

**Provision and Utilization of Elementary Education Facilities  
in North East India : What DISE data reveals ?**

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## **Provision and Utilization of Elementary Education Facilities in North East India : What DISE data reveals ?**

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India being a signatory of declaration of the 'Education for All (EFA)' meet both in Jomtien (1990) as well as Dakar (2000) is committed to achieve the goal of EFA at the earliest possible time. However the target of achieving this goal, as mentioned in the Dakar declaration, is 2015. India has committed itself to achieve the goal of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE), which is part of EFA, by the year 2010. In order to meet this goal the country has launched a nation wide programme known as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in year 2000-01. But actual implementation of this programme started in many states in 2002-03 only and in some states even in 2003-04.

The country is bound by the Constitutional commitment given under the Article 45 of the Directive Principles of the State Policy which enjoins that "the state shall endeavour to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years . Unfortunately we are still struggling to achieve this goal in 2005. In order to achieve this goal, apart from the commitment given in National Policies on Education (NPE), several projects and programme have been launched in various states of the country during late 1980s and in 1990s. Some of these are namely Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project (APPEP), Bihar Education Project (BEP), Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Project (UPBEP), Lok Jumbish and Shiksha Karmi Projects of Rajasthan and the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP). Out of these projects/programmes only DPEP covers more than one state otherwise each of these projects were meant to cover only one state and that even in some cases did not cover all the districts of the states where these projects were implemented. DPEP which started with 42 districts in seven states in 1994-95, ultimately covered about 270 districts from 18 major states of the country in its various phases.

It may be noted that the abovementioned projects and programmes did not cover any of the North Eastern states with the exception of Assam from where 9 districts were covered under DPEP. It is therefore clear that till 2000-01 no special efforts in the form of any projects or programmes were made to achieve the goal of UEE in the North Eastern states. This is despite the fact that these states are in far flung areas and many of these states have difficult terrains with scattered population and that is why comparatively lesser coverage of the population by the educational facilities. As discussed above Sarva Shiksha Abyhiyan (SSA) programme is the first serious effort towards achieving the goal of UEE which covers the whole country including all the North Eastern states. These North-Eastern states have generally launched SSA in their districts in 2002-03 and some of these states have started implementing the programme even in 2003-04 also.

As mentioned above the Universalization of Elementary Education is a Constitutional directive and it has also been endorsed by various Committees/ Commissions on education and also in the National Policies on Education. However it may be noted that implications for this directive are not restricted to only making provisions i.e. opening of schools, for elementary education but also to ensure that all children participate in education and successfully complete 8 years of schooling. The UEE therefore has four important components namely Universal Access (i.e. provision), Universal Enrolment and participation, Universal Retention and Universal Achievement. Out of these four components the present paper focuses mainly on the first two components namely universal access i.e. provision and universal participation.

### **District Information System of Education (DISE)**

At the time of initiating DPEP in 1994 it was felt that a sound information system is essential for successful implementation and monitoring of the programme. It was also felt that an innovative model is required in order to strengthen the database for planning and management in a decentralized framework. It was realised that DPEP with a focus on decentralized planning, requires school level information, which is up-to-date, reliable and is available soon after its collection. The MHRD as a part of the DPEP national endeavour decided to design and develop a school based computerized information system. The responsibility for developing this system was given to the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), New Delhi

NIEPA designed software for implementation at the district level and provided the necessary technical and professional support to DPEP districts. The first version of the software, named as District Information System of Education (DISE) was released in 1995. The district level professionals were assisted and trained in the establishment of EMIS units. The DISE data collected from schools and computerized at the district level are disseminated up to the school level in various ways. The first major review of DISE was undertaken in 1997-98. When SSA was launched the DISE software was redesigned to cater to the needs and requirements as perceived in the SSA programme.

The latest DISE report covers as many as 931471 schools spread over 539 districts across 25 States and Union Territories. Except Haryana the coverage in case of all states and UTs in terms of number of districts is complete. The coverage of DISE includes 6 states from North Eastern part of the country. These are Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. It may be noted that two North Eastern states namely Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur are yet to be covered under DISE or at least data pertaining to these two states have not been reported in DISE 2004 report cards.

The present paper focuses on provisions and utilization of elementary educational facilities in 5 North Eastern states that have not been covered under DPEP and for which DISE data is made available in 2004. Thus the paper aims at highlighting the elementary education scenario by presenting the analysis of elementary education data on selected

items as reported in DISE State Report Cards (2004) of five North Eastern states namely Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura.

### **Administrative Structure of the States**

The administrative structure of these five North Eastern states can be seen in terms of the number of districts, blocks, clusters and villages that these states have. Table 1 given below presents the state wise number of district and sub-district administrative units in these selected states.

