

# **PERSISTING EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITIES IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM OF NAGALAND**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The growth of modern education in Nagaland has been featured with an increase in the number of schools and enrollment alongside a healthy literacy rate. Such growth has catered to the growing educational needs in the state and thus, viewed with optimism. However, among the consequences of modern education in a tribal society, since the colonial period, an evident inequality was one of them. This inequality has aggravated with the turns of socio-political changes. It has taken various forms in the present day Nagaland marked with urbanized sections existing in parallel with 'backward' and underdeveloped areas, depicting a wide disparity. Such disparity is exacerbated by the existence of poor performing government run schools and a high number of better performing private schools. The presence of a poor performing government sector and a growing private sector in a highly disparate society, such as Nagaland, affects the affordability factor in education. Meanwhile, the location of the schools also determine the accessibility of the various sections of population with regard to education. This paper, therefore, analyses the High School Leaving Certificate (HSLC) examination performance and related data from the Nagaland Board of School Education (NBSE) to present the existing educational inequalities and explore other educational gaps within the education system in Nagaland. It also delves into the aspect of accessibility of education for both the Government run and Private schools throughout Nagaland.

**Key words:** Modern Education, Nagaland, Inequality, Accessibility, Performance.

## INTRODUCTION

Education has always been seen as an empowering and liberating force; a way to improve an individual's future or a way for upward mobility. Even with its changing nature over time, education continues to hold the image of empowerment and liberation. This changing nature has observed an obvious shift in the accessibility pattern of education. From being limited to privileged few in the ancient times or in the traditional societies, it has shifted to a pattern of universalization in the modern society. What was viewed as a luxury has now become a necessity, a basic right. Thus, the overall view of education globally has seen expansion and growth in terms of accessibility and in numbers. However, these educational parameters of increasing number of schools and a high literacy rate, though significant, tend to overlook the inequalities that emerges with such educational growth and change. It does not take into account the quality of education distributed and accessible to the various portions of the society.

Like most colonized societies, even among the Nagas, Colonialism and Christianity, were the main driving forces of modern education. Although modern education was initially limited to certain Naga tribes and villages, its gradual acceptance and establishment resulted in its growth and expansion. With the statehood formation, education as an institution was further strengthened. Over the years, the schools in Nagaland have not only increased but also emerged in various forms; they range from government run schools to private mission run schools to individually owned private schools. Thus, such increase in the number and options have catered to the growing educational need; meanwhile the educational policies have also made attempts to ensure compulsory education for all. The educational reports of Nagaland has shown high literacy rate and growing number of schools, with an increasing number in the private sector. Yet on the other hand, educational scenario in the rural areas show high drop-out rates, poor infrastructure and facilities, along with the problem of absenteeism for both teachers and students. The Sixth All India Educational Survey stated that the dropout rate in Nagaland the dropout rate till class 5 is higher than the national average and it increases with class 8 level, showing a highest dropout rate by class 10 (Singh, 2004). HSLC results are also evidence of the rural-urban inequality as well as the Public-Private gap in terms of performances. This contradicting situation does not represent a healthy educational scenario.

India's literacy rate from 2001-2011 indicated an increase of 9.2%. Meanwhile, the literacy rate surveyed by the National Statistical Commission from 2017-2018 stands at 77%. The

literacy rate for Nagaland state, as per the 2011 census, exhibited a percentage of 79.55% with the male population displaying 82.75% literacy rate, and the female population showing 76.11%. According to the Nagaland Board of School Education (NBSE) data, 2018, Nagaland state displays a total of 721 schools, out of which 431 is private owned and 290 is government run. Nagaland has seen a rise in the number of schools, particularly in the private sector.

