



Education For 21ST Century : A study on status of Educational Institutions in Rural areas of the Southern region of Assam i,e Barak Valley.

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Abstract

Education is the single most important instrument for social and economic transformation of the country. A well educated population, adequately equipped with knowledge and skill is not only essential to support economic growth, but is also a precondition for growth to be inclusive since it is the educated and skill person who can stand to benefit most from the employment opportunities which growth will provide. Thus, Education is not only an instrument of enhancing efficiency but also an effective tool of widening and augmenting democratic participation and upgrading the overall quality of individual and social life. As education is the means for bringing socio-economic transformation in a society, so considering the needs of 21st century, in NEP 2020 importance given on Outcome Based Approach (OBA) rather than simply Content Based Education. Outcome based approach consider three aspect that is Accessibility, Efficiency and Quality, which requires erasing of structural bottlenecks.

It is in this context the present study made an attempt to explore the status of different aspect of accessibility with reference to three districts of the Barak Valley in the state of Assam. The present study is based on Secondary data analysis and it has been observed that most of the Educational Institutions in the Barak Valley are suffering from variety of problems such as limited structural framework, absence of infrastructural facilities, localization issue and so on.

Thus, in order to ensure the goals of Accessibility of Education in Barak Valley, structural reform in Educational institutions is necessary. The present study has been intendant to provide suggestive solutions to help deal with these challenges.

Key words: Accessibility, Higher Education Institutions (HEI), OBA.

Introduction:

Swami Vivekananda once remarked that “Education, Education, Education alone! Travelling through many cities of Europe and observing in them the comforts and education of even the poor people, there was brought to mind the state of our own poor people, and I used to shed tears. What made the difference? Education was the answer I got”. In Upanishad we find, “Sa Vidya ya vimukltaye” that is Vidya or Education is that which frees us from all sorrows, pain, bondage etc. In this way, the National Educational Policy 2020 (NEP-2020) has been prepared in order to create intellectually capable and interested youth to build strong foundation for New India. The theme of the NEP 2020 is simply – Able Education, Prosperous Bharat.

The National Education Policy 2020 which has been prepared under the committee chaired by Dr. K Kasturirangan. The major objective of the NEP-2020 is to synergising the present educational institutions to become an able medium of integrated and comprehensive education providers to establish ideal Bharatiya Education system and makes classroom education positive and joyful interactive session. This requires massive changes in the education system of the country from Primary school level to Higher Education in India. The NEP 2020 has given importance on practical aspects of education and learning outcome. The policy is fundamental to in-achieving full human potential and setting up a platform for fostering critical and analytical learning along with problem solving (Research for Resurgence) attitude among the minds of the Youths. In short the NEP 2020 has given priority on evolving education policy from primary to Higher education, its curriculum, system and methodology based on Integral Bharatiya vision, rooted in its eternal ethos and centred at overall development of the country.

In NEP-2020 priority given on Outcome Based Approach (OBA) which considers three aspects that is Accessibility, Efficiency and Quality Education. Quality education specifically entails issues such as appropriate skills development, gender parity, provision of school infrastructure, equipment, educational materials and resources, scholarships, or teaching force. On the other hand, accessibility is about providing an equally enriching experience and options to exhibit knowledge to all students easily.

Thus, in the NEP- 2020 importance given on Universal Access to Education at all levels. Although, due to various initiatives such as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (now the Samagra Shiksha) and the Right to Education Act, India has made remarkable strides in recent years in attaining near-universal enrolment in elementary education. However, the data for later grades indicates some serious issues in retaining children in the schooling system. The GER for Grades 6-8 was 90.9%, while for Grades 9-10 and 11-12 it was only 79.3% and 56.5%, respectively - indicating that a significant proportion of enrolled students drop out after Grade 5 and especially after Grade 8. As per the 75th round household survey by NSSO in 2017-18, the number of out of school children in the age group of 6 to 17 years is 3.22 cr.

Therefore in NEP-2020 measures have been taken to bring these children back into the educational fold as early as possible, and to prevent further students from dropping out, with a goal to achieve 100% Gross Enrolment Ratio in preschool to secondary level by 2030. Two major initiatives have been undertaken to bring children who have dropped out back to school and to prevent further children from dropping out.

1. The first is to provide ***effective and sufficient infrastructure***, so that all students have access to safe and engaging school education at all levels from pre-primary school to Grade 12.
2. The second is to achieve universal participation in school by carefully ***tracking students, as well as their learning levels***.