Table 1  
**Administrative Profile of the States (2001)**

<b>Item/States</b>	<b>Meghalaya</b>	<b>Mizoram</b>	<b>Nagaland</b>	<b>Sikkim</b>	<b>Tripura</b>
Number of Districts	7	8	8	4	4
Number of Blocks/Taluks	44	35	51	21	45
Number of Clusters	280	218	87	139	225
Number of Villages	5472	807	1271	510	1008

As is clear from the data presented in the above table these states are very small in terms of administrative units. As far as districts are concerned Mizoram and Nagaland have 8 districts each whereas Sikkim and Tripura have only 4 districts each while Meghalaya has as many as 7 districts. The number of blocks/taluks in these states vary from maximum 51 in Nagaland to as low as only 21 in Sikkim. Mizoram has highest number of Clusters (280) followed by Tripura (225). Nagaland has only 87 clusters whereas Sikkim has 139. From the point of view of number of villages Meghalaya seems to be the biggest state having 5472 villages followed by Nagaland (1271) and Tripura (1008). Mizoram and Sikkim have only 807 and 510 villages respectively.

### **Demographic Profile of the States**

Table 2 presents the population data related to the five states. It includes the population as well as population related indicators as per the 2001 Census.

Table 2  
**Demographic Scenario of the States (2001)**

<b>Item/States</b>	<b>Meghalaya</b>	<b>Mizoram</b>	<b>Nagaland</b>	<b>Sikkim</b>	<b>Tripura</b>
Total Population (in lakhs)	23.19	8.89	19.90	5.41	31.99
Decadal Growth Rate (1991-2001)	30.70	28.80	64.50	33.10	16.00
% Urban Population	19.60	49.60	17.20	11.10	17.00
% SC Population	0.5	0.0	0.0	5.0	17.4
% ST Population	85.9	94.5	89.1	20.6	31.1
Sex Ratio	972	935	900	875	948

The table shows that demographically Tripura is the biggest state having population of about 32 lakhs whereas Sikkim is smallest state with only 5.4 lakhs population. After Tripura, Meghalaya (23.2 lakhs) and Nagaland (19.9 lakhs) have sizeable population while Mizoram has even less than one million people in the state.

It is surprising to note that the growth rate of population in these states is very high. Except Tripura where the growth rate is 16 percent all other states have growth rate of population more than the national average. In Nagaland the growth rate is found as high as 64.5 percent during 1991-2001 decade.

Mizoram is the most urbanized state where about half of the population lives in urban areas while all other states have less than 20 percent urban population ranging from 11.1 percent in Sikkim to 19.6 percent in Meghalaya.

These states have negligible Scheduled caste population except Tripura (17.4 percent) and Sikkim (5 percent). However, Meghalaya (86 percent), Mizoram (94.5 percent) and Nagaland (89 percent) are numerically dominated by the Scheduled Tribes' population. The other states Sikkim (20.6 percent) and Tripura (31.1 percent) have also substantial ST population.

In three states namely Meghalaya (972), Tripura (948) and Mizoram (935) the sex ratio is more than the sex ratio in the country (929) while surprisingly in other two states Nagaland (900) and Sikkim (875) the sex ratio is quite low.

### Literacy Scenario

Table 3 presents the literacy rates of these five states as well as India for the total, male and female population as per the 2001 census.

Table 3  
Literacy Rates of the States (2001)

Item/States	Meghalaya	Mizoram	Nagaland	Sikkim	Tripura	India
Over all Literacy	62.6	88.8	66.6	68.6	73.2	65.4
Male Literacy	65.4	90.7	71.2	76.0	81.0	75.8
Female Literacy	59.6	86.7	61.5	60.4	64.9	54.2

The data shows that barring Meghalaya the literacy of all the other four states is higher than the literacy rate of the country. Mizoram has exceptionally higher literacy rate (88.8 percent) which is second highest in the country after Kerala. As far as the male literacy is concerned it is highest in Mizoram (90.7 percent) while it is lowest in Meghalaya (65.4 percent). However except Meghalaya and Nagaland the male literacy of all states is better than the male literacy of India. Though female literacy is lowest again

in Meghalaya (59.6 percent) but still it is better than the female literacy of the country (54.2 percent). All the five states have better female literacy than female literacy of the country.

It is important to note that the gender disparities in literacy are relatively lower in these states. The gap between male and female literacy is as low as only 4 percent points in Mizoram and about 6 percent points in Meghalaya. In remaining states it ranges from 9.7 percent points in Nagaland to 16.1 percent points in Tripura. But still it is less than the male-female literacy gap at the national level (21.6 percent points). It shows that gender disparities are comparatively less in education in this part (i.e. North East) than in other parts of the country.

### **Institutions of Elementary Education in States**

All these North Eastern states are small in size and that is why the number of educational institutions is comparatively small in these states. Table 4 presents number of primary level institutions in these states.