The NBSE data shows that the number of schools increased from 469 to 721 from 2010 to 2018. This data include the higher secondary schools as both the HSLC and HSSLC examinations are held under the NBSE. However, this study is limited to the High schools and the HSLC examination, therefore, the numbers under study further may differ. The total number of schools according to 2018 data, is 721 out of which 431 is private owned and 290 is government run. Among the 431 private schools, 106 were identified as recognized Private Hr. Sec. Schools with Secondary section, 103 as recognized Private High schools and 222 as permitted Private High schools. Meanwhile, out of the 290 government run schools, 44 were recognized Government higher Secondary schools with a secondary section, while 246 schools comprised of the recognized Government High schools

An increasing number of schools and high literacy rate is only an aspect of educational scenario. It is not enough that education is made accessible. Apart from the accessibility, it is important to explore the kind of education that is available to the various strata and sections of a society. In a world of increasing competition, education does not remain excluded. It is crucial to delve into the gaps of education in consonance with its changing nature. Amidst the growing socio-economic disparity, there is a need to go beyond the idea of universalization of education and look into the inequalities that continue to persist. Only by addressing the persisting educational inequalities can we retain the empowering essence of education which is crucial to the idea of educational equality. This paper, therefore, take the conflict perspective for the purpose of analyzing the existing gaps in the education system of Nagaland taking into account the aspects of accessibility, affordability and the High School Leaving Certificate (HSLC) examination performances.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This paper is qualitative in nature. Secondary sources has been referred to for data analysis. The High School Leaving Certificate (HSLC) examination and other data available through the

Nagaland Board of School Education (NBSE) has been largely utilized for the purpose of this study. It is an analytical paper that takes into account the wider socio-economic disparity and the rural-urban divide, linking it with education while exploring other existing educational inequalities. For the consistency of data, the period from 2010 to 2018 has been taken. The whole of Nagaland has been taken into account as per the HSLC-NBSE data available for the specified time period.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- To explore the existing inequalities in the educational scenario in Nagaland
- To identify the persisting educational gaps in relationship with the wider Naga society

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: A CONFLICT PERSPECTIVE**

The Marxian perspective views the education system as an ideological state apparatus (Althusser, 1971) for maintaining the class disparities and repressing any form of disorder. It argues that the school is able to prevent resistance and reproduce the capitalist relations mainly through instilling the skills required for the reproduction. Such class disparity and inequality is seen to get legitimized through meritocracy and fragmentation or weakening of the working class through status distinction of high and low achievers by rewarding personality traits (Bowles and Gintis, 1976). Under the Marxian framework also emerges, the concept of 'hidden curriculum' in schools which has less to do with the content of the lessons and more to do with the way in which schooling is delivered. It is found in the existing hierarchies in schools and the external rewards that students compete for (Apple, 1978). A similar view is provided by Ivan Illich (1973) who viewed schools as institutions that had less to do with the content of the formal lessons taught and more to do with inculcating passive consumption. He also argued that the hidden curriculum teaches children that their role in life is to know their place and to sit still.

Under the conflict approach can also be included the Bourdieusian perspective which focuses on the cultural capital and its crucial role in education. Cultural capital, in general, is referred to mastery and command over certain knowledge, skills and taste etc. that emerges from a distinctive way of life (Beteille, 1993). It is also used to describe competencies possessing familiarity and confidence in the contexts, processes, and expectations, possession of relevant

intellectual and social skills of an institution and a more ‘strategic conception of agency’” (Lareau and Weininger, 2003). Bourdieu while admitting that the school acts as an institution that imparts knowledge and skills, also asserts that it contributes to the unequal distribution of power and privilege with legitimization where the contribution towards the dominant is more than the dominated (Bourdieu and St. Martin, 1996). Bourdieu (1998) also focused on the family and education system and the relationship between them as the main institutions that help in achieving the reproduction of structure for the distribution of cultural capital.

The cultural capital of an individual largely depends on the cultural capital the family possesses. This cultural capital is seen to work in consonance with the economic and social capital coupled with an interdependency between the three (Edgerton and Roberts, 2014). They constitute each other in such a way that the economic capital facilitates the acquisition of educational and occupational success for the future, which in return generates economic capital. Thus, Bourdieu adds that the youths from the dominant region comparatively hold more access to information, rapid and profitable, because of the networks that they hold (Bourdieu and St. Martin, 1996: 188-214). Cultural Capital, identified as the currency of education, acts as the legitimizing force of knowledge and the outlook of life in the guise of equality and meritocracy; while meriting students according to their “natural gifts” and “innate taste” which are inherited, the education system produces and reproduces a system of educational hierarchies which are also a reproduction of the social hierarchy (Bourdieu, and Passeron, 1990: 208). Edgerton and Roberts (2014) sum up that “cultural capital cannot be divorced from academic/technical skills or ‘ability’; the two interpenetrates”.

