

Is Caste An Impediment To Higher Education? – A Comparative Investigation on North East India

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Abstract

It is commonly accepted that rising the access to higher education among the deprived communities like SC, ST has always been a matter of challenge since long time. Again when we consider the case of North East India then such type of issue gains more importance because of miscellaneous inheritance of this region. In this present level of study the prime focus is on issues relating to access to higher education among SC and ST groups in North East regions. As it also bears importance to have a strong gaze on this issue thus this study applies a comparative framework with rest of Indian states. The secondary data based analysis shows evidences of disparities in enrolment among SC, ST and other castes.

Section-I

1.1. Introduction:

In India, The Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) are among the most socially and educationally disadvantaged groups. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have different histories of social and economic deprivation, and the underlying causes of their educational marginalization are also strikingly distinct. However, a comparison of educational outcomes among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes yields a common picture that the government has sought to address through a common set of policy prescriptions. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are the terms of reference listed in the Indian Constitution, and in government, legal and scholarly writing,

particularly of the colonial period. According to all India Survey of Higher Education conducted by MHRD, the enrollment of Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) students is very low. Gross Enrolment Ratio of SC students in 2014-15 was 19.1 and ST students was 13.7. Exclusionary trend in higher education and professional education are the result of not only factors increase in private cost to be incurred by students, growth of self-financing or student finance institution, the poor quality of education in government and aided schools but also due to strengthening of non-financial entry barriers and inadequate attention to the problem of disadvantaged group. . Considering this situation the study seems to be more relevant to examine the status of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students in Higher Education and the comparison of their enrolment with the students of other categories all over India.

1.2. Importance of the Study:

Education is one of the basic activities in every society. Most people view education as a formal process of acquiring knowledge that takes place in a class environment. Education is a process that starts right at birth. It is a much wider term. The central area of concern of this present study is to investigate the level achievement level in higher education for ST, SC and rest of population.

1.3. Objectives of the Study:

Main objectives of the study are as follow:

1. To examine the trend of total enrolment of students in Higher Education in India.
2. To examine the trend of enrolment of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students and to make a comparison of their enrolment with rest of the students of all over India.
3. To identify whether there is any significant difference in enrolment of students among the SC, ST and other groups of North-East and rest of India.

1.4. Hypotheses:

1. **H₀**: Average enrolment of SC students of all Indian states = Average enrolment of rest students of all Indian states. (**H₁**: Average enrolment of SC students of all Indian states < Average enrolment of rest students of all Indian states.)

2. **H₀**: Average enrolment of ST students of North- East = Average enrolment of all categories of students of rest of India. (**H₁**: Average enrolment of ST students of North-East < Average enrolment of all categories of students of rest of India.)

3. **H₀**: Average enrolment of SC students of rest of India = Average enrolment of ST students rest of India. (**H₁**: Average enrolment of SC students of North-East < Average enrolment of ST students of rest of India.)

Section-II

2. Review of Literature and Research Gap:

Athawar and Ubale (2016) analyzed the status of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes pursuing higher education. This study is based on both field survey as well as quantitative secondary data. Data are collected from 2009 to 2013. Nearly one

third of Indian population constitutes SC and ST. Almost all belong to poor family and in remote areas, so they are unable to participate in development program. They are still lying below poverty level. As compared to SC and ST are far behind in education as well as social activities and development. The reason may have several problems and they should be identified and it is differ in both the caste. This paper tries to put their education status and factors affecting to pursue the education.

Chanana (1993) presented a paper which focuses on the growth of higher education within the framework of preferential treatment and supportive measures for the benefit of different social groups, namely, the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, minorities and women. She also reviewed the educational policy discourse which assigned several functions to higher education. Some of these are: equity for the Scheduled Castes and Tribes; mainstreaming for the minorities and equality for women. Her paper demonstrated that the educational policy fails to integrate these functions which remained sectoral aims even at the conceptual level. Further, in the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic Indian society, the parameters of gender, caste, class and region are crucial in determining access to higher education. Again, gender becomes the all-inclusive negative parameter conferring cumulative and competing disadvantages on women. Lastly, the educational policies and programmes are unable to encompass the complex social reality within a single framework and are, therefore, unable to bridge the gap between policy and practice.