Besides, to facilitate learning for all students, with special emphasis on Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs), the scope of school education will be broadened to facilitate ***multiple pathways to learning involving both formal and non-formal education*** modes through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Programmes offered by the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), State open School (SOS) etc.

The Central and State Government has given rigorous effort to introduce the NEP-2020 within the country from the academic year 2023-24. For this Central and state government has already initiated different policy changes. The first step in the implementation is renaming the erstwhile Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) as the Ministry of Education (MOE). The different comprehensive plan such as SARTHAQ (Students and Teachers Holistic Advancement through Quality Education), NISHTHA (National Initiative for school Heads and Teachers Holistic Advancement), SAFAL (Structured Assessment for Analysing Learning), NDEAR (National Digital Education Architecture) and so on has been launched to facilitate the smooth implementation of NEP 2020. Every state in the country has taken various initiatives as per their

structural feasibility to implement NEP 2020. Some states of the country have already implemented it gradually. There are no such exceptions in the state Assam. In fact the State Education Minister of Assam Dr. Ranoj Pegu said that, we have set target to completely implement the National Education Policy in the state by 2023. For better implementation of NEP-2020, Chief Minister of Assam Dr. Himanata Biswa Sharma has also advised to merge Directorate of Elementary and Secondary Education in to one single Directorate of School Education for seamless running of both elementary and secondary education system in Assam. Thus, the Assam government has set target of 75 per cent implementation of NEP-2020 by 2022 and 100 present by 2023.

Review of Literature

Review of literature is one of the most important steps in any type of educational research work. Review of Literature provides a sound theoretical base of research and provides the knowledge about existing situation. Many studies have been taken in to consideration related to Education sector in the North Eastern states, which are as follows.

Punnyya Committee (1993) observed that 70-75% expenditure of total allocated fund spend on salaries of teaching and non-teaching staff. The committee examined present policy, pattern of providing development and maintenance grants, pattern of allocation of grants between teaching, research and non-teaching function, review the existing scheme and also examined patterns of utilization of grants. The committee recommended UGC may an appropriate incentive for generating additional resources in Universities.

Chatterjee (1999) made a critical analysis of the scenario with special emphasis on financial constraints in Higher Education done. It reveled from the discussion that the growth rate of higher education expenditure on plan and non-planned is declining from year to year.

Suklabaidya (2009) highlighted that higher educational institution located in semi urban and rural area in Assam are facing tremendous constraints and limitations in terms of Finance, infrastructure and information and technology.

Singh and Ahmad (2012) explained that despite of growth in Higher education in North East India but students of the North East going to other parts of the country for Higher education. The Central Government needs to improve the infrastructure of these institutions and attract talented faculty so that there is a visible improvement in the quality of Higher education.

Biswas. N B. ,(2006) points out that in North East majority of the students enrolled themselves in in Arts Education so it has created shortages and surplus of different categories of manpower.

Das, Chakroborty and Dey (2014) made an effort to analyses growth and development, policy and plan perspective of the government towards higher Education in North East India. They also mentioned that there has been a significant development in the educational scenario of the North Eastern Sates of the India but few states of this region do not maintain increasing parity.

Das, S (2020) explained that NER is lagging behind in Quality Education. The role of the central in funding of higher education is limited and uneven. Therefore states government is required to provide bulk of public funding for higher education.

Boruah ; P Jyoti (2018) points out that North Eastern states has faced lots of problems in higher education and also the region has a lots of opportunities in relation to higher education. Paucity of financial allocation and

poor administration in higher educational institutes in North East region drives the colleges and universities into disappointing condition.

Bala, Reena (2016) points out that North Eastern states suffers from economic isolation. Absence of adequate infrastructure has slowed down the development process of North Eastern Region. Physical existence of institution is important aspect to spread the higher education among the North Eastern states as per the requirement of area and population. Due to the paucity of higher educational institutes, students migrate to other cities.

A report of Indian Chamber of Commerce (2010) analysed that majority of the students migrate to the other states such as Delhi and Bangalore not only to pursue higher education like research but also a basic level of higher education like graduation because it lacks quality education. Secondly, technical and professional education centres within the region provide outdated and irrelevant curriculum which also push the students to another area.

Twelfth five year plan of the planning commissions has also laid emphasis on quality of education in this region. Still the North East region of India has scope for improvement in bestowing quality education.