The tendency of education to become an agent of inequality has been much stressed. Michael. W Apple viewed education as both a ‘cause’ and an ‘effect’ and in the words of William Raymond, sums up that “This reproduction is a ‘logical necessity’ for the continued maintenance of an unequal social order. The economic and cultural unbalance follows naturally.” (Apple, 1979: 40, 42). The increase in the number of schools and enrolment does not seem to solve the problem of inequality in education. Educational institutions, though serve individuals by making education accessible, which should not be denied, remain the main agencies of transmission of an effective dominant culture (Apple, 1979:6, 8).

While on the one hand, education makes people believe that it is a tool that promotes equality, on the other hand, it reflects that inequality in education is not only the result of social inequalities but that education itself acts as an agent of inequality (Samadar, 2016:375-376). The co-existence of these two sides appear to be the base of education in the present day. With the universalization of education expanding accessibility, only a part of the problem and probably the easiest part, has been solved (Lawton, 1968).

Andre Beteille also asserts that apart from the material and economic capital, there are other elements that bring about disparity in the society like education. The fact that the schools which are accessible and affordable do not provide quality education, and the ones that provide are expensive and accessible to only a few, is a representation of the inequality perpetrated by education (Beteille, 1993).

Thus, conflict perspective views education as an agent that perpetrates inequality. What is observed is a maintenance of class disparity at an ideological level through the schools and also legitimizing of the distinctions using meritocracy. With the power of such legitimacy and ideological perpetration, the schools exhibit the ability to assign students to their places in the school as well as in the society. The class disparities also carry with them disparity in the cultural capital. This cultural capital, considered to be inseparable from the academic capital, then plays a crucial role in reproducing educational hierarchies and consequently the social hierarchies. While the conflict approach also agrees with the idea of schools and educational institutions making education accessible, it argues that schools remain the main agencies of transmission of an effective dominant culture, and hence, of inequality.

Education while giving people an image and hope of equality also tends to become the very agent of inequality itself. It tends to highly contradict itself. Therefore, the need arises to go beyond viewing education as growing with the increase in number of schools and literacy rates. This paper does not intend to label education and schools as wholly unequal but rather to delve into the cracks of inequalities of an education system in order to restore or pursue solutions to maintain the democratic and egalitarian nature of education. Thus, for the purpose of identifying and analyzing the existing and persisting inequalities in the education system of Nagaland, the conflict perspective has been referred to for the theoretical framework.



## **NAGALAND AND THE GREAT SOCIO-ECONOMIC DIVIDE**

The Nagas are one group that has been largely impacted by colonization. It has not only brought about territorial changes among the Nagas but also has in a major way changed the social, cultural and political face of the Naga society. Of many factors, modern education played a fundamental role in shaping the present-day Naga society. It replaced the indigenous system of learning, popularly known as the Morung. The Morung was instrumental in educating and preparing young men for their role and contribution in their society by imparting the required skills, values, knowledge and tradition. In addition to the Morungs were the homes which acted as major sources of learning in the traditional Naga society. The traditional Naga homes were not only complementary to the indigenous learning but also a preparatory one for the Morungs.

The debate remains on whether female morungs existed or not; however, there are mentions of some similar existence. Writings have shown the existence of places where women would gather and learn lessons on weaving, singing and art etc. from a 'Morung' master or by elders (Sanyii, 2010:56) (Shishak, 2010:220). Among the Ao tribe, it existed as "Tsuiki", a place where girls gathered in the evening in the house of a widow (Bejongkumba, 2014). In the traditional Naga society, the homes and Morungs acted as educational arenas for learning, available to every member of the Naga Society with regard to their respective roles and irrespective of social positions.