Satapathy (2016) examined the status of Higher Education for women in Odisha. Her paper attempted to look at the problem of women's higher education from district

perspectives. She also analyzed the higher education status of SC and ST women in Odisha. In her paper, 2011 census data has been used for the spatial analysis of women's higher education across classes. The methodology used is simple tabular forms and statistical tools such as percentages and ratios. The comparison between two census data(2001 & 2011) had been dropped deliberately since it is felt that even at that time the situation of education for women in general and Higher Education for women in particular had not drastically improved for Odisha vis a vis other states. The concern in her study was higher education instead of literacy. She found that higher education for women is a visibly neglected area of research. There was huge inter district disparities across social groups in Higher Education completed by women. Thus too much emphasis on literacy and providing incentives for literacy programmes only overshadowed the importance of higher education for women which is significant in the long run. Thus she suggested that the policies should be such that more and more women opt for higher education. Proper planning and implementation of schemes would go a long way to help these districts.

Premi (1989) observed that poor economic background is the most important reason to drop out in scheduled castes. Students were not able to understand what was being taught and therefore they left the course. Student took up a job in most cases a low paid one as soon as it was available otherwise there was lack of concentration on studies. Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes joined (I.T.) course only for striped and they were no interesting in training.

Muraya (1991) Studies change in the status of scheduled castes involves ameliorative change. He pointed out that the

economic status of scheduled castes changed as a result of increasing occupational mobility and spread of education on account of promotive measures and also the modernizing forces. But educational advancement of scheduled castes has brought no important change in their traditional status. The social inequalities between higher castes and the scheduled castes is remain continue and the scheduled caste have to suffer degrading on account of the stigma of untouchability and the disabilities attached to their caste traditionally.

From the literature review it is found that there is enough need of segregated study to have clear indication of condition higher education of ST, SC group and rest of the population.

Section-III

4. Methodology:

This section provides the details of data and tools of analysis applied in this study.

Data: for this present level of study data on Gross Enrolment Ratios of all categories of students are taken care of. Here data is collected for all the states and data on Gross Enrolment Ratios of Higher Education for the years 2001-2002 to 2014-15 is obtained from the official website of All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE).

Test statistics: A hypothesis test that is used to determine questions related to the mean in situations where data is collected from two random data samples. The two sample T-test is often used for evaluating the means of two variables or distinct groups, providing information as to whether the means between the two populations differs. The test statistic is a t statistic (t) defined by the following equation:

$$t = \frac{[(x_1 - x_2) - d]}{\sqrt{\left[\frac{s_1^2}{n_1} + \frac{s_2^2}{n_2}\right]}}$$

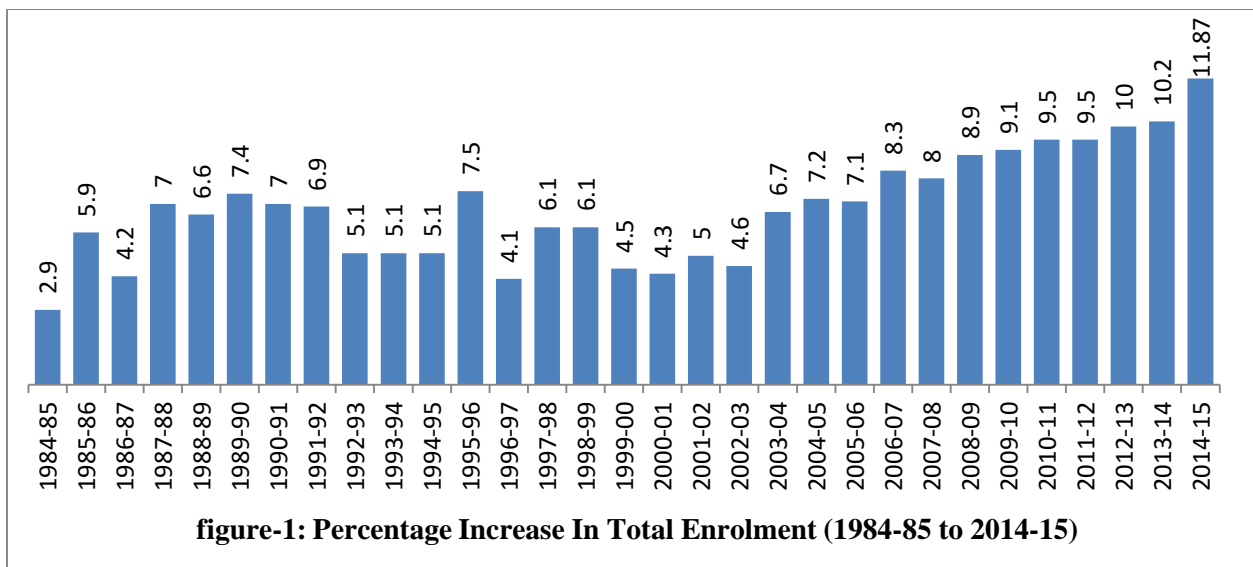
where x_1 is the mean of sample 1, x_2 is the mean of sample 2, d is the hypothesized

difference between population means, s_1 is the standard deviation of sample 1, s_2 is the standard deviation of sample 2, and n_1 is the size of sample 1, and n_2 is the size of sample 2.