Murali Rao Someswara (2013) explored and evaluated the practices of quality management in Higher education sector, which aimed at identifying the different parameter of quality and tried to measure the level quality maintained in MBA program in various institutions.

Gogoi, R, (2017) points out that there is conflict between quality and quantity. Number of entrants and to higher education and unplanned growth in the number of institutions as well as enrolment of existing ones, result is conflicted. There is great diversity of the geographic, socio economic and political conditions because liver of control of the education system is not the hands of educationalist.

Kharkongor; N. West points out that all efforts have to be put together to straighten the present education system and to create employment opportunities which will reduce migration from North east to other states and also address the issue of insurgency.

Tiwari, K.N.(2013) points out that Government has given considerable emphasis to literacy, school enrolment and network of schools and spread of institutions of higher education including technical education over the decades , however , the quality of education is poor because of many reasons.

Maulick , B (2013) points out that the educational progress of country depends upon the parallel developments in primary, secondary and higher education sector.

Problem statement :

There are number studies which have been taken in consideration to points out that in the Primary, Secondary or Higher Education sector in the North East India, there are lots of Quality and Accessibility issues. Since the government of Assam has set down deadline to implement the multidisciplinary NEP framework in the state by 2023, so attempt has been made to analyse Accessibility issue related to educational institutions in rural areas of southern part of Assam that is Barak valley which is composed of three districts Cachar, karimganj, and Hailakandi.

Therefore, in the light of the above framework the present paper have taken in to consideration the *Accessibility issues for Educational institutions in the three districts of the Barak Valley that is Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi and also analysing the gap if any.*

Research Questions:

In this research study attempts has been taken to answer the following question.

1. What is the status of Educational institutions in the three districts of Barak valley?
2. Why there are problem in tracking students, as well as their learning levels?
3. What are the major factors behind the accessibility gap?
4. Is it possible to successfully introduce NEP 2020 framework, if the Accessibility gap exits?
5. How can these gaps be filled?

Research objectives:

The aim of this paper is to study the accessibility issue of educational institutions in the Barak valley and analysing the accessibility gap. Therefore in line to the aforementioned fact the specific objectives of the present study are as follows.

1. To explore the uneven growth of educational institutions in the three districts of the Barak valley.
2. To find out rural urban gap in the setting up of educational institutions within the districts itself.
3. To determine the gap (Horizontal inequality) in accessibility; if any.
4. To explore a way forward.

Methodology:

This study is totally based on study of existing literature through contemporary, analytical, secondary data. Statistical tools like Averages (Arithmetic Mean), ratios, Percentage has been used to analyses the data to be collected from secondary data set.

Analytical method has been taken in to consideration while observing the reports related with the study and while examining the other literature relevant to study.

Secondary data has been collected from reputed official publications like PIB (Press Information Bureau) , Press Release, Census Report 2011, Statistical Handbook Assam, 2019, 2020, 2021 , Gunotsav Report 2022 etc.

Data Analysis and Interpretation-

Objective: 1:

“To explore the uneven growth of educational institutions in the three districts of the Barak valley.”

Brief Profile of Barak Valley.

The Barak Valley is the junction point of three States of north east India that is Tripura, Manipur and Mizoram. The valley is well connected with road ways and air ways with rest of the parts of the country. The Barak valley is located in the southern region of the Indian states of Assam. The region consists of three administrative districts of Assam namely Cachar, Karimganj, and Hailakandi. The main largest and capital city of Valley is Silchar. Once North Cachar Hills was a part of the valley but in 1951 erstwhile Sub division was made a separate district and eventually curved out of Cachar. On 1st July 1983, Karimganj district was curved out from

the eponymous subdivision of Cachar valley. This was again repeated in 1989 with the creation of Hailakandi districts.