The entry of the American missionaries led to the establishment of the modern education system through Christianity and further resulted in the decline of the Morung. Education and Christianity among the Nagas went in tandem and spread throughout the Naga areas. Christianity spread to the different Naga areas at different paces. However, the aim of this education that spread was from its inception for the purpose of evangelizing and to produce a workforce for the British administration and it continued to retain its Christian roots. Thezenlo Thong (2012) labels education and Christianity as two sides of the same coin serving the purpose of Christianizing and westernizing the Nagas. Thus, it cannot be confirmed if all Christians can be considered as educated. However, much of the early educational initiatives came from the churches. With time and change in the socio-political events modern education received proper government support and Nagaland state also saw the entry of private catholic schools and emergence of local private schools.

Another consequence of the entry and acceptance of modern education among the Nagas was also the formation of salaried Naga personals in the colonial administration and those working with the American missionaries. The educated natives found themselves as interpreters, village headmen, clerks and evangelist or teachers in the Colonial period. Further, the statehood formation led to formal establishments with educated Nagas working in and running the new system. Most of the early educated with government employment not only became role models for the pursuit of education, but also became the decision makers of a new Naga society. Thus, one finds resources and opportunities concentrated among the educated; control over knowledge came in the hands of a few and education only acted as a motivation for job (Tunyi, 2012). Thus, the transition of the Naga society from the simple-traditional stage to a more complex form was observed. This transition was also featured with a new form of stratification based on education as well as socio-economic condition.

At present, Nagaland continues to show above 70% as under the rural population. This population is considered to be dependent on agriculture for their livelihood and sustenance with low returns on agriculture and lack of proper market in the case of Nagaland (Dutta, 2004). Nagaland is also seen to be one of the worst affected North East states in terms of poverty, showing a doubling in the poverty rate of 8.8 in 2004 to 20.9 in 2009-2010, with one-third of the population not having access to improved source of drinking water (Nongbri, 2014:85). Meanwhile, a study on poverty in Nagaland showed that 36.82 per cent of rural area of population and 29.39 per cent of urban population of Nagaland were living below the poverty line. This amounts the proportion of poor for the whole state to 33.83 per cent. Meanwhile, 19.9% of the urban population was also found to be multidimensionally poor (Jamir and Ezung, 2017).

The 2011 census showed the total workforce to be 49.24% and the non-working force as 50.76%. The data further exhibits 59.76% of workers in Agriculture/allied activities, 9.37% in the government sector, 1.28 in the household industry, and 38.95 in other work. Despite various developments taking place, the majority of population (71.14%) in Nagaland remains dependent on agriculture, which is largely subsistence in nature (Human Development Report, 2016). Thus, with a major population percentage in Nagaland making up the rural population and dependent on agriculture for their livelihood and 50.76% non-working force, the socio-



economic disparity is evident. This socio-economic divide is visible not only in the rural-urban gap but also within the various sections of the urban population.

The impact of a higher and growing number of private schools in a society with such disparity level, the educational equality is bound to be effected. While the national ratio of private schools to public schools in India is 5:7, Nagaland shows a ratio of 1:5. Thus, indicating a higher number of private schools in comparison to not only the public sector but also comparatively higher than the national standard. The private schools in India range from urban elite schools to low fee paying schools in the rural or semi-rural settings. Meanwhile, Kohima depicts an approximate range of Rs. 800 to Rs 3000 school fee per month, and admission fee from Rs. 5000 ranging to Rs. 35000, excluding other fees, for private schools. Thus, a higher number of private schools with such fee range, coupled with a wide socio-economic disparity can limit the access of education.

The existence of a poor performing government sector has given advantage to the private sector in education leading to a wider disparity in terms of accessibility and affordability. A private school in a village costing Rs. 50 seems fair, but for a family around the poverty line it is a lot. Such families however take the risk of spending on private education with the hope of a better future for their children (Gupta, 2013:159). With the competition in education increasing rapidly, the hope of a better future through education seems to grow dimmer. Gupta (2013) cites that 31 percent of students in the private schools in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh are unable to read a simple paragraph even after spending much of their income on private education.