Table 4  
**Number of Primary level Institutions in the States**  
(As per 2003-04 DISE data)

<b>Item/States</b>	<b>Management</b>	<b>Meghalaya</b>	<b>Mizoram</b>	<b>Nagaland</b>	<b>Sikkim</b>	<b>Tripura</b>
<b>Schools having only Primary Sections</b>	Government	2998	1240	1361	503	1992
	Private	2001	94	140	111	10
	Total	4999	1334	1501	614	2002
<b>Primary with Upper Primary</b>	Government	80	55	128	145	493
	Private	129	126	180	22	4
	Total	209	181	308	167	497
<b>Primary with Upper Primary &amp; Sec./H.S.</b>	Government	30	7	14	124	546
	Private	112	24	182	12	19
	Total	142	31	196	136	565
<b>Total Number of Primary Schools/Sections</b>	Government	3108 (58.1)	1302(84.2)	1503(74.9)	772(84.5)	3031(98.9)
	Private	2242 (41.9)	244 (15.8)	502 (25.1)	145(15.6)	33 (1.1)
	Total	5350	1546	2005	917	3064
<b>No. of Primary Schools/Sections per 10,000 Pop.</b>	Total	23.07	17.39	10.08	16.95	9.58

**Note : Figures given within parentheses are percentages to total number of schools/sections.**

The above table presents the state wise availability of primary schooling facilities. Table reveals that total number of primary schools/sections is highest in Meghalaya (5350) followed by Tripura (3064). However it may be noted that population of Tripura is more than the population of Meghalaya. As can be expected the number of primary schools/sections is lowest in Sikkim as it is the smallest of the five states in terms of population.

If we look at the provision of primary schooling facilities made by the government and private bodies the data presented in the table shows that share of private schools is almost negligible (1.1 percent) in Tripura where about 99 percent schools are government schools. In Mizoram and Sikkim more than 84 percent of the total schools are run by government while in Nagaland about three-fourth of the schools are government schools. It is interesting to note that in Meghalaya only about 58 percent schools are managed by government and rest 42 percent schools are run by private bodies.

The accessibility of primary schooling facilities can be seen in terms of number of primary schools/sections available per a specific unit of population. The above table presents data on number of primary schools/sections available in these states per 10,000 population. It shows that accessibility is highest in Meghalaya where there are 23 schools and it is followed by Mizoram and Sikkim where there are about 17 schools each per 10,000 population. The situation is worst in Nagaland and Tripura where the number of primary schools/sections per 10,000 population are only 10 and 9 respectively..

Table 5 presents number of upper primary schools/sections available in these states as per 2003-04 DISE data.

As far as the number of upper primary schools/sections in the states is concerned the table shows that Meghalaya has highest number (1256) followed by Tripura (1141). This is despite the fact that demographically Tripura is a bigger state than Meghalaya. Being the smallest state Sikkim has lowest number of upper primary schools/sections (314) in absolute terms.

If we look at the management wise number of upper primary schools/sections. In Tripura as high as 97 percent are government schools while only about 3 percent schools are run by the private bodies. In Sikkim also about 89 percent are government schools while only 11 percent schools are managed by private bodies. In Nagaland about 52 percent are government schools while 48 percent schools are run by private bodies. However in Meghalaya the privately managed institutions are in majority (59.9 percent) and government runs only about 40 percent of the total upper primary schools/sections in the state. In Mizoram about three-fourth of the total upper primary schools/sections are run by government while only one-fourth are private schools.

Table 5  
**Number of Upper Primary level institutions in the States**  
 (As per 2003-04 DISE data)

Item/States	Management	Meghalaya	Mizoram	Nagaland	Sikkim	Tripura
Schools having only Upper Primary Sections	Government	359	638	175	2	3
	Private	450	84	3	0	0
	Total	809	722	178	2	3
Primary with Upper Primary	Government	80	55	128	145	493
	Private	129	126	180	22	4
	Total	209	181	308	167	497
Primary with Upper Primary & Sec./H.S.	Government	30	7	14	124	546
	Private	112	24	182	12	19
	Total	142	31	196	136	565
Upper Primary with Sec./H.S.	Government	35	2	81	8	67
	Private	61	4	7	1	9
	Total	96	6	88	9	76
Total Number of Upper Primary Schools/Sections	Government	504 (40.1)	702 (76.7)	398 (51.7)	279(88.9)	1109(97.2)
	Private	752 (59.9)	238 (23.3)	372 (48.3)	35 (11.1)	32 (2.8)
	Total	1256	940	770	314	1141
No. of Upper Primary Schools/Sections per 10,000 Pop.	Total	5.42	10.58	3.87	5.80	3.57

**Note : Figures given within parentheses are percentages to total number of schools/sections.**

The accessibility of upper primary schooling facilities can be seen in terms of number of such schools/sections available per unit of population in various states. The data presented in the above table reveals that the access of upper primary schooling is best in Mizoram where there are more than 10 upper primary schools/sections available per 10,000 population. However this figure is lowest in Tripura (3.57) and Nagaland (3.87). Meghalaya and Sikkim have 5.42 and 5.80 upper primary schools/sections per 10,000 population respectively. It therefore indicates that access of upper primary schooling is best in Mizoram and worst in Tripura. Out of these five North-Eastern states.

#### **School and Teacher related Indicators in states**

Table 6 given below presents data on various indicators related to schools and teachers at primary and upper primary level of education in the states.