Section-IV

4. Data Analysis and Discussions:

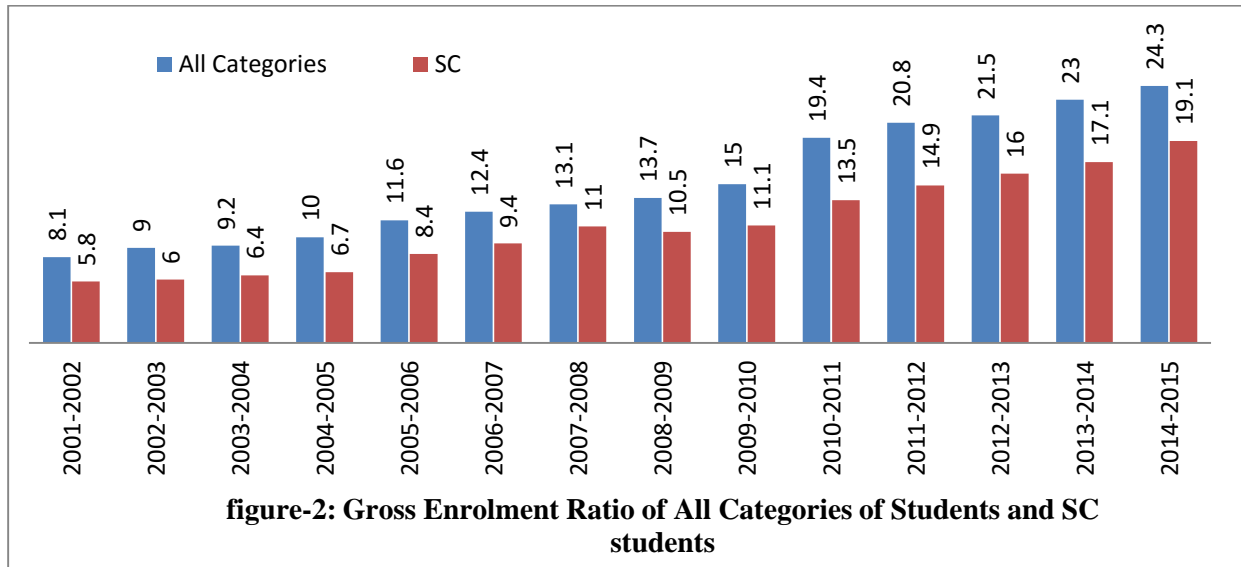
Trend of Percentage change in total enrolment of students in Higher Education in India from 1984-85-2002 to 2014-15 is shown in Figure-1.



Source: AISHE Report 2014-15

Figure-1 depicts an increasing trend in the percentage of total enrolment of students all over India from 1984-85 to 2014-15. Percentage of total enrolment of students in Higher Education in India was only 2.9 percent in 1984-85 which increased to 11.85 percent in 2014-15. The trend was quite fluctuating between the periods from 1984-85 to 2002-03 but after that it showed