## **PERFORMANCE IN HSLC EXAMINATION: AN ANALYSIS**

According to the Nagaland Board of School Education (NBSE) data, 2018, Nagaland state displays a total of 721 schools, out of which 431 is private owned and 290 is government run. This section covers the performances of all the schools under NBSE from 2010 to 2018 and their overall performances. The High School Leaving Certificate (HSLC) exam results in Nagaland are a good indicator of the overall performance of the schools in Nagaland. Over the years, the pattern of results has seen a better performing Private sector in comparison to the Government run schools. The performance gap is wide. Apart from the overall performance, majority of the toppers emerge from the private schools. A topper from some government

school remains an infrequent affair and therefore, much celebrated when it occurs. The HSLC examination results from 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2016, 2017 and 2018 recorded no students from government schools in the top twenty/fifty. The 2014 results showed two toppers from government schools in Kohima and in 2015 one from Government High school Tsurangkong. Thus, the occurrence of students from the Government schools in the toppers list from 2010 to 2018 was three students in total, while the rest were filled by the private schools.

Further is discussed other aspects of the HSLC examination performance. Below in Table 1.1 is exhibited the enrolment rate and the qualification percentage for both the private schools and the government run schools.

**Table 1.1: Representation of the Overall performance of the HSLC Examination from 2010-2018**

Year	Enrolled for school		Enrolled for exam		Qualified exam	
	Government	Private	Government	Private	Government	Private
2018	5798	16349	4263	14609	1738 (40.77%)	12120 (82.96%)
2017	5829	16495	4296	14673	1830 (42.60%)	12727 (86%)
2016	6538	16229	6220	16188	2041 (32.81/%)	12863 (79.46%)
2015	6292	16151	4900	14520	1693 (34.55%)	12000 (82.64%)
2014	6067	15118	4214	13233	1757 (41.69%)	11019 (83.27%)
2013	5424	14651	3925	12998	1462 (37.25%)	10800 (83.08%)
2012	4855	13966	3624	12094	1274 (35.15%)	9751 (80.63%)
2011	4685	13528	3333	11433	1264 (37.92%)	9320 (81.52%)

<b>2010</b>	4560	13317	3313	11430	1149 (34.68%)	8614 (75.36%)
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The enrolment of the private sector is more than a double of the government schools throughout the years shown. The numbers/percentages of students who qualified the HSLC exam showed a much larger gap between the government run schools and the private schools. While the qualification percentage is an end product, the enrollment rate are an evidence of a higher preference of private schools. Such preference can be credited to the image and reputation of the government schools created over the years. The government schools in Nagaland have been characterized with poor infrastructure, hygiene, teaching and learning experience. Apart from lack of an inducing environment, there are many schools that do not possess a library, laboratory or playground and above all the constant poor performance (Liegise, 2009).

Local dailies have reported of a government middle schools in Kijumetouma village and Dihoma village where unused computers have been lying in the schools without any computer instructor and the students deprived of technological knowledge, while Keviphe village is without a single matriculate till 2016<sup>1</sup>. Thus, the lower enrollment rate are not only based on the preference of private schools which are considered “better”, but also because most schools that are available are poorly functioning and mostly government run, while majority of the private schools are concentrated in the urban areas of Kohima and Dimapur.

The difference in performance is not only limited to the Public-Private school, but also among the various districts in Nagaland<sup>2</sup>. Tables 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 are representations of the various districts in the HSLC examination performances in groups based on the degree of the Public-Private gap. This grouping of districts have been labelled as high range performing districts for those districts with comparatively lesser Public-Private gap, middle range performing districts for those districts with higher Public-Private gap, and lower range performing districts for those districts with the highest Public-Private gap.