Table 6  
**Primary and Upper Primary level Schools and Teachers in States**  
(As per 2003-04 DISE data)

<b>Schools/ Teachers</b>	Meghalaya	Mizoram	Nagaland	Sikkim	Tripura	<b>India</b>
<b>Percentage of single Teacher Schools</b>						
Primary only	14.4	7.1	6.1	2.1	12.0	19.1
Upper Primary only	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	7.0
<b>Percentage of Schools with Pre-primary Sections</b>						
Primary only	79.3	18.3	96.8	96.9	1.6	14.27
Primary + Upper Primary	74.6	61.9	86.4	98.8	3.4	23.21
<b>Ratio of Primary to Upper Primary Schools</b>	4.24	1.64	2.60	2.92	2.69	3.18
<b>Pupil Teacher Ratio</b>						
Primary only	21	17	14	42	11	46
Upper Primary only	16	10	11	6	12	31
<b>Percentage of Female Teachers</b>						
Primary only	50.9	48.1	37.9	39.7	18.9	34.4
Upper Primary only	34.8	25.8	25.7	68.8	28.6	23.6
<b>Average number of Teachers per School</b>						
Primary only	2.5	3.8	5.4	5.0	4.0	2.93*
Upper Primary only	4.5	6.5	10.8	8.0	11.7	6.45*

\* Figures pertain to 2002-03 taken from 'Selected Educational Statistics (MHRD)'

The above table shows there are still some single teacher schools in all these states. As far as exclusive primary schools, i.e. schools having only primary sections, are concerned Meghalaya (14.4 percent) has the highest percentage of such schools followed by Tripura (12 percent). It is heartening to note that Sikkim has only 2.1 percent single teacher primary schools which is lowest out of these states. However the data presented in the table reveals that percentage of single teacher primary schools in each of these five states is individually less than that of the national average of single teacher schools which is reported as 19.1 percent. It may further be noted that there are hardly any upper primary schools in these states that have only one teacher. This is as against the percentage of single teacher upper primary schools in the country that are reported as 7 percent in the table.

It is generally perceived that pre-primary schools prepare children for primary schooling. It is therefore desirable that primary schools may have pre-primary sections attached to it as it ensures better participation of children in primary education. The

above table provides data on the percentage of exclusive primary schools and schools having both primary and upper primary sections and having pre-primary sections also.

Data reveals that Nagaland (96.8 percent) and Sikkim (98.9 percent) have highest percentage of primary schools having pre-primary sections. It is disappointing to note that in Tripura only 1.6 percent primary schools have pre-primary sections. These figures when compared to the national average show that position in four states namely Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Sikkim is better than the national average (14.27 percent).

For schools having primary and upper primary sections in Sikkim 98.8 percent schools have pre-primary sections. In Nagaland and Meghalaya are 86.4 percent and 74.6 percent such schools have pre-primary sections respectively. Again Tripura has a poor performance as only 3.4 percent of its primary + upper primary schools have pre-primary sections. In the country 23.21 percent primary + upper primary schools have pre-primary sections. It may therefore be concluded that barring Tripura the facilities of pre-primary education are better in these North-Eastern states when compared with the country as a whole.

In order to achieve the goal of UEE it is necessary that along with primary schools/sections enough number of upper primary schools/sections are made available so that there is an opportunity for all children completing primary education to attend upper primary level also. In this regard the SSA allows to open more upper primary schools in the districts subject to the ceiling of 1 upper primary school for every 2 primary schools. Thus the ratio of primary and upper primary schools/sections as allowed in SSA is 2:1.

The above table reveals that in these five North Eastern states the ratio of upper primary to primary schools/sections ranges between lowest 1:1.64 in Mizoram to as high as 1:4.24 in Meghalaya. It clearly shows that in Meghalaya there is shortage of upper primary schools/sections whereas the position is very comfortable in Mizoram. However in other three states this ratio is 1:2.60 (Nagaland), 1:2.69 (Tripura) and 1:2.92 (Sikkim). When compared with the ratio of upper primary and primary schools/sections in the country (1:3.18), it is found that the availability of upper primary schooling facilities is better in all states except Meghalaya.

### **Availability of Teachers**

In order to ensure that proper teaching learning process takes place it is important that enough number of teachers are made available in the schools. In this regard the two indicators that may show the availability of teachers are pupil-teacher ratio and average number of teachers per school.

The data presented in the above table reveals that the schools in North-Eastern states have comparatively enough number of teachers. As against the prescribed norm of 1:40 at primary schools the ratio in Sikkim (1:42) is a little bit more than that but even

this is less than the teacher pupil ratio reported at the national level which is 1:46. In all other states this ratio ranges between 1:11 in Tripura to 1:21 in Meghalaya. In upper primary schools the teacher-pupil ratio is even less with 1:6 in Sikkim to 1:16 in Meghalaya. This is against the ratio of 1:31 in the country as a whole. In other three states it is 1:10, 1:11 and 1:12 in Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura respectively. It can therefore be concluded that in the North-Eastern states there is absolutely no problem as far as the availability of teachers at primary and upper primary level is concerned and the schools generally have more than enough number of teachers.

Average number of teachers available per primary school in these states vary from 2.5 in Meghalaya to 5.4 in Nagaland. This is against the average of 2.93 in the country. Similarly in the upper primary schools the average number of teachers per school is 4.5 in Meghalaya which is lowest among these five states. This average is 6.5 in Mizoram, 8 in Sikkim, 10.8 in Nagaland and 11.7 in Tripura. These figures can be seen against the average of 6.45 teachers per upper primary school in the country.

