



Problems and Challenges of Higher Education in Rural Areas of Darrang District: Assam

KEYWORDS

Problems, Challenges, Higher Education, Rural Area, Darrang.

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ABSTRACT Education is a lifelong process which helps to achieve the path of development. Higher Education is treated as specialization in all the branches of education, inquiry as well as search of knowledge and integration and regional cohesion. It has been viewed in many developing countries as a significant contributor to sustainable development and poverty alleviation. It starts after the successful completion of secondary schooling. In present age, the impact of globalization is changing the scenario of higher education with aspirants from every knock and corner of the world pursuing specialization in branches of higher education. Globalization and ICT has expanded and play as the antidote to rural as well as backward areas. India being the second largest populated country in the world, without sophisticated education system its different culture, religion, geographical territory, regional variety and flora and fauna become unworthy hence not utilizing human resources in developing the country's infrastructure. Though, India attained freedom almost seven decades ago but the literacy rate is comparatively lower than that of many other countries of the world. Presently, all the regions of the country including North-eastern region are facing numerous problems and challenges in higher education in vocational, technical, engineering, humanities etc. In Assam pseudo-environment, socio-economic instability, lack of proper utilization of educational policies, unprecedented growth of population, unavailability of adequate educational institutions are the main causes of backwardness of higher education system. The present study has been conducted on Darrang district with the help of convenient comparative studies covering educationally conscious citizens, students, guardians & inhabitants of rural and urban areas.

1 INTRODUCTION:

Education is the modification of behavior, natural, harmonious and progressive development of man's innate power. The basic functions of education are acquisition, preservation, dissemination and extension of the frontier of knowledge, the balanced education in individuals and the training of high level personnel for all walks of human life and society.

The higher education had formally introduced in India when the British ruling set up Wood Despatch Commission in 1854, and recommended the establishment of the three Universities in Madras, Pune and Kolkata respectively. Time to time different commissions for higher education was set up by the British-India government and gradually the higher education spread all over the India by establishment of colleges, universities. Lately, after independence the Government of India formed Radhakrishnan Commission, Kothari Commission, National Educational Policy, NCERT, UGC, DEC, AICTE etc. for the development of higher education in our country. Distance mode of education system is leading the highest number of enrollment in higher education sector in India covering remote and backward areas in irrespective of sex, gender, caste, community, religion etc. Privatization, Globalization and Liberalization of higher education reduces the problems and challenges of higher education. Globalization or cross border education motivated the equal participation of women and removing the gender discrimination. Many international organizations- World Bank, UNESCO are funding and functioning for the development of higher education across the world.

2 CONCEPT OF HIGHER EDUCATION:

The higher education is depending on self disciplined of individuals. The term "Higher Education" or "Further Education" are variously understood. The Education Act

1988- Higher education is defined as higher courses in any institution broadly; those of a standard than General Certificate of Education (G.C.E.) and further education as all other post-school courses. Higher education is normally more specialized study after successful completion of basic education lasting for at least eleven or twelve years in India. It normally starts in the age of 17-18 years and onwards in the institutions of our country comparative to the rest of the world. There participate a variety of institutions only some of which called Colleges, Universities, the designation of institutions being according to each country's traditions and conventions. Universities always provide for a wide range of subjects, with opportunities for post-graduate work, while the range and the level of work at other institutions varies, with some concentrating directly on vocational courses, sometimes in one specific area such as teacher training. Higher Education we may classify in various ways- Graduate level- In our country study of the 3/4 years course after the completion of senior secondary level. Post graduate level – the further study after the completion of graduation etc.

3 GLIMPSE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN DARRANG:

The Darrang is one of the most populated districts in middle Assam. There are different religions, castes, communities, languages and mixed cultures seen in the district.

The present scenery of educational institutions in Darrang- there are only 1499 Primary Schools, 446 Middle Schools, 148 High Schools, 23 Higher Secondary Schools, 10 Junior Colleges and 5 Colleges including one Degree College having Post-Graduation and three Teachers' Training College. Except a Nursing College, there is no technical and vocational educational institution seen in the district. Most of the educational institutions situated in urban area where only 7 to 10% of total population lives. The private institutions established by the NGOs, Semi-organizations

in urban and rural areas are playing a vital role in imparting primary and secondary education only in the district of Darrang. Till the independence the government actions policies unable to spread the lime light of education in rapid pace in such area.