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<sup>1</sup> Morung Express is a local daily in Nagaland. The news article is dated August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016

<sup>2</sup> The total number of districts in 2022 is 16. This data is, however, limited to 2018 when Nagaland had 11 districts in total

**Table-2.1 Qualifying percentage of high range performing districts**

Year	Kohima		Mokokchung		Peren		Phek	
	Govt.	Pvt.	Govt.	Pvt.	Govt.	Pvt.	Govt.	Pvt.
<b>2018</b>	301 (51%)	2550 (83%)	321 (49%)	719 (82%)	179 (50%)	357 (69%)	287 (44%)	670 (83%)
<b>2017</b>	327 (57%)	2738 (86%)	326 (51%)	820 (85%)	147 (42%)	394 (74%)	320 (48%)	699 (86%)
<b>2016</b>	346 (56.62%)	2767 (85.34%)	363 (54.42%)	838 (84.30%)	125 (42.09%)	351 (68.42%)	363 (46.36%)	668 (84.34%)
<b>2015</b>	296 (46.39%)	2759 (84.70%)	259 (42.32%)	757 (77.17%)	170 (50.90%)	322 (61.92%)	296 (41.63%)	664 (81.07%)
<b>2014</b>	304 (47.80%)	2556 (82.35%)	265 (39.67%)	776 (80.92%)	165 (49.11%)	258 (58.77%)	319 (43.34%)	646 (79.75%)
<b>2013</b>	271 (51.13%)	2533 (86.42%)	248 (41.96%)	740 (74.33%)	146 (55.51%)	293 (73.61%)	304 (48.10%)	633 (83.39%)
<b>2012</b>	230 (44.57%)	2382 (84.02%)	214 (38.14%)	708 (74.68%)	114 (55.33%)	261 (64.12%)	238 (40.03%)	552 (81.77%)
<b>2011</b>	178 (38.19%)	2229 (81.83%)	237 (40.72%)	715 (74.23%)	104 (52%)	210 (56.30%)	258 (50.39%)	514 (80.69%)
<b>2010</b>	191 (37.65%)	2037 (76.32%)	196 (35.19%)	650 (69.97%)	75 (48.07%)	205 (53.11%)	167 (34.36%)	483 (77.03%)

**Table-2.2 Qualifying percentage of middle range performing districts**

Year	Wokha		Zunheboto		Dimapur	
	Govt.	Pvt.	Govt.	Pvt.	Govt.	Pvt.
2018	90 (29%)	582 (71%)	128 (23%)	68 (71%)	217 (23%)	4588 (72%)
2017	110 (32%)	608 (75%)	84 (16%)	707 (71%)	260 (31%)	4704 (75%)
2016	134 (32.21%)	600 (74.71%)	87 (12.62%)	707 (67.20%)	241 (23.86%)	4639 (75.35%)
2015	89 (27.73%)	638 (72.83%)	103 (16.19%)	693 (68.88%)	231 (23.10%)	4411 (73.42%)
2014	75 (25%)	586 (64.75%)	134 (22.79%)	617 (68.25%)	214 (24.43%)	4006 (72.35%)
2013	55 (18.39%)	534 (58.23%)	118 (20.99%)	619 (73.51%)	160 (21.36%)	3663 (67.59%)
2012	74 (23.94%)	557 (63.87%)	112 (23.28%)	462 (60.94%)	125 (19.59%)	3616 (68.03%)
2011	61 (15.52%)	508 (56.26%)	76 (16.48%)	510 (64.23%)	131 (21.30%)	3349 (66.44%)
2010	51 (13.31%)	266 (31.33%)	104 (22.46%)	431 (58.96%)	146 (24.91%)	3146 (63.79%)

**Table-2.3 Qualifying percentage of lower range performing districts**

Year	Kiphire		Longleng		Tuensang		Mon	
	Govt.	Pvt.	Govt.	Pvt.	Govt.	Pvt.	Govt.	Pvt.
2018	25 (11%)	363 (73%)	23 (9%)	152 (56%)	89 (16%)	647 (66%)	78 (11%)	804 (66%)
2017	22 (11%)	344 (77%)	14 (7%)	162 (55%)	143 (19%)	718 (72%)	77 (11%)	833 (68%)