In order to encourage enrolment of girls it is necessary that primary and upper primary schools have female teachers. It is generally believed that at elementary level at least 50 percent teachers should be females. The above table reveals that in primary schools only Meghalaya has a little more than 50 percent female teachers. In other states the percentage of female teachers in primary schools ranges between 18.9 percent in Tripura to 48.1 percent in Mizoram. However barring Tripura in all the other 4 states the percentage of female teachers is better than the national average of 34.4 percent. In the upper primary schools the position is even worse. Except Sikkim where there are 68.8 percent female teachers in no other state it is more than 34.8 percent. Despite that it may be noted that the percentage of female teachers in upper primary schools in all these states is better than the national average of 23.6 percent although it is only between 25 and 30 in Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura. It is therefore clear that though the position is better in these states as compared to many other states, but still it is far from satisfactory.

### **Participation of children in Elementary Education**

The availability of educational facilities is not a guarantee that all children are really participating in education also. It is therefore necessary to ensure that children who are eligible to be in the schools should participate in education by entering the schools and also completing five and eight years of schooling successfully. However the first condition for participation is 'enrolment'. Table 7 presents data on a few indicators related to enrolment at primary and upper primary level of education in these five North-Eastern states.

In order to achieve the goal of UPE or UEE it is necessary that all children are enrolled in schools. However it is generally found that participation of girls is not at par with boys. Table 7 presents data on percentage of girls' enrolment at primary and upper primary level in these states. It shows that in all these five states the percentage of girls in enrolment at primary as well as upper primary level is better than the respective percentage in the country. It clears that participation of girls at elementary level of

education in these state is better than their participation in India as a whole. However it may be noted that participation of girls is best in Meghalaya where both at the primary as well as upper primary level the girls out number boys in enrolment and it is also true for upper primary level enrolment in Sikkim. In other states the percentage of girls in enrolment, whether for primary or upper primary, is less than 50 percent though it is not less than about 48 percent anywhere. It is therefore clear that participation of boys in these states at elementary level is slightly better than that of girls.

Table 7  
**Enrolment at Primary and Upper Primary level in States**  
(As per DISE data 2003-04)

<b>Enrolments</b>	Meghalaya	Mizoram	Nagaland	Sikkim	Tripura	<b>India</b>
<b>Percentage of Girls in Enrolments</b>						
Primary level	50.65	48.33	48.38	49.31	47.93	47.2
Upper Primary level	52.52	48.88	48.96	52.11	48.01	44.2
<b>Total Grossness in Enrolments</b>						
Primary	31.41	19.79	11.03	39.0	10.55	15.69
Upper Primary	33.49	24.10	16.53	58.51	25.54	17.76
<b>Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)</b>						
Primary	97.7	128.0	104.4	128.3	132.3	95.4*
Upper Primary	-	-	54.5	63.0	74.1	61.0*
<b>Net Enrolment Ratio (NER)</b>						
Primary	66.9	102.7	92.9	80.7	118.3	-
Upper Primary	-	-	45.5	26.9	55.2	-

\*Figures pertain to 2002-03 taken from 'Selected Educational Statistics (MHRD)'

The above table provides data on both gross enrolment ratios (GER) as well as net enrolment ratios (NER) in these states. The data shows that at primary level the GER in all states, barring Meghalaya, is more than 100. It actually ranges between 97.7 percent in Meghalaya to 132.3 percent in Tripura. At upper primary level DISE report cards make available the GER for only three states as data from Meghalaya and Mizoram is not reported. The GER at upper primary level, as reported in DISE, show a dismal picture as it is as low as only 54.5 percent in Nagaland, 63 percent in Sikkim and 74.1 percent in Tripura. Despite these low GER figures it may be noted that GER at upper primary level in Sikkim and Tripura are better than the GER at the national level (61 percent)

It may be mentioned that GER is not a very appropriate indicator of enrolment as it includes the enrolment of over age and under age children also while computing enrolment ratio. Better indicator for enrolment is net enrolment ratio (NER). The data in the table shows that at primary level NER in Meghalaya is lowest (66.9 percent) whereas it is 80.7 percent in Sikkim and 92.9 percent in Nagaland. However surprisingly NER in

two states namely Mizoram (102.7 percent) and Tripura (118.3 percent) as reported in the DISE data is more than 100 percent technically which can never be possible. ***This puts a question mark on the reliability of enrolment data as given in DISE state report cards 2004 at least for these two states Mizoram and Tripura.*** The NER for upper primary, as given in the above table, has been reported for only three states and it shows that NER is only 26.9 percent in Sikkim and 45.5 percent in Nagaland and 55.2 percent in Tripura.