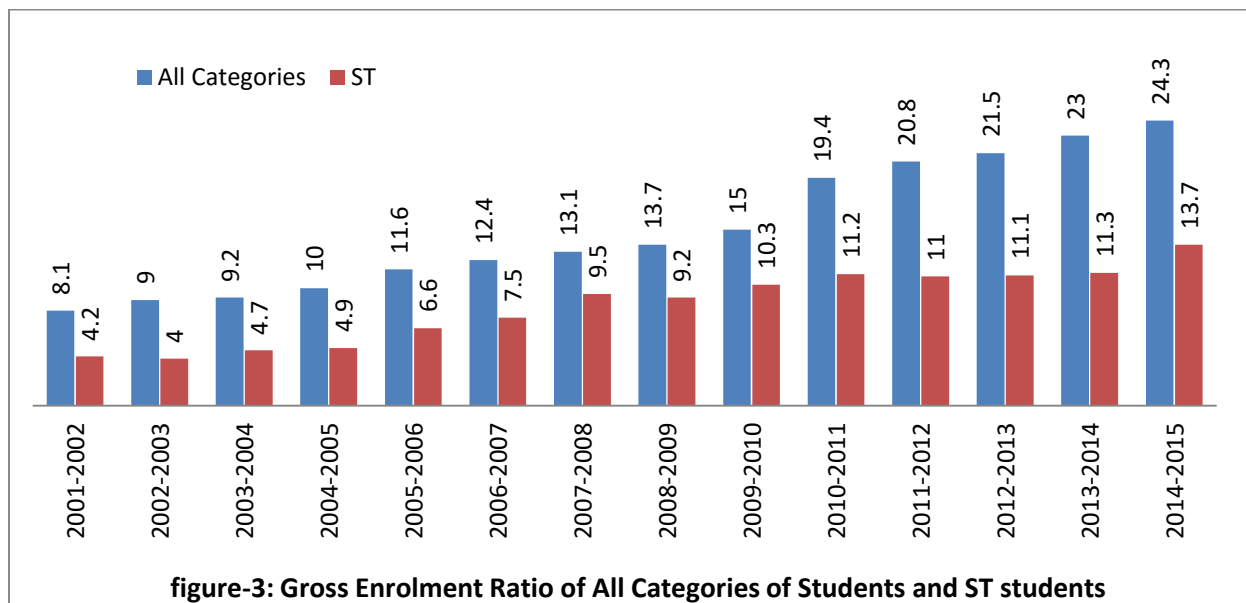
an increasing trend throughout the whole period of 2003-04 to 2014-15. Status of enrolment of students in Higher Education can also be reflected through Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER). Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is a statistical measure used in the education sector to determine number of students enrolled in different educational institutions.



Source: AISHE Report 2014-15

In figure 2, the Gross Enrolment Ratios of all categories of students and SC students in Higher Education for the years 2001-2002 to 2014-15 are shown. In the figure, we can see that there is an increasing trend of GER of all categories of students as well as SC students from 2001-02 to 2014-

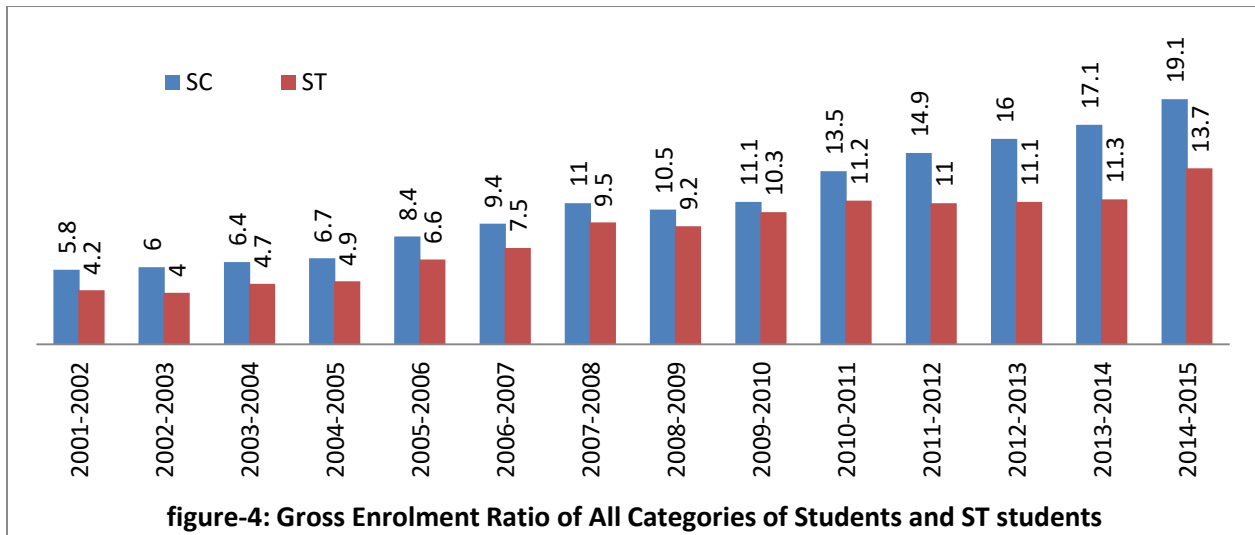
15. But the ratio is more in case of all categories of students than SC students. In 2001-01, the ratio for all categories of students was 8.1, which has increased to 24.3 in 2014-15. In case of SC students, the ratio was 5.8 in 2001-02 and it has increased to 19.1 in 2014-15.