<b>2016</b>	10 (4.18% )	299 (73.28% )	14 (7.95%)	143 (52.57%)	80 (10.70%)	606 (72.57% )	99 (11.1%)	778 (67.01%)
<b>2015</b>	6 (1.94% )	263 (67.61% )	27 (11.59%)	122 (46.21%)	153 (22.90%)	697 (77.44% )	77 (9.40%)	689 (62.30%)
<b>2014</b>	30 (11.58 %)	279 (69.23% )	31 (13.96%)	131 (52.4%)	117 (19.97%)	495 (68.09% )	104 (13.35%)	690 (65.16%)
<b>2013</b>	15 (5.85% )	270 (66.99% )	13 (4.46%)	134 (50%)	73 (12.26%)	470 (67.52% )	59 (9%)	647 (64.37%)
<b>2012</b>	13 (5.26% )	189 (61.36% )	7 (2.9%)	100 (3.84%)	79 (12.97%)	353 (59.42% )	65 (12.17%)	625 (66.48%)
<b>2011</b>	7 (2.91% )	178 (58.94% )	4 (2.58%)	92 (25.06%)	67 (11.34%)	371 (62.46% )	137 (29.08%)	644 (77.59%)
<b>2010</b>	46 (16.49 %)	111 (39.36% )	18 (9.23)	115 (30.02%)	46 (8.77%)	371 (55.62% )	95 (22.51%)	560 (67.23%)

The first group of districts-Kohima, Mokokchung, Peren, Phek- have shown a comparatively lesser gap between the government and the private schools. The second group comprising of Wokha, Zunheboto and Dimapur, have a wider gap. Meanwhile, the third group comprising of Kiphire, Longleng, Tuensang, Mon, show a high degree of gap in the qualifying percentage. The data depicts the public-private gap is not limited to just the two sectors in education but also shows further gaps between the various districts. The districts with the highest Public-Private gap are mostly from the districts that come under the “Backward” category. Thus, there are gaps within gaps in such an educational scenario.



At the backdrop of the Public-Private gap, it is also pertinent to look into the number of schools of both types available for each district. Table 3.1 shows the eleven districts with the number of schools from the year 2010 to 2018 for both government and private schools.

**Table-3.1 No. of schools increased from 2010 to 2018 in both sectors district-wise**

District	Government		Private	
	2010	2018	2010	2018
<b>Kohima</b>	16	27	63	71
<b>Wokha</b>	9	17	17	21
<b>Mokokchung</b>	17	35	33	31
<b>Dimapur</b>	12	25	105	142
<b>Tuensang</b>	13	22	16	21
<b>Zunheboto</b>	13	21	28	36
<b>Phek</b>	19	33	20	23
<b>Mon</b>	10	17	20	31
<b>Peren</b>	6	13	15	16
<b>Longleng</b>	5	11	6	8
<b>Kiphire</b>	5	12	6	12

Although the number of private schools are comparatively higher than the government schools, the period 2010 to 2018 exhibited a higher rate of increase in the government run schools than the private owned schools. Only Dimapur and Mon districts showed a higher rate of increase for private schools. The increase shown in Dimapur was exclusively high.

Thus, what is evident is the increase in the number of government schools without the improvement in the facilities and infrastructure, while a major increase of private schools occurring in an urban and commercial area like Dimapur. The overall educational scenario, however, is marked with a higher number of private schools in the state with concentration in Kohima and Dimapur, while some districts show a total of less than 30 schools. Such scenario creates an accessibility gap.

With the accessibility picture placed for the various districts, the aspect of Zero pass percentage in the HSLC examination is next taken into account to explore the gaps among the districts as well as gaps within them. The Zero pass percentage refers to the absence of any student from a school qualifying for the HSLC examination. The private schools in Kohima district have shown a record of zero pass percentage only twice between 2010 to 2018; one each during 2010 and 2015. With regard to the government schools in Kohima district, areas like Phenshenyu and Kezocha have showed zero percentage for repeated number of years. For Wokha district, areas like Lotsu showed continuing zero pass percentage for government schools. Meanwhile, in Mokokchung the zero pass percentage was higher among the private schools in comparison to the Government schools. The repetition of the district Mokokchung instead of the particular locality made it ambiguous to identify which places were performing worse. Though Dimapur district showed less zero pass percentage throughout the period under study, most of the zero pass percentage that occurred were largely from the government schools. Some areas like Akahuto, Agunaqa and Zuheshe saw repeated zero pass percentage over the years for the government schools; and Niuland and Purana Bazar for the private schools. Tuensang district depicted very high zero pass percentage for the government schools especially for areas like Chimonger, Noksen, Pangso, Khuttur, Chinmilen and Chipur which showed constant poor performances over the years. With regard to the Private schools in Tuensang, the area labelled Tuensang village showed zero pass percentage for three years. In Zunheboto district, the Government schools showed high zero pass percentage, while private schools showed only one instance of zero pass percentage. Areas like Xuivi, Asükikha, Kilomi, Xamunuboto and Satoi showed continuous poor performance for the Government sector. For Phek district, except for Khezhakeno area showing instances of zero pass percentage in both Government and Private schools, the zero pass percentage was low.