The Cachar District which has 5 Revenue circle and 8 educations Block that is katigorah, Lakhipur, Narshingpur, Raza Bazar, Salchapra, Silchar, Sonai and Udharbond. Silchar is the District headquarters is major learning hub of Assam. The Cachar district has a number of well-known educational institutes in North East India. Silchar, the district headquarters, is a major learning hub of Assam. The district has a central university, the Assam University, which is situated at Durgakona, 18 km from Silchar. It also has NIT Silchar, one of the 30 NITs in India. The Silchar Medical College and Hospital is the only medical college of southern Assam. To ensure a steady flow of skilled workers in different trades for the industry ITI, Srikona is there. The district also includes a number of Government and private degree colleges such as Gurucharan College, Cachar College, Radhamadhav College, and Sonai College. Prominent schools in the district include Silchar Collegiate School, Cachar High School, Adhar Chand Higher Secondary School, Narsing School, Government Boys & Girls Schools, Holy Cross School, Pranabananda Holy Child School, Pranabananda Vidya Mandir, South Point School, Maharishi Vidya Mandir, Kendriya Vidyalayas and Don Bosco School. Thus in short, it has 1392 nos. of Elementary, Secondary school, 11 nos. of Degree colleges including 1 Medical College and 1 Engineering college. It has also 1 Polytechnic, 2 nos. of ITI (Industrial training Institutions) and 1 central University.

The Karimganj District which is comprised of 5 Revenue circle and 6 Education Block that is Badarpur Block, North karimganj Block, Patherkandi Block, RamKrishna Block, South karimganj Block, Urban Karimganj Block. The district Headquarter is Karimganj Town. The District has 10 numbers of Degree colleges; among them some are Karimganj college, Rabindra Sadan girls college, Nabin Chandra college, Ramkrishna Nagar college etc. It has 1 polytechnics, 1 ITI, 107 numbers of High and Higher secondary schools, and 1700+ LP, UP and ME jointly.

The Hailakandi District which is the Headquarters of District itself has been constituted in the year 1869. The District has 4 revenue circle and 5 Education Block. These are Algapur, Hailakandi, Lala, Katlicherra, and south Hailakandi. The district has 6 colleges ; S.S College, A.L Choudhury College, S.K Roy college, Katilicherra S.C.Dey college, Kalinagar etc. 1 polytechnic, 2 numbers of ITI, 32 numbers of high and higher secondary schools and so on.

If we consider all the educational institutions of the three districts, we can see that most of educational institutions are located in the Cachar District of the Barak Valley. On the other hand the Karimganj and Hailakandi districts are far behind. The uneven settings up of educational institutions have been tabulated in the following table:

District	Elementary/10+2	UG/Colleges (TDC Course/ Medical Courses, Technical)	Universities (Central and State)
Cachar	2192	10+6= 16*	1*
Karimganj	1914	2+10=12*	Nil
Hailakandi	1356	6+3=9	Nil

Source : Gunotsav Evaluation Result sheet ,2022.&

Office of the Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi District Administration office.

*** Number has been changed after cabinet meeting held on Silchar on 29/11/22 .

In the above table it is clearly visible that establishment of the educational institutions are not uniform in the three districts. In case of Primary, and Senior Secondary school there is little bit uniformity but when we consider Higher secondary school or college level then we can see that there are diversity or too much discrimination. Most of the higher educational institutions are located at Cachar districts where as Hailakandi and karimganj district have been deprived from it. All though three districts have different size of geographical area but they have equal constitutional status but the Cachar district is receiving more priority than rest of the districts in the Barak Valley. Since, the students of Hailakandi and Karimganj districts are not in position to access the services easily as received by the students of Cachar districts, so obviously it creates the problem of unequal access to resources.

Objective: 2:

“To find out rural urban gap in the setting up of educational institutions within the districts itself”.

The NEP- 2020 which has taken in to consideration the outcome approach in order to make the NEP- 2020 more effective, transparent, clear, efficient and accessible which is basic needs of the time and to attain the core objective of “Atmanirvar Bharat”. The Outcome approach can be analysed in two sense that is,

1. Program Outcome,
2. Course -Learning outcome.

Program outcome is nothing but the skills, knowledge and attitude which left to the students after completion of his/her study that is capacity building of the students.

Course- learning outcome show what a student should know or be able to do or value as a result of taking the Couse program. It can be used as the proxy variables of Efficiency of Education.

To make education Accessible and Qualitative, mere lecture or teacher’s centric approach is not sufficient. Modern education system ensures all round development of a student through different curricular activities like arts, sports, physical and digital classroom, Library, community services etc. Thus here both physical and E-Learning platform plays an important role to deliver quality education.

However, it is un-denying fact that most of the rural parts of the country are facing lots of problem and even not equipped and enriched with sophisticated modern educational institutions, so delivering of quality education is still a major issue in rural areas. One such situation can be realised if we consider the rural parts of the Barak valley. Here we can see that there are

In the Barak Valley we can see that the percentage of population living in rural areas is more than urban population but they are in less advantageous position to access educational institution. Most of the Government approved or private graded educational institutions are located at the towns or nearby towns, whereas rural areas are unable to deliver quality education.