Source: AISHE Report 2014-15

In figure-3, the Gross Enrolment Ratios of all categories of students and ST students in Higher Education for the years 2001-2002 to 2014-15 are shown. In the figure also, we can see that there is an increasing trend of GER of all categories of students as well as ST students from 2001-

02 to 2014-15. But the ratio is more in case of all categories of students than ST students. In 2001-01, the ratio for all categories of students was 8.1, which has increased to 24.3 in 2014-15. In case of ST students, the ratio was 4.2 in 2001-02 and it has increased to 13.7 in 2014-15.



Source: AISHE Report 2014-15

In figure 4, the Gross Enrolment Ratios of SC and ST students in Higher Education for the years 2001-2002 to 2014-15 are shown. In the figure also, we can see

that there is an increasing trend of GER of SC students as well as ST students from 2001-02 to 2014-15. But the ratio is more in case of SC students than ST students.

Table-1

t- Test: Paired Two Samples for Means (SC and Rest) for all Indian States

Descriptive Statistics	SC	Rest
Mean	9.569116446	66.82515825
Variance	31.86722095	889.927564
Observations	36	36
Df	35	
t Stat	t Critical	P(T<=t)
12.00971103	1.68957244 (one-tail)	2.030107915 (one-tail)
	2.86098E-14 (two-tail)	5.72196E-14 (two-tail)

Source: Authors own calculation from secondary data

In table-1, t-Test has been calculated to see whether there is any significant difference between the means of enrolment

of SC students and Rest students for all Indian States for the year 2014-15. The analysis shows that the calculated value of t

is greater than critical value of t, both one tail and two tail. This shows that there is significant difference between the means of enrolment of SC students and Rest students

for all Indian states and the condition of SC students is poorer than the condition of Rest students.

Table-2

t- Test: Paired Two Samples for Means (SC and Rest) for North-East India

Descriptive Statistics	SC	Rest
Mean	7.697480585	73.1474524
Variance	26.42115963	622.741108
Observations	8	8
Df	7	
t Stat	t Critical	P(T<=t)
-7.803951081	1.894578604 (one-tail)	5.33797E-05 (one-tail)
	2.364624251(two-tail)	0.000106759 (two-tail)

Source: Authors own calculation from secondary data

In table-2, t-Test has been presented to examine whether there is any significant difference between the means of enrolment of SC students and Rest students for North-East India. This table also shows that calculated value of t is greater than critical

value of t which indicates that there is significant difference between the means of enrolment of SC students and Rest students for North-East states and the condition of SC students is poorer than the condition of Rest students.

Table-3

t- Test: Paired Two Samples for Means (ST and Rest) for all Indian States

Descriptive Statistics	ST	Rest
Mean	19.12719152	66.82515825
Variance	817.1062569	889.927564
Observations	36	36
Df	35	
t Stat	t Critical	P(T<=t)
5.240535956	1.68957244 (one-tail)	3.87323E-06 (one-tail)
	2.030107915 (two-tail)	7.74645E-06 (two-tail)

Source: Authors own calculation from secondary data

In table 3, t-Test has been calculated to examine whether there is any difference between the means of enrolment of ST students and Rest students for all Indian States. The above table shows that calculated value of t is greater than critical

value of t which indicates that there is significant difference between the means of enrolment of ST students and Rest students for North-East states and the condition of ST students is poorer than the condition of Rest students.

Table-4

t- Test: Paired Two Samples for Means (ST and Rest) for North-East India

Descriptive Statistics	ST	Rest
Mean	19.15506703	73.14745238
Variance	735.6207482	622.7411079
Observations	8	8
Df	7	
t Stat	t Critical	P(T<=t)
-2.94426534	1.894578604(one-tail)	0.010791005 (one-tail)
2.364624251 (two-tail)	0.02158201 (two-tail)	

Source: Authors own calculation from secondary data

In table-4, t-Test has been presented to examine whether there is any significant difference between the means of enrolment of ST students and Rest students for North-East India. This table also shows that calculated value of t is greater than critical

value of t which indicates that there is significant difference between the means of enrolment of ST students and Rest students for North-East states and the condition of ST students is poorer than the condition of Rest students.