It may be inferred from the enrolment data as given in the table and analyzed as above, that these five North-Eastern states have a long way to go in order to achieve the goal of universalization of elementary education even on the basic component of universal enrolment. It may be reminded that SSA programme suggested the target date for universal enrolment as 2003 which has already passed two years back

As given in table the DISE also reports figures on total grossness in enrolment at primary and upper primary level. However if one analyses these figures on grossness in enrolment and compares it with the difference between the GER and NER reported in the same document one finds mis-match. For example, the total grossness in enrolment at primary level in Meghalaya is reported as 31.41 percent whereas the GER and NER for Meghalaya are reported as 97.7 percent and 66.9 percent respectively which shows a difference of 30.8. In Sikkim the reported total grossness at primary level is 39 percent but the difference between GER (128.3 percent) and NER (80.7 percent) comes out to be 47.6 percent. Similar inconsistencies can be seen in the upper primary level, between the difference in GER, NER and total grossness reported, also. ***It may therefore be inferred that either the data on total grossness are not correct or the data on GER and NER are not reliable. It is suggested that in future such inconsistencies in data in the DISE reports may be avoided. Hopefully in the subsequent years the DISE reports will be free from any such inconsistencies.***

### **School Facilities in Elementary Education**

Provision of schooling facilities does not mean opening of schools and appointment of teachers only. In order to ensure that proper teaching learning takes place the schools need to have at least certain basic minimum facilities. Table 8 presents data on selected items related to school facilities in the primary and upper primary schools of these North-Eastern states.

The primary and upper primary schools need to have basic facilities like toilet and drinking water. The data presented in the table shows that in Sikkim 82.1 percent primary schools and cent percent upper primary schools have common toilets. However the position is worst in Meghalaya where hardly one-sixth of primary and one-third of upper primary schools have common toilets. Among other states about 28 percent primary schools of Nagaland and Tripura have common toilets whereas in Mizoram about 36 percent schools have this facility. As far as upper primary schools are concerned about half of the schools have common toilets in Mizoram and Nagaland whereas in Tripura about two-third schools have this facility. Position in these states in primary schools is

worse than the over all position in the country while in upper primary schools these states, barring Meghalaya, are better placed than the national average.

Table 8  
**Facilities in Primary and Upper Primary Schools in States**  
(As per DISE data 2003-04)

<b>Facilities</b>	Meghalaya	Mizoram	Nagaland	Sikkim	Tripura	<b>India</b>
<b>Percentage of Schools having Common Toilets</b>						
Primary only	16.6	36.2	28.1	82.1	28.2	29.06
Upper Primary only	35.2	50.1	51.1	100	66.7	39.18
<b>Percentage of Schools having Girls' Toilets</b>						
Primary only	4.3	4.7	7.3	24.4	3.4	15.64
Upper Primary only	14.1	9.3	15.7	0	0	28.14
<b>Percentage of Schools having Drinking Water Facility</b>						
Primary only	39.1	66.8	36.8	63.4	68.1	71.9
Upper Primary only	45.2	74.0	50.8	100	66.7	75.3

The table further reveals that situation is extremely bad as far as availability of girls' toilets in primary and upper primary schools are concerned. Except Sikkim where 24.4 percent primary schools have girls' toilets none of the other four states have even 10 percent schools having girls' toilets. This is despite the fact that 15.6 percent primary schools in India have this facility. In upper primary schools the position is even worse. The DISE data shows that in Sikkim and Tripura no upper primary school has girls' toilet. In other states 9.3 percent upper primary schools in Mizoram, 14.1 percent schools in Meghalaya and 15.7 percent schools in Nagaland have girls' toilets. It is disappointing to note that in these states the situation is far worse than in other states of the country as at the national level 28.14 percent upper primary schools have this facility.

Availability of drinking water facility in primary and upper primary schools is necessary. But the data presented in the above table shows that in these North-Eastern states even this basic facility is not available in many schools. In Nagaland only 36.8 percent primary schools have drinking water facility while in Meghalaya the respective figure is 39.1 percent. In other three states, 63.4 percent primary schools in Sikkim, 66.8 percent in Mizoram and 68.1 percent in Tripura have this facility. These figures may be compared with the percentage of primary schools (71.9 percent) in the country having this facility. In upper primary schools as against 75.3 percent schools in India having drinking water facility, in Sikkim all schools have this facility. But in other states position is not as good. The most disappointing is Meghalaya where only 45.2 percent upper

primary schools have drinking water facility while in Nagaland about half of the upper primary schools have it. About two-third upper primary schools in Tripura and three-fourth schools in Mizoram have drinking water. It may therefore be inferred that except Sikkim the availability of drinking water in primary and upper primary schools in these states is not satisfactory.

### Efficiency in Elementary Schools

Efficiency of the education system can be seen in terms of efficient functioning of the schools. At elementary level it is necessary to make sure that all primary and upper primary schools are functioning properly and the teaching learning process takes place so as to ensure that the teachers are teaching and students are learning. Thus the efficiency of schools can be seen by looking at the time devoted by the schools on curricular and co-curricular activities. Table 9 given below presents data on some indicators related to the efficiency of schools as reported in the DISE State Report Cards 2004.

