moreover, as in 2012-13, there are 3 Universities/University level Institute, 26 Colleges, 3 Technical Education Institutes, 2 Nursing Institutes and 6 Teacher Training Institutes in the state. Thus, the state has travelled a long way in establishing and improving educational infrastructure since Independence.

Arunachal Pradesh has, no doubt, witnessed a progressive growth in literacy, GER and GPI while gender disparities, rural-urban disparities and Dropout Rates (DoR) witnessed significant reduction at both state and district levels. The increase in literate population and decline in non-literates population at both state and district levels in 2001-2011 signaling a positive change in the state. Considering the progress in educational indicators GER and GPI (in GER), the change is at better pace than the national average. However, the progress in educational attainment in the state is not free from few major setbacks. The state literacy levels are stubbornly remained below than that of the national average and the Dropout Rates (DoR) in the state is much higher than that of national average. These are mainly due to low literacy levels and high Dropout Rates (DoR) with wide inter-district variations in educational attainment across the state. It must be remembered that without addressing these setbacks, the state will not be able to sustain the shining pace of educational attainment and consequently, a distorted and imbalanced educational attainment will come up in this strategically important state of India.

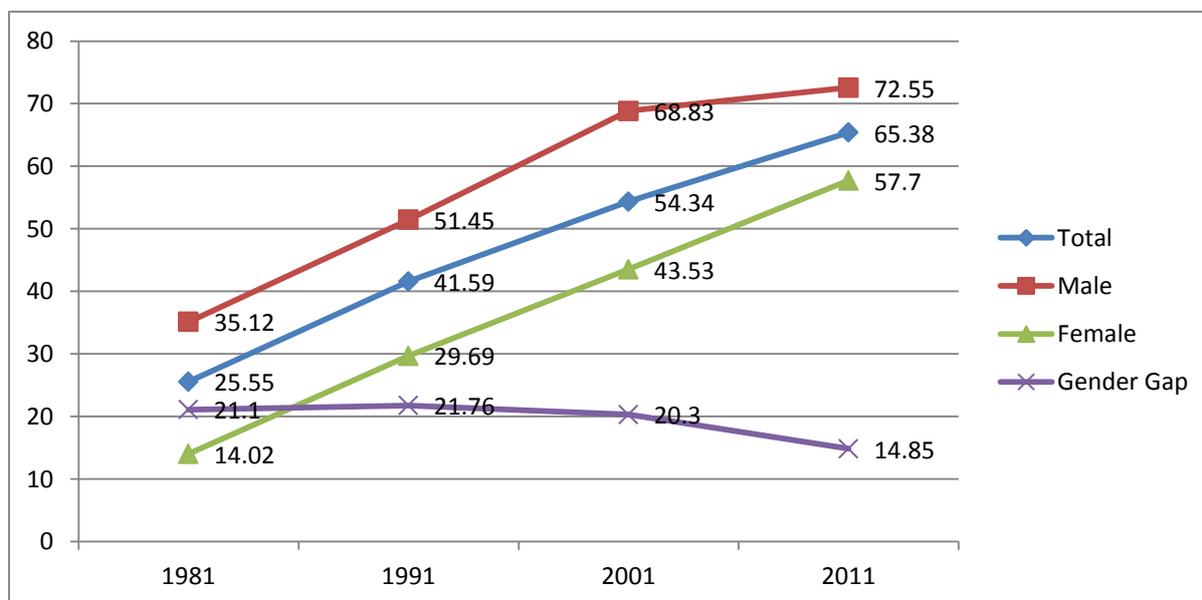
The following figures and tables capture the crux of educational scenario of Arunachal Pradesh:

**Figure 1: Dropout Rates- India & Arunachal Pradesh**



Source: U-DISE, NUEPA, 2005-06 to 2014-15

**Figure 2: Trends in Literacy in Arunachal Pradesh**



Source: Table: 5.1 Compiled from Census of India, Office of Registrar General of India; Statistical Abstract of Arunachal Pradesh, 2001, 2008 & 2014

**Table: 1****Literacy Rates by Gender and its differential in Arunachal Pradesh over Decade**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Gender Gap</b>
<b>(1)</b>	<b>(2)</b>	<b>(3)</b>	<b>(4)</b>	<b>(5)</b>
1961	12.25	1.42	7.1	10.83
1971	17.82	3.71	11.3	14.11
1981	35.12	14.02	25.6	21.10
1991	51.45	29.69	41.6	21.76
2001	68.83	43.53	54.3	20.30
2011	72.55	57.70	65.4	14.85
% increase in 2011 over 2001	5.4%	32.6%	20.4%	
<b>% Decline in Gender Gap</b>				
<b>1961-1971</b>	<b>1971-1981</b>	<b>1981-1991</b>	<b>1991-2001</b>	<b>2001-2011</b>
-30.3	-49.5	-3.1	6.7	26.8

*Note: Minus (-) indicates increase in Gender Gap*

*Source: Compiled from Census of India, Office of Registrar General of India; Statistical Abstract of Arunachal Pradesh, 1991, 2008 & 2014.*