Table-5

t- Test: Paired Two Samples for Means (SC and ST) for all Indian States

Descriptive Statistics	SC	ST
Mean	9.569116446	19.12719152
Variance	31.86722095	817.1062569
Observations	36	36
Df	35	
t Stat	t Critical	P(T<=t)
1.757285229	1.68957244 (one-tail)	0.043807219 (one-tail)
	2.030107915 (two-tail)	0.087614438 (two-tail)

Source: Authors own calculation from secondary data

In table-5, t-Test has been calculated to examine whether there is any difference between the means of enrolment of SC students and ST students for all Indian States. The above table shows that calculated value of t is greater than critical

value of t which indicates that there is significant difference between the means of enrolment of SC students and ST students for North-East states and the condition of SC students is poorer than the condition of ST students.

Table-6

t- Test: Paired Two Samples for Means (SC and ST) for North-East India

Descriptive Statistics	SC	ST
Mean	7.697480585	19.155067

Variance	26.42115963	735.620748
Observations	8	8
Df	7	
t Stat	t Critical	P(T<=t)
1.079426713	1.894578604 (one-tail)	2.364624251 (one-tail)
	2.364624251 (two-tail)	0.316180346 (two-tail)

Source: Authors own calculation from secondary data

In table-6, t-Test has been presented to examine whether there is any significant difference between the means of enrolment of SC students and ST students for North-East India. This table also shows that calculated value of t is smaller than critical value of t which indicates that there is no significant difference between the means of enrolment of SC students and ST students for North-East.

Section V

5.1. Conclusion:

The study is conducted to see the situation of SC, ST and Rest of the students of India and North-East States of India. The trend in total enrolment of students is shown and it is increasing over the years from 1984-85 to 2014-15. The trend in GER of SC, ST and All Categories of Students of the whole India for the years 2000-01 to 2014-15 is presented in this study and the trend is also increasing over time. For examining the situation of SC and ST students of North-East for the recent time period, paired t-Test is applied. This test is conducted to see whether there is any difference in the average of enrolment of SC students and rest students of all Indian States as well as North-Eastern States of India, whether there is any difference in the average of enrolment of ST students and rest students of all Indian States and North-Eastern States of India and lastly to see whether there is any difference in the average of enrolment of SC students and the average of enrolment of ST students

of all Indian States as well as North-Eastern States of India. The results show that the condition of SC and ST students of North-East is poorer than the condition of SC and ST students of rest of India and the condition of SC students is poorer than the condition of ST students of all Indian States. But in case of SC and ST students of North-East India, the situation is different. The analysis shows that there is no difference in the condition of SC students and ST students of North-East.

5.2. Scope for Future study

In the light of the above facts, the following specific issues are proposed to be studied

1. What are the socio-economic backgrounds of scheduled castes respondents?
2. What are the factors which motivate the particular community to gain the higher education?
3. What are conflicts that arise between different castes by gaining higher education?

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Appendix

Table A: Gross Enrolment Ratio

Year	All Categories			SC			ST		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2001-2002	9.3	6.7	8.1	7.7	3.6	5.8	5.8	2.6	4.2
2002-2003	10.3	7.5	9	8	3.7	6	5.6	2.4	4
2003-2004	10.6	7.7	9.2	8.3	4.3	6.4	6.2	3.1	4.7
2004-2005	11.6	8.2	10	8.1	5.2	6.7	6.3	3.5	4.9
2005-2006	13.5	9.4	11.6	10.1	6.4	8.4	8.6	4.7	6.6
2006-2007	14.5	10	12.4	11.5	6.9	9.4	9.5	5.5	7.5
2007-2008	15.2	10.7	13.1	13.2	8.6	11	12.4	6.7	9.5
2008-2009	15.8	11.4	13.7	12.5	8.3	10.5	11.6	6.7	9.2
2009-2010	17.1	12.7	15	13	9	11.1	13.1	7.5	10.3
2010-2011	20.8	17.9	19.4	14.6	12.3	13.5	12.9	9.5	11.2
2011-2012	22.1	19.4	20.8	15.8	13.9	14.9	12.4	9.7	11
2012-2013	22.7	20.1	21.5	16.9	15	16	12.4	9.8	11.1
2013-2014	23.9	22	23	17.7	16.4	17.1	12.5	10.2	11.3
2014-2015	25.3	23.2	24.3	20	18.2	19.1	15.2	12.3	13.7

Source: Data collected from AISHE Report 2014-15