In fact some rural areas are still not been connected with digital world, better educational infrastructure, multiple streams in a particular college etc. so under such situation it is not possible for everyone to illuminate the inherent quality of the students in rural areas. On the other hand, the students from the urban areas are in the comfort zone so they are able to get full benefits from the educational institutions. Most of them are too much involved in the multiversity courses and joining in the different crash course even in the night etc. makes their personality development easy without too much economic burden, whereas in case of students belonging to rural areas it is like dream.

So, obviously there has been gap in accessibility between the rural and urban students in terms institutional feasibility. This can be seen in terms of the given table.

As per Census report 2011, the education attainment level in the three districts are-

1 Districts	2 Total Population (in lakh)	3 Total Literacy Rate (%)	4 Urban Population (in lakh)	5 Literacy rate in Urban areas (%)
Cachar	1736617	79.3	315464	87.39
Karimganj	1228686	78.2	109700	92.82
Hailakandi	659296	74.3	48140	92.93

Source - Census report 2011, Government of India.

The above table points out that in case of Cachar district Total literacy rate as a whole is 79.3%; whereas urban literacy rate is 87.39%. In case of Karimganj and Hailakandi district the situation is same that is total literacy rate of the two districts is less than urban literacy rate. For instance, in case of Karimganj districts Total Literacy rate is 78.2%; whereas urban literacy rate is 92.82%. , similarly in case of Hailakandi districts Total Literacy rate is 74.3% ; whereas urban literacy rate is 92.93%. (Column 3 and Column 5).

However, if we consider others way around and compute the share of urban population in total literacy level of the districts, then we can see *Horizontal inequality* exist in the three districts. Here, Horizontal inequality indicates that urban gets more benefits than the rural areas with in the same districts. It can be seen in terms of following table.

1 Districts	3 Literacy Rate (%)	6 Share of urban Population in Total population	7 Share of Rural Population in Total population	8 Share of urban Literacy rate in Total literacy	9 Share of Rural Literacy rate in Total literacy
Cachar	79.3	18.6	81.83	14.41	64.89
Karimganj	78.2	8.93	91.08	6.99	71.22
Hailakandi	74.3	7.3	92.6	5.43	68.81

In the table we can see that in the case of Cachar district the share of urban population in Total population is just 18.6% (column-6)and their contribution in Total Literacy level is 14.41%(Column-8). Similarly, in case of Karimganj and Hailakandi district the share of urban population in total population is 8.93% and 7.3% respectively; whereas their share in Total Literacy of the districts level is 6.99% and 5.43% respectively. (Column 6 and Column 8).

On the other hand, in the case of Cachar district the share of rural population in Total population is 81.83% and their contribution in Total Literacy level is 64.89%. Similarly, in case of Karimganj and Hailakandi district the share of rural population in total population is 91.08% and 92.6% respectively; whereas their share in Total Literacy level of the districts are 71.22% and 68.81% respectively. (Column 7 and Column 9).

From the above statistical analysis it can be seen that rural areas are performing well in the District level literacy rate as compare to urban areas, but as a matter of fact that in rural areas there mainly primary level school or a few high school and even these are not up to the quality standard. So, obviously rural people are in

the most disadvantageous position to access higher education. As a result the drop out ratio gets high with promotion to higher level of class.

Since, high or higher educational institutions have not been grown uniformly in rural and urban areas within same districts, so this is nothing but rural urban gap in accessibility or alternatively *Horizontal inequality*. Here the word Horizontal inequality has been used to points out that people of similar origin, intelligence and demographic features but still do not have equal access.

Objectives 3.

To determine the gap in Accessibility-

From the above analysis it becomes clear to us that in the Barak Valley the growth of Educational institution is uneven. Most of the educational institutions mainly higher education or secondary level has been set up in the urban areas or nearby towns whereas in most of the rural areas there are mainly primary educational institutions. Here, although after 2014 the situation has been changed dramatically, but even though attempt has been made to points out some of the factors which have created Accessibility gap as critical issue in Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi districts