Table 9  
**Efficiency in Primary and Upper Primary Schools in States**  
(As per DISE data 2003-04)

<b>Efficiency Indicators</b>	Meghalaya	Mizoram	Nagaland	Sikkim	Tripura	India
<b>Average number of Instruction days</b>	211	194	186	170	231	210
<b>Average number of days spent on non-teaching</b>	7.2	3.9	3.5	3.6	3.6	-
<b>Apparent Survival Rate (upto grade IV/V)</b>	36.9	57.3	58.6	64.7	67.4	-
<b>Percentage of Schools received TLM grants</b>						
Primary only	35.94	35.53	49.10	32.74	47.45	39.69
Upper Primary only	44.50	40.44	63.48	50.00	33.33	8.04
<b>Percentage of Schools received School grants</b>						
Primary only	38.88	30.51	55.56	68.24	76.12	48.81
Upper Primary only	43.51	32.69	67.98	50.00	100	11.69
<b>Percentage of TLM grants utilized</b>	88.1	99.7	99.3	90.4	95.7	-
<b>Percentage of School grants utilized</b>	94.2	98.9	97.1	92.8	94.8	-

The data presented in the above table shows average number of instruction days in the schools of these states in a year. As is clear from the table it ranges from lowest 170 days in Sikkim to highest 231 days in Tripura. The average number of instruction days in schools for the country is reported as 210 which reveals that in three states

namely Mizoram, Nagaland and Sikkim the schools function for less number of days in a year than the national average. Meghalaya is more or less at par while in Tripura schools function for more number of days than the national average.

It is generally perceived (and also complained) that teachers are assigned a lot of non teaching work because of which schools open for less number of days and as a result the teaching work suffers. The above table presents data on this aspect as reported in DISE. The data reveals that average number of days spent in a year on non-teaching work by the schools/teachers ranges between 3.5 days in Nagaland to 7.2 days in Meghalaya. In other states it is 3.6 days each in Sikkim and Tripura and 3.9 days in Mizoram. *On the basis of this data given in DISE reports it can be inferred that the perception that a lot of time of teachers is spent on non- teaching work given to them by the government, is a more of a myth and less of a reality.*

The table presents data on the apparent survival rate of the students at primary level i.e. up to grade IV/V. Out of these states Meghalaya show a very alarming situation as survival rate at primary level in this state is as low as 36.9 percent which thereby means that out of 100 children entering in grade I as many as 63 leave the system before reaching the final grade of primary education. The survival rates in Mizoram and Nagaland are 57.3 percent and 58.6 percent respectively which is again disappointing as more than 40 percent children are dropping out of the system without completing primary education. In Sikkim and Tripura the data shows that the situation is slightly better as the survival rates are 64.7 percent and 67.4 percent respectively. Keeping in view that the goal of UEE can be achieved only when the survival rate is 100 percent up to grade VIII, these North-Eastern states do not seem to be any where near that goal. Even the goal of UPE by 2007 seems to be difficult to achieve in any of these five states as in next two years these states probably may not be able to increase the survival rates from 37, 57, 58, 65 and 68 to 100.

Under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programme each primary and upper primary school is expected to get Rs. 2000 per year on account of School Development grant and Rs. 500 per teacher per year on account of TLM grants. The DISE report has provided data on the percentage of schools received these grants in 2003-04.

The table shows that TLM grants have been received by less than 50 percent primary schools in these states. Nagaland is the best where 49.1 percent primary schools and 63.5 percent upper primary schools received this grant. In Sikkim one-third primary and half of the upper primary schools have been reported received it. In Meghalaya and Mizoram 35 to 36 percent primary and 40 to 45 percent upper primary schools received the TLM grants. In Tripura about 47 percent primary and 33 percent upper primary schools got this grant. However when we compare these figures with the all India average it is found that these states are relatively better as far as upper primary schools are concerned as only 8 percent upper primary schools got this grant in the country in year 2003-04.

As far as school grants are concerned Tripura is best where 76 percent primary schools and 100 percent upper primary schools received this grant. The performance of Nagaland and Sikkim is better than the national average where 55.5 percent and 68.2 percent primary schools respectively and 68 percent and 50 percent upper primary schools respectively got the school grants. Mizoram is worst where less than one-third primary and upper primary schools have received this grant while Meghalaya is slightly better where 39 percent primary and 43 percent upper primary schools received this grant. For primary schools Meghalaya and Mizoram are worse than the national average while for upper primary schools all these states have better performance than the country as a whole. It means that in some other states of the country the position is even worse than these five North-Eastern states.

DISE State Report Cards also provide data on the utilization of TLM grants and school grants. As can be seen in the table it is very heartening to note that the utilization of these grants is very impressive in all these states. As far as TLM grants are concerned Mizoram and Nagaland have utilized more than 99 percent while Tripura has utilized more than 95 percent. Utilization by Sikkim is a little over 90 percent while Meghalaya has been able to utilize 88 percent of these TLM grants. If we look at the utilization pattern of School grants we find that Mizoram has utilized about 99 percent as against 97 percent by Nagaland and 95 percent by Tripura. Meghalaya has utilized 94 percent while Sikkim has utilized 93 percent of School grants.

From the above analysis and discussion it may be inferred that though percentage of schools receiving the TLM and School grants does not seem to be good but it is heartening to note that the utilization of these grants in all these five states is impressive. It shows that schools and teachers are active enough to utilize the money that has been given to them for developing the teaching learning material or for the overall development of the school.

### **Major Findings**

The elementary education scenario including literacy figures presented and analyzed above for the five North-Eastern states of India reveal the following important points related to various aspects of universalisation of elementary education.

