



Problems and Challenges of Higher Education in Assam

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ABSTRACT :- Education plays a significant role in balancing the socio-economic fabric of a country . It is one of the powerful instrument for the development of personality and wisdom of people. India today has one of the largest higher education networks in the world. The higher education sector, in recent decades, has witnessed a tremendous growth in many aspects such as teacher- student ratio, enrolment, facilities etc. Although there have been lot of challenges to higher education system of India but equally have lot of opportunities to overcome these challenges and to make higher education system better. The current study aims to highlight the present scenario of higher education in Assam and also challenges of higher education in rural areas of Assam.

KEYWORDS :- Higher education, challenges, development, rural area.

I. INTRODUCTION :-

Education is a comprehensive as well as dynamic term. Its scope is so wide and varied as it covers our whole life. Education is acquisition of knowledge, modification of behaviour and it promotes harmonious development of the child. It is a lifelong process of learning and is influenced by many factors including social, emotional and physical development. It is a process of initiating the child into the way of life. It plays a vital role in the development of a person. It makes an individual civilized, refined, cultured and educated.

The vision of higher education in India is to realize the country's human resources potential to its fullest with equity and inclusion. The higher education system in India has grown in a remarkable way, particularly in the post-independence period, to become one of the largest system of its kind in the world. India's higher education sector has witnessed a tremendous increase in the number of University/ University level institutions and colleges since independence. Universities in India are set up by the Central or State Governments by means of legislation, while colleges are established by the State Governments or private bodies/trusts. All colleges are affiliated to some university.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY :-

The determined objectives of the present study are:-

- i. To study the growth and development of higher education in Assam.
- ii. To study the problems and challenges faced by the higher educational institutions of Assam.
- iii. To find out solutions to overcome those challenges.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY :-

The study is based on secondary sources of information. Secondary information have been collected from various books, megazines, government reports, articles and also from the internet sources.

IV. GLIMPSE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN ASSAM :-

Assam is situated in the North- East of India and is the largest north-eastern state in terms of population while second in terms of Area. The history of modern education in Assam began in the year 1826, when Assam became a part of the British Empire following the signing of the treaty of Yandaboo. There were seven Colleges in Assam in 1947-48, while the Gauhati University the first University of the entire region, came up only in 1948. By 2014-15 , the state had 17 universities, 400 colleges, 466 junior colleges, 1080 higher secondary schools and 40,444 primary schools, apart from an unspecified number of nursery and preparatory schools all over the state.

While the seventeen universities including the two central universities set up under the provisions of the Assam Accord, had a total enrolment of 2,20,572 students , the Higher Secondary students in schools and junior colleges put together had 3,51,539 students in 2011-12. The sixteen medical education institutions (which include Home/ Ayurvedic/Dental Pharmacy /Nursing) has around 4,300 students, while the engineering colleges had 3,246 students. In 2011, the literacy rate of the state is 72.19% (77.85% for male and 63.00% for female).

V. THE CHALLENGES BEFORE HIGHER EDUCATION IN ASSAM :-

It is our 77th year of independence still our education system has not been developed fully. Although Higher Education has gradually expanded in Assam since independence, issues involving access, equity and quality still continue to present challenges that need to be address. Here are the major challenges faced by the higher education of Assam at various levels :-

- i. **Inadequate funds :-** Most of the higher educational institutions in Assam are suffering from limited funds. As a consequence they are constricted to expend on areas like improvement in technology and research based activities.
- ii. **Inadequate infrastructure facilities:-** Poor infrastructure is another one challenge to the higher education system of Assam. The majority of colleges and universities in Assam suffer from the problem of basic amenities and state-of-the-art infrastructure. These institutions lack the necessary physical amenities, such as a fully computerised library, laboratory, proper electrical facility, toilets, classroom etc.
- iii. **Lack of innovative outlook and research:-** Higher education should be research- oriented. But most of the higher educational institutions of Assam lack innovative outlook and research which also hinders the development of the teachers, students and the overall infrastructure of the institutions. But our higher education system gives more importance on bookish knowledge. It less emphasize on research activities.
- iv. **Lack of modern teaching method :-** Today, the 21st century is called the age of information technology. But still now we have been adopted traditional method. Educational institutions are still following the traditional mode of teaching and learning instead of modern devices like use of digital class room and other technology sophisticated instruments to help to improve class room atmosphere. Theoretical knowledge is still disseminated through chalk and talk method of teaching. The new technologies are yet to be introduced.
- v. **Dominated by the examination system:-** Higher education of Assam are so much dominated by the examinations, that there remains little scope for experimentation, expression for talent and freedom of study. The examination has harmed not only the pupils but also the teacher. In the minds of the students, it has created fear, jealousy, nervous, tension and unhealthy spirit of competition.
- vi. **Lack of job oriented course :-** Education is always seen as a medium to guarantee livelihood prospects in future. But in today's competitive world where whole world is running after professional courses the educational institutions in Assam are still venturing for traditional courses.

VI. SUGGESTIONS :-

- i. **Proper infrastructure :-** To create a healthy environment in higher educational institutions of Assam ; the infrastructure of the institution should be develop. Better infrastructure must be provided in higher educational institutions.

- ii. **Innovative teaching methods :-** Traditional teaching methods are often outdated and do not align with the needs of the modern students. It is crucial to adopt innovative teaching methods that are engaging, interactive and designed to cater to the diverse learning styles of the students. Therefore, new and innovative methods of teaching should be introduced in every higher education institutions.
- iii. **Adopting emerging technology :-** The new technologies offer vast opportunities for progress in all walks of life. To improve the quality of higher education there should be extensive and optional use of audio-visual technologies and the internet connectivity. Various teaching aids like projectors, multi-media etc. should be made available in educational institutions so that the teachers can use it to make their teaching effective. The course should be so designed to make good use of these modern developments.
- iv. **Better amenities for research and technological development :-** Research and technology developments are inseparable components of any higher education institution. Proper amenities and funding, scholarships are necessary for the development of this sector.
- v. **Establish job oriented courses :-** Universities and colleges are in urgent need to enhance job- oriented programmes, thus, in turn, providing a sound career opportunity for the students.
- vi. **Provide quality education :-** The focus should be on providing quality education that is aligned with the needs of society and emphasizes practical learning. Higher education institutions should realize the need for quality education and come forward with action plan for improving quality in higher educational institutions.
- vii. **Expansion of higher education institutions :-** There is a need of expansion of higher education institution in every district of Assam. More colleges offering science and commerce courses, professional institutions like engineering, law, medical college etc. need to be established in each district of Assam especially by giving due attention to backward areas.

VII. CONCLUSION :-

Education is a weapon to improve one's life. Education improves one's knowledge, skills and develops the personality and attitude. Despite the fact that higher education sector of Assam has developed tremendously in last few years, it is not equally accessible to everyone. A huge population still do not get higher education. In this paper we have presented the present scenario of higher education in Assam. We also identify the challenges like poor infrastructure facilities, lack of funds, inappropriate methods of teaching etc. However, there are several solutions to these issues, including adoption of new methods of teaching, adoption of technology, proper infrastructure etc.

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