1. In the Barak valley most of the higher educational institutions are located in towns or periphery or its revenue circle. Generally such areas have been developed after they got district status. As a result the pace of development and urbanisation is more than rural areas. Consequently government has shown priority to establish educational institutions in urban areas so over a period of time institutional development in the rural areas have been neglected.
2. Access to Education in rural areas of Barak Valley is remain an issue as every village is not facilitated with a school , college or any other private educational institutions which means students have to walk or travel 10km to 15km or even more from their home to pursue higher education. Since communication facility is not easier in rural areas and even very expensive, so guardians become reluctant to send their children in the educational institutions. Till today there are number of villages in the Barak Valley where there is only diesel auto to connect with the nearer towns.
3. The Socio- Economic status of the rural people in the three districts are not so better in compare to urban areas. Most of village economy is based on agricultural sector, and it is seasonal. So after completion of Primary education, many students who are willing to access high or Higher secondary level of education are even unable to take admission in the school and continued due to poverty, family-social bindings at home and negligence of parents.
4. Teacher's absenteeism is another important issue in rural areas. Most of the teachers especially at the primary and High school level are reluctant to attend the regular classes in the remote areas. Since road connectivity is not so well developed and especially in the rainy season the conditions gets more deplorable, so teacher absenteeism is major hurdle to access quality education. In some places of Barak valley reports have been found that, during rainy season Gents teachers weekly visit the school and lady teachers once in the month.
5. After 75th years of Independence of the country, most of the villages have not been connected with electricity. In case of Barak Valley there is no such exception. Here also majority of the villages have no power supply and as a result they have to dependent upon the solar power to meet their basic requirement of power consumption. Under such situation it is very difficult for them to use electronic gadget, so they bound to abstain from the online digital world and online classes.

6. In modern time's telecommunication services has been improved much and in this field private telecom companies like Jio, Airtel and other telecom service provider are much advanced and sophisticated to provide connectivity services. But since private service provider are profit oriented, so they prefer to provide their services in the towns or nearby periphery and at the same time Government telecom service provider who are ready to provide services in the remote areas are facing the problem of staff shortage and even not so well equipped with advanced technology, so rural people are disconnected from internet connectivity. Under such situation it is very difficult to get regular informative and edutainment e-learning classes.
7. All though Department of Education, Assam Government has taken various initiatives to improve infrastructural facilities in the school by providing fund allocation to the respective school, but some schools are located in such remote areas where the construction cost overtake carrying costs. As a result most the construction becomes just book keeping entry and students continued their education without proper teaching learning method.
8. In the Gunotsav evaluation process one thing comes out that in the rural educational institutions most of their educational gadgets have been stolen by the local miscreants. So, schools authority are bound to access education without basic amenities such fan, Light, and other electronic gadgets, drinking water facility.
9. At some primary and secondary schools, the SMC (School Management Committee) is also responsible behind the access of quality education. In most of the schools in the rural areas SMC President and Head teacher makes a bonding and thus they get involve in unethical activities. Due to such nexus accessibility and quality education have been compromised.
10. In the rural areas school education is less advanced than the urban areas because in urban areas there is lot of computer aided teaching. Such methods are very effective to deliver quality education, provides notes, demonstration etc. which may makes class room education more interesting. As a result students belonging to rural areas get automatically deprived from the quality education.

A way Forward:

So far, we have seen that in rural areas accessibility to quality education is very challenging as compare to urban areas. Although primary educational institutions are there but most of them are not up to the quality mark in terms of infrastructure and service delivery. Therefore, in rural areas Accessibility to provide quality education is still questionable.

In the NEP 2020, Government has given importance to provide Quality education and makes it Accessible to everyone, but there are number instance which have points out that Horizontal inequality (Inter districts variation) and vertical inequality (Intra district variation) in setting up of educational institutions .Under such situation to meet the objective of Accessibility is still remain area of concern in Barak Valley. Here some of the strategies have been outlines in support of improve the situation:

1. In the three district of Barak Valley we can see that most of the higher educational institutions are located in the urban areas or nearby urban areas, so government should adopt inclusive development projects and give privilege to setting up new educational institutions in the remote areas. Such effort may narrow down regional divergence and access of education will be easier.
2. Since Primary and lower primary educational institutions are there in the rural areas and literacy rate is quite better but in case of higher education it is very low, so in order to make higher education accessible