The Brahmaputra River runs through the south of the district. Large area of the district is lying on Chapori area (Bank of the Brahmaputra) which is the most and thickly populated by the large amount of minority Muslims. Only a few numbers of LP and UP schools are seen where is no assurance of primary education in Chapori area having the declaration as fundamental rights for every children of India. There is overcrowding of students which are out of modern facilities like- infrastructure, lavatories, practical instrument, devoted teachers, playground etc. Except the few lower and upper primary schools there is no higher secondary school in such remote area than it is impossible to think about any higher educational institutions

After independence, government established Guahati University in 1948 from where the path of new higher education for Darrangian and other people of Assam came to the light. Now, there are a few numbers of colleges affiliated to Guwahati University established in different places of the district. All higher institutions in Darrang district enroll large numbers student every year beyond the intake capacity. In Darrang, Open Distance Mode of Education introduced in the colleges very lately. There are only few study centers for post graduation also unable to cover all disciplines.

4 SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- The present study is confined to the level of higher education, problems and challenges in the selective area.
- To sort out the way to chalk out the challenges and perspectives of higher education.
- To study and evaluate the problems of higher education in selected rural area.
- To study the area and find out the challenges of the higher education.
- To study the area and to find perspectives of higher education.

5 METHODOLOGY:

The study is analytical and descriptive in nature. The researchers have adopted observation method of study on the area cooperating with some educated and conscious people, students, guardians and teachers of lower to secondary level schools in study area.

6 FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:

1. Most students of these areas are belonging to the level of first generation learners especially in my study. The guardians/parents are far backward in education hence not aware of higher education for their offspring.
2. The guardians/parents generally come across the school teachers who are most cases not higher educated. In that case the guardians cannot realize the necessity of higher education.
3. The rural people have no easy access to the electronic and print media due to various reasons. They cannot become aware of opportunities of higher education.
4. The higher educational institutions are located in urban areas and due to conservative mindset of the rural people; especially the girls are almost not allowed to

stay outside the home.

5. Economically the rural people are not sound; they mostly depend on agricultural income. They cannot afford the all cost of higher education. The financial hindrances most significant for creating problem for higher education.
6. Joint and bigger family size is also a cause of hindrance in this matter. In a bigger family it is seen that brilliants do not get enough opportunity in getting higher education, because all the children deserve same opportunity.
7. Rural students do not get enough opportunities in making their results better; though some students have talent in specific fields but lack of recognition, guidance and overcrowding sometimes damage the talent. Without better result they are unable to compete with the advanced students.
8. Most of the families, nearly 85 percent people depend on agriculture (poor cultivators, petty traders). The guardians/ parents assume that their higher educated wards will not extend their helping hands in their agricultural works. Again in case just 2.9 percent Muslim boy and 1.5 Muslim girls' parents desire to support them to procure for technical higher education.
9. Lack of Communication and Information Technology; Access of newspaper, radio and television found to be very poor in rural areas. Another problem for the aspirants of the higher education those who living Chapori as well as most rural and the remote area.
10. Early marriage hinders in getting higher education especially for minorities in my study area. Superstitious belief of religious fundamentalists sometimes barred to adroit higher education for girls students.
11. Problem of educated unemployment now-a-days is a great challenge to higher education. Most of the institutions in my study area running by theoretical courses and seen dearth of vocational and technical courses.
12. Lack of computer illiteracy is seen in rural areas; so students/ aspirants of higher education unable to follow the e- learning facilities.
13. Language is barrier for higher education; in my study area it is seen that all the schools from Lower Primary to Higher Secondary follow the medium of instruction in Assamese, but the medium of instruction of higher education is English in many disciplines.
14. Problem of road and transport communication: it is seen that maximum rural roads are very poor in transport and out of reach of the target area of educational institutes.
15. Lack of women higher educational institution is seen in my study area as well as government initiatives regarding its very poor.

7 REMADIAL SUGGESTIONS:

- Need based courses should be introduced in existing institutions and set up the new institution with disciplines like Agriculture, Pisciculture, Horticulture, Sericulture, Animal Husbandry; etc can mitigate the challenges of higher education in my study rural area.
- There should be problem or dearth free school education for solving the problems and challenges stated above. From the early stage English should be made compulsory for the all students, and all school level teachers must take strong initiatives in teaching the English language.
- More and more educational institutions especially for women higher education should be set up in the rural areas for coup up with the problems of higher education.

- Hostel facilities for needed students should provide in all higher educational institutions.
- The initiatives of more and more ODL study centre in existing institutions may reduce the problems of higher education and those who are unable to take regular basis they will get the opportunities.

8 CONCLUSION:-

Education, decent standard of living and longevity of life are the three indicators of Human Development. But the higher education is mastery of learning, knowledge and skill as well as self disciplined. It is depend on the interest, attitude, socio- economic conditions, environment, guidance, heredity of an individual. Without interest and patient no one can achieve higher education. In the wake of globalization sustainable development, international peace with bilateral relations, gender discrimination, human right issues, social justice, poverty alleviation are the main concerns of the higher education for the developed country.