While the private schools in Mon district did not show any zero pass percentage, the Government schools in areas like Totokchingnyu, Longching and Mopong have shown continuous poor performance. Peren district showed only one zero pass percentage throughout. Meanwhile, for Longleng district, the private sector depicted a clear no zero pass percentage. Out of the total number of 11 government schools, 6 showed zero pass percentage twice in nine years. Areas like Bura Namsang, Sakshi, Pongo, Kangching and Yongnyah constitute the areas showing continued zero pass percentage results throughout. Kiphire district exhibited most of

its zero pass percentage for the government schools in areas like Anatongre, Seyochung and Longmatra with continued zero pass percentage. Only Pungro area recorded zero pass percentage in both private and public schools in Kiphire.

The private sector in Nagaland appears to have created an image of being 'better' without giving much competition to the government schools. The high enrollment rate is evident of such prevailing mindset. Meanwhile, the better performance results in the HSLC examination is a major factor that aids the enrollment. The poor infrastructure, functioning and performance of the government schools persisting, though remain a concern in many reports, has not countered any intervention. On the other hand, the private sector is seen to penetrate through all districts but heavily concentrated in the major urban areas. Such a scenario in the urban areas, while providing a range of options, also limits the options largely to the private sector and not between the government and private schools.

The performances gaps between the government and private schools as well as the rural-urban divide are already a reflection of lag between the different sections of population. The further gaps within a district in the form of certain areas with continuous poor performances are an evidence of an even wider educational gap. While in some areas the options are limited largely to the private schools, in other areas there exists the option of only what is available.

## **CONCLUSION**

The continuing optimism and hope towards education is evident in the increase of schools and enrolment rate. The growth of the private sector is also viewed as a response to the poor performing government schools. However, the large concentration of the private sector in the urban areas exhibits its relevance to a portion of population with affordability and not to the larger rural masses. The affordability factor in education further divides the already stratified sections, thus aiding to the existing socio-economic disparity. At the backdrop of such disparity, the Public-Private divide in terms of infrastructure, facilities and performance in the HSLC examination remains a concern for educational equality. This Public-Private divide is further viewed to be more evident in the rural areas or the areas that are considered 'backward'. The Rural-Urban divide in the education system of Nagaland is mired with further gaps even

within the rural or backward areas. Such educational gaps within gaps is observed in the continuous poor performance of particular areas within a district.

While the socio-economic gap being explored in the education system of Nagaland can be seen as more recent, the rural-urban divide as well as the Public-Private divide in the education system has persisted without much intervention. As such, it is important to reiterate these concerns of educational inequalities and carry such studies for action and intervention. The essence of equality is crucial to education. In recent times where education is more a right than a luxury, there is also found increase in academic competition and commercialization of education. Therefore, the issues of accessibility needs to be revisited and the affordability factor in education highlighted for equality to find place in the midst of a global growing socio-economic disparity.

The identified educational gaps depicts a reproduction of inequality taking place in the education system of Nagaland. An ideology surrounding the creation of a mindset that whatever can be paid for, or even unaffordable to the masses, is better than what is available, appears to be in existence with regard to education. Consequently, such ideology not only tells the student population from various sections to stay where they are, but also is able to keep them in their respective social positions educationally. Thus, an education system reproducing such social hierarchies loses its ability to nurture the idea of social mobility in its true form. Meanwhile, the persisting inequalities require both a micro and macro-level intervention for education to grow in quantity as well as quality.

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