- Barring Meghalaya the other four states have better literacy rates than the literacy rate of the country. Even in Meghalaya also the literacy is only a little less than the national literacy. However Mizoram has highest literacy in the country after Kerala. As far as female literacy is concerned all the five states have higher literacy than the female literacy of the country.
- Despite the implementation of Operation Blackboard scheme in the country in late 1980s these states still have single teacher primary schools. Though in Sikkim there are only 2.1 percent single teacher primary schools in Tripura and Mizoram as many as 12 percent and 14.4 percent primary schools respectively have only one teacher. However the situation

in these states is far better when compared to the national average as there are 19 percent single teacher primary schools in India.

- In general these North-Eastern states have relatively more teachers available in schools. The teacher pupil ratio at primary level in these states is less than 1:25 except Sikkim where it is 1:42. However the position is far better in these states when compared to the pupil teacher ratio in the country, which is 1:46. At the upper primary level these states seem to have more than enough number of teachers. At this level the teacher pupil ratio is highest in Meghalaya and that is merely 1:16 as compared to 1:31 which is the teacher pupil ratio in the country.
- In order to promote the girls education and ensure that all girls participate in schools it is important that there are female teachers in every school. It is believed that at primary and upper primary level at least half of the teachers should be females. In primary schools except Meghalaya none of the four other states have more than 50 percent female teachers. In upper primary schools Sikkim is the only states where more than 50 percent (about two-third) of the teachers are female. However when compared with the national average percentage of female teachers at upper primary level is better in all these five states and even for primary schools also it is true with the exception of Tripura.
- The availability of basic facilities in schools like toilet and drinking water is an important part of provision of access for education. The position of availability of these facilities in these North-Eastern states does not seem to be good though it may be better as compared to some other states. In Meghalaya only 16.6 percent primary schools have common toilets though at the national level 29 percent primary schools have this facility. But in Sikkim 82 percent primary schools have common toilets. Similarly for upper primary schools also the position is worst in Meghalaya where only 35 percent schools have common toilets. In other four states more than 50 percent upper primary schools have common toilets. The overall situation is better when compared with the national average.
- Availability of girls' toilet in the schools in these states is a real problem. Not even one-fourth of the primary or upper primary schools have girls' toilets in any of these states. Even the position is worse when compared with the national figures. As against 15.6 percent primary schools having girls' toilets in India except Sikkim (24.4 percent) none of the other four states have even 10 percent schools having this facility. The situation is far worse in upper primary schools.
- Drinking water facility is available in about two-third primary schools in Mizoram, Sikkim and Tripura while in other two states it is available in less than 40 percent primary schools. These figures may be seen against

72 percent primary schools having drinking water facility in the country. In upper primary schools though cent percent schools have drinking water facility in Sikkim, in rest of the 4 states less than 75 percent (the national average) schools have this facility. Thus it can be seen that these states have relatively poor facilities in the primary and upper primary schools.

- The participation of girls at primary and upper primary level of education is comparatively better in these five states. In all these states the percentage of girls in enrolment at primary level is more than 47 percent which is the national average. Similarly at upper primary level also no state has less than 48 percent girls' enrolment though the figure for the country is 44 percent only. It may therefore be noted that the participation of girls in elementary education is relatively better in these states.
- The participation of children can be seen in terms of gross enrolment ratio. At primary level all the five states report more than 100 percent GER though it is 95.4 percent in the country. But since GER is not a good indicator it may not be appropriate to make any comments or drawing any conclusions. Further the NER figures presented in the DISE data do not seem to be reliable as in two states GER is reported as more than 100.
- The schools in these five North-Eastern states have about 200 instruction days in a year which is less than the national average of 210 days. But in three states namely Sikkim (170), Nagaland (186) and Mizoram (194) the number of instruction days is even less than 200. Surprisingly Tripura (231) has the highest number of school instruction days in these states. Thus the schools in these states do not seem to function very efficiently.
- One of the indicators of efficiency of the education system is the survival rate. The data shows that in these states the survival rate at primary level is quite low. The survival rate up to final grade of primary level (i.e. grade IV/V) is highest in Tripura (67.4 percent) followed by Sikkim (64.4 percent). In Meghalaya the survival rate is as low as only 37 percent. It is therefore clear that there is high rate of drop out at primary level in these states ranging from 33 percent in Tripura to 63 percent in Meghalaya. SSA targets universal retention upto primary level by 2007. These five states are not likely to achieve this target.

It may be concluded that in these states though the position on access and provision is not very good but they have generally sufficient number of teachers. Even in some states the teachers may be surplus also as the teacher pupil at primary and upper primary level is as low as 11 (Tripura) and 6 (Sikkim) respectively. But the education system is not very efficient as the schools function for relatively less number of days and the drop out rate is relatively high. This is despite the fact that these states have better literacy rates than the average literacy rate of the country. In order to achieve the goal of UPE or UEE they have a long way to go and it is doubtful if they may be able to meet the

targets envisaged in Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programme within the stipulated time frame. This is despite the fact that none of these five states can be termed as educationally backward states. If these states are nowhere near achieving the SSA targets, one can imagine what will be fate of educationally backward states of the country in this regard

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