- to all the aspirants of rural households, community participation, Anganwadi centre NSS (National Service Schemes) may plays a vital role to motivate them and to encourage them.
3. In order to ensure quality Education, Government should focus on rural connectivity like transportation facility, roads and connectivity in the rural areas and also infrastructure of the institutions. Such promotional measures may motivate the students to take admission in the high or higher educational institutions.
 4. In the rural parts of three districts in the Barak valley efforts are required from the district administrative level to ensure that a minimum set of cognitive skills are acquired by all the students during eight years of elementary education. Quality issue and determinants thereof such as ensuring availability of trained teachers, innovative pedagogy that impact upon the learning outcomes of the children must be addressed on priority basis.
 5. In the case Gross enrolment ratio of the three districts it has been found that the percentage of Boys students is higher than the Girls students. Since Female education is need based criteria to build up solid future of the society but in the three districts the situation is dismal. The situation is very common in the rural areas of Barak Valley. Female students are unable to get quality education due to various social restrictions. So, this should be checked by promoting the campaign like Beti bachao beti padhao, various scholarships schemes for girls may ensure access of quality education in rural areas.
 6. If we look at the situation of the higher educational institutions in the Barak Valley, we can see that after Graduation most of the students in the Karimganj and Hailakandi districts are unable to access higher education such PG or PhD under Assam University as it is far away from their residence. Therefore, Government should take initiatives to upgrade the prestigious and oldest higher educational institutions of the two districts at the University status like Cotton University formerly known as Cotton College. Although recently Guru Charan College gets Deemed University status but still it is centred on Cachar District. So, here government should think to give appraisal to the other college in the two districts as state level university status. This will helpful for the students of the rural areas to access the Higher education in these two districts.
 7. Distance Learning programme which have been introduced to meet the need of the aspirants who are unable to access regular classes, but unfortunately open and Distance Learning Education (ODL) centre is not uniformly distributed in the three districts. Most of the colleges in rural areas have no distance learning facility centre and even if there is any centre, students of the rural areas have to go towns to appeared in the final examination; this is uneconomical .So this provision should be liberalised as per as possible and makes it accessible to everyone.
 8. Urbanisation is the one of the best strategy to improve the status of the rural areas of Barak valley. If Government gives some momentum or takes big push effort to the growth process like construction of Hospitals, factory or other industrial development in the rural areas, then it may initiate new hopes in the rural areas of Barak valley. Due to positive external effects it may give incentives to private investors to come forward. In this way rural development may accelerate and Private Venture educational institution and other services will grow up with passage of time.
 9. Barak Valley is Southern Part of the state Assam. This part is about 350km far away from the State Capital. This region has been neglected due to various political and geographical factors. If the Government take initiatives to provide special package for the Barak Valley, then overall development of the region will be accelerated and this will promote not only educational environment but also promote over all development of the valley.

10. In rural areas most of the students are not so much able to access co-curricular activities and competition, so feelings of inferiority complex comes up in their mind. They feel hesitation to take part in the state or district level programme. Under such situation initiatives should be taken by Non-Government Organisation (NGO), NSS group or various student organisations to encourage them and flourish their capability.
11. The social economic development process in the Barak valley is comparatively less than Brahmaputra valley. Majority of the rural people are dependent upon subsistence level of farming and so there is family labour participation. Therefore Students absenteeism, drop out ration is high, so if Government takes initiatives to launch different employment generation scheme in rural areas for the working parents group then students may access/complete their education.
12. Engagements of teachers belonging to Primary and Secondary level in various Government activities is another problem in offering quality education. Due to engagement of the teachers in multiple government works, their qualities of teachings get affected. Besides, in rural areas most of the teachers engaged themselves in local political matter; this has also effected quality education. This situation is very much crucial to access quality education.
13. To appreciate the efforts of the students some scholarships schemes either in the form of gifts or books to the students who are belonging to the rural areas will give them encouragement to perform better which may create positive effects in the minds of the guardian as well as other students to enrol in educational institutions.

Conclusion:

The educational progress of any region depends upon its strategic development plans associated with developments in primary, secondary and higher education sector. A region can be only developed when there is inclusive growth in the education sector for which educational institutions in both the rural and urban sector must be developed equally. However, in the Barak Valley, it is found that most of the schools and colleges are located in the urban areas and as a result rural areas in the valley get affected. This has created a gap between rural and urban areas; which is a serious matter of concern.

If Government of Assam planned to implement the NEP- 2020 from academic year 2023 then it is obliged to ensure structural renovation of the existing educational institutions in the Barak valley. Since most of the educational institutions are sufferings from verities of problems so under such situation it becomes very difficult to implement NEP 2020 successfully in the Barak valley. So here role of the Government, Local politicians, Community participation is highly desirable.

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