**Table: 2****Rural-Urban Literacy Rate in Arunachal Pradesh**

<b>Residence</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Gender Parity Index</b>
<b>(1)</b>	<b>(2)</b>	<b>(3)</b>	<b>(4)</b>	<b>(5)</b>
Rural	67.44	52.04	59.94	77.2%
Urban	88.45	76.66	82.93	86.7%
Total	72.55	57.70	65.38	79.5%
Residence Parity Index	76.2%	67.9%	72.3%	

*Source: Census of India, 2011*

**Findings of the Study**

- i. The state's decadal increase in total and female literacy were higher than that of corresponding national average during 2001-2011 while decadal increase in male literacy was below than that of corresponding national average.
- ii. In terms of literates and illiterates, both male and female literates in the state increased while illiterates for both reduced in 2001-2011. Female literates

increased by 79.7 per cent which is much higher than the increase in males by 45 per cent. On the other hand, share of state literates increased from 54 per cent in 2001 to 66 per cent in 2011.

- iii. Gender Parity Index (GPI) in literacy (by rural and urban) revealed disparity in favour of males in both residence, while higher disparity (low GPI Values) is observed in rural areas at both state and district levels in 2011. On the other hand, GPI in literacy (by male and female) shows disparity in favour of males at both state and district levels.
- iv. Residence Parity Index (RPI) in literacy revealed a higher disparity in female category in favour of urban areas as compared to disparity in male category, while disparity among all categories - persons, male and female, is in favour of urban areas.
- v. Except Papum Pare and Dibang Valley (the highest and the lowest populated districts respectively), the districts with lower literate population have witnessed higher decadal percentage increase in literates, that is, lower percentage increase in literates for districts with higher literate population during 2001-2011.
- vi. A healthy improvement in GER and GPI in GER in Elementary Education is observed during 2005-2006 to 2014-2015. Notably, there exist high DoR at both state and district levels.

### **Educational Issues & Challenges**

The following are the issues & challenges being faced by the education system:

- I. Though the female literacy increased at higher rate in 2001-2011, male literacy at 82.1 per cent is still much higher than female literacy at 65.5 per cent, and consequently, the gender gaps still exists at double figures of 16.3 percentage points;
- II. The inter-state disparities in educational attainment are wide and severe in India;
- III. Declining standards of teaching-learning quality has been observed: one of the key challenges facing the Indian education system is the quality-related deficiencies at each stage of education resulting in unsatisfactory level of student learning-both scholastic and co-scholastic/non-cognitive. The overall

standard of Indian education is well below global standards; as per PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment, 2009) ranking results, Tamil Nadu and Himachal Pradesh were ranked at 72 and 73 out of 74 participants, higher only than Kyrgyzstan. Further, ASER (Annual Status of Education Report, 2014) finding revealed two important setbacks in Indian education system: that learning levels across the country, whether in public or private school, have not improved, and reading and arithmetic abilities of children in standard 5 in rural India is so low that the possibility of children's progress in the school system is bleak. These expose the quality gaps in Indian education system;

- IV. The Declining students and teacher's attendance: Children's attendance in both Primary and Upper Primary schools shows a steady downward trend especially in educationally backward states. On the other hand, low levels of accountability among school teachers are captured by the high rates of teacher absenteeism in government schools;
- V. Shortfall in funding for programmes: Shortfall in funding has been a major constraint in implementation of some of the programmes designed to further expand school education and adult education programmes and to maintain acceptable level of quality in education. As per report, an amount of Rs. 231233 billion has been funded for school education from 2010-11 to 2014-15 with a shortfall of Rs. 156 billion.

### **Policy Recommendations**

As per the study the following policy recommendations have been made:

- I. Improving access to school education considering the high DoR at Secondary and Higher Secondary Levels of education;
- II. Removing gender disparity especially in the higher age and in rural areas;
- III. Improving quality of education, that includes improving PTR with proportional distribution of teachers in all areas, better schools amenities such as libraries, toilets and improving class room-teacher ratio (CTR);
- IV. Improve and strict monitoring of programme implementation and check students and teachers absenteeism by providing better quality teaching-

learning activities in school and there by regaining the pride of teaching profession;

- V. Inter-state disparities in educational attainment is wide and extreme which needs an urgent effective policy dose. Special focus on educationally backward states must be initiated at both the state and national levels with strict monitoring of fund management;
- VI. At district level:
- Efforts to increase the literacy levels (total, Male and Female literacy) to acceptable levels, at least above the national average;
  - District- specific planning and disaggregated targeted policy is needed to be initiated with more focus directed towards comparably educationally backward districts, viz., Anjaw, Changlang, East Kameng, Kurung Kumey, Upper Siang, Upper Subansiri and Tirap for a balanced educational attainment progress across the state;
  - Free and Compulsory Education Programme needs strict implementation and monitoring as various reports indicate that a considerable amount of fees is being charged (indirectly) from poor parents that are generally unaware of the new education policy provisions in the state;
  - Larger participation of local communities in school administration is needed, while illegal appointment of teachers especially under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) for vote bank politics and the consequent effect of degrading standards of school quality need to be checked at urgency.

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