



## ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND WAYS AHEAD: A STUDY IN KAMRUP DISTRICT OF ASSAM

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### ABSTRACT

Present paper deals with the status of higher education system in India with special reference to Assam on the basis of study conducted in Kamrup district, Assam. Importance of Higher Education in making people empowered socially, economically as well as politically is felt by each educated individual. It has the main responsibility of equipping individuals with advanced knowledge and skills to develop them as fully capable citizen. Today, higher education has been finding it difficult to meet the challenges of global market demand leading to creation of educated unemployment, student unrest, brain drain and couple of collateral problems. Consequently, different challenges have appeared before the system in the country and states. Maintenance of quality, lack of success in achieving excellence, no criteria for admission in some colleges, high dropout rates, lack of proper infrastructure, student-teacher ratio problem, privatization, problem to access to higher education etc. are some issues that came into light when status of higher education was analyzed in the study area. While this paper maintains a national orientation, prime focus is given on varied aspects of higher education in the state of Assam.

**KEYWORDS :** challenges, higher education, India, prospects.

### INTRODUCTION

Higher education in India has experienced phenomenal expansion since independence. Number of university level institutions and colleges has grown up from 28 to 677 and 578 to 3800 respectively from 1951 to 2014 in India. As a result, the number of teachers as well as students has also increased significantly. The growth of students' enrolment is more than the growth of number of teachers over the period of time, may be due to the massive investment by government at school level in form of primary as well as secondary education. Rise in enrolments and institutions at school level, there is mushrooming growth in higher education institutions. As per available data at the end of 2014 there were 677 Universities and 38000 colleges in India. The role of higher education in the emerging scenario of knowledge economy is very crucial and multifaceted for our country. There are many basic problems faced by higher education system in India. Among which mention may be made lower level of teaching quality, issues in financing higher education, concentration on theoretical knowledge than that of practical knowledge, traditional methods of teaching, privatization, inadequate facilities and infrastructure etc.

### LOCATION:

Kamrup District is an administrative District in the state of Assam of India formed by bifurcation of old Kamrup District in 2003, named after region it constitutes. It occupies an area of 4,345 sq. km. Census date 2011, Govt. of India shows that, Male literacy rate in this region is- 81.30% while literacy rate of female is 69.47% with a population of 1,517,542 and sex ratio is 949 per 1000 male. The study is confined to 2 colleges in Kamrup District of Assam, Namely-

- Pub-Kamrup College,
- Patidarrang College.

### OBJECTIVES:

- To identify on the issues and challenges in higher education,
- To analyze the views of students on quality of higher education and related aspects,
- To study barriers in development of higher education.

### DELIMITATIONS:

- The study was restricted to a particular area of Kamrup District.
- The study was limited to two higher educational institutions namely, Pub Kamrup College and Patidarrang College.

### METHODOLOGY:

In present study the investigator has used- Descriptive Survey Method and Observation Method on a sample group of 50 students

(25 from each college). As tools questionnaire and observation was used.

### FINDINGS:

Analysis and Interpretation of findings from the study were-

#### Issues in facilities and infrastructure-

When students were asked about the facilities and infrastructure of the college, majority of them i.e. 85% of them replied that they are not satisfied with these. Among the facilities they mentioned that, lack of sufficient hostel facility, drinking water, hygienic toilet, lack of computer and wifi connectivity were some of the issues. In India, many of the universities don't have adequate infrastructure or facilities to teach students. Even many private universities are running courses without classrooms. Internet and Wi-Fi facility is still out of reach of many students.

#### Brain drain-

Students were asked whether they are satisfied with the quality of education they are receiving to which 55% replied they are not satisfied while 45% of them replied positively. Those 55% students also provided their supporting views towards negative responses mentioning that because of lacking quality of education phenomena like brain drain is now coming up.

#### Issues related with teaching-

Regarding issues related with teaching students in different percentage pointed out that traditional teaching methods, outdated and rigid curricula, lack of accountability, lack of innovation and experimentation were raised questions on Indian higher education system.

**TABLE – 1 Issues pertaining to teaching**

Issues identified	Percentage of respondents
Traditional teaching method	20%
Outdated and rigid curricula	25%
Lack of accountability	10%
Lack of innovation and experimentation	45%

#### Overcrowded classroom and library condition-

When students were asked about problems affecting quality of education they think to be very significant in their institution, 65% students replied it to be overcrowded classroom while other 35% responded it to be not upto date library.

#### Cost of Education-

Though government of Assam is taking initiative for free admission under some circumstances, students opined that the main factor of lower enrolment and dropout problem in rural area is the cost of education. Technical education sometimes remains only as a dream for most of the students of rural areas where the people are mostly dependent on agriculture.

#### **Privatization-**

Students of the study area being aware of the fact that approximately 50 per cent of the higher education in India is imparted through private institutions mentioned that Private providers, in the interest of maximizing profit, have every incentive to 'minimize costs' by compromising on the quality of education.

#### **Lesser use of ICT-**

ICT can affect the delivery of education and enable wider access to the same. In addition, it increases flexibility so that learners can access the education regardless of time and geographical barriers. But, use of ICT was hardly seen while teaching according to sample group. Reasons for it as they mentioned were, electricity problem, lack of finance, insufficient material facilities.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Indian Higher education system is the second largest in the world which caters the educational requirements of millions of students coming from different sections of the society. Although there have been challenges to higher education, recent calls for reform may provoke a fundamental change in higher education. This change may not occur as a direct response but in form of some reform practices such as, improvement of quality, innovative and dynamic methods of teaching, integrating technology with teaching, introducing digital library system etc. Responding to these emerging needs, the UGC stated: "The University has a crucial role to play in promoting social change. It must make an impact on the community if it is to retain its legitimacy and gain public support". Concepts like of access, equity, relevance and quality can be made reality only if the system becomes effective and efficient.

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