

# Educational Changes in Post Colonial Assam with Special Reference to Higher Education: An Analysis

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**Abstract:** Education is a dynamic process as it changes in accordance with the changing nature of society. The education system is not a single phenomenon and it incorporates structure of education, aims of education, curriculum of education, methods of teaching, examination and evaluation system, educational administration and management etc. Every country has its own national system of education. Now a day, a diversified and multiple changes are taken place in the education system in all over the world. The educational scenario of Assam is also changing that have been taken place in different aspects involving both quantitative and qualitative aspects. The history of growth and development of higher education in Assam is not so old. The first college and university in the region, Cotton College and Gauhati University, Guwahati was established in 1901 and 1948. The establishment of the first University at Guwahati in January 1948 gave a real boost to the expansion of higher education from the pre-university up to the postgraduate and doctoral level in the whole of North East India. In this paper, the investigator makes an attempt to give an overview of the development of higher education in Assam highlighting the changes that taken place in post colonial assam. It mainly focuses on general education only not covering technical, vocational and professional education. The changes that are taken place in terms of literacy rate, number of institutions, Number of enrolment, examination and evaluation system, mode of education are to be discussed in the paper.

**Keywords:** Educational changes, Higher education, quantitative and qualitative changes

## 1. Introduction

Education is a dynamic process as it changes in accordance with the changing nature of society. The education system is not a single phenomenon and it incorporates structure of education, aims of education, curriculum of education, methods of teaching, examination and evaluation system, educational administration and management etc. Every country has its own national system of education. Now a day, a diversified and multiple changes are taken place in the education system in all over the world. The educational scenario of Assam is also changing that have been taken place in different aspects involving both quantitative and qualitative aspects. The history of growth and development of higher education in Assam is not so old. The first college and university in the region, Cotton College and Gauhati University, Guwahati were established in 1901 and 1948. The establishment of the first University at Guwahati in January 1948 gave a real boost to the expansion of higher education from the pre-university up to the postgraduate and doctoral level in the whole of North East India. In this paper, the investigator makes an attempt to give an overview of the development of higher education in Assam highlighting the changes that taken place in post colonial Assam.

## 2. Objectives

This paper deals with the following objectives-

- 1) To discuss about the quantitative changes that has been taken place in higher education in Post Colonial Assam.
- 2) To analyse about the qualitative changes that have been taken place in higher education in Post Colonial Assam.
- 3) To provide some suggestions for the quantitative and qualitative improvement of higher education in Assam.

## 3. Methodology

As per methodology is concerned, this paper is primarily based on secondary data collected through reviewing survey studies, books, journal, reports and internet sources. Hence, the discussion of this paper is made on the basis of this collected data. The changes that have been taken place in higher education both in quantitative and qualitative aspects are examined on the basis of different indicators, namely Literacy rate, number of institutions, students enrolment, Gross Enrolment Ratio, Teaching position, Examination and evaluation system, Curriculum, methods of teaching etc. The study is delimited to only general education not covering technical and professional education. This paper is also laid stress on the changes that have been taken place in Dibrugarh University.

## 4. Analysis and Discussion

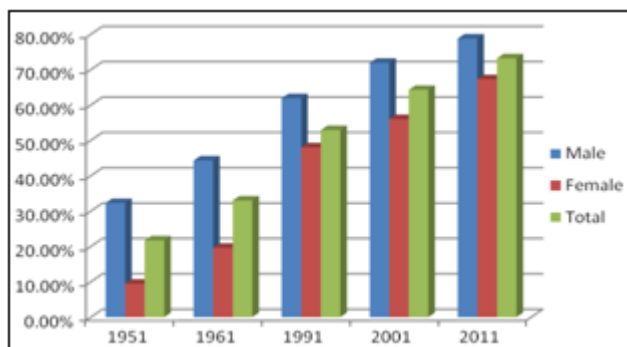
### 4.1 Quantitative changes in higher education in Assam:

#### 4.1.1 Literacy Rate in Assam

The literacy rate in Pre-independence Assam was not satisfactory. The literacy rate in Assam is gradually increased after independence. The literacy rate of Assam is 73.18 percent according to 2011 Census. The urban literacy rate of Assam in 2011 is 88.88 percent as against the rural 70.44 per cent. Male literacy rate for 2011 in urban areas is 91.84 per cent and in rural areas 76.51 percent. Female literacy rate for 2011 in urban areas is 85.71 per cent and in rural areas is 64.09 per cent. The literacy rate of women is 67.3% while male literacy rate is 78.8%. The following table shows the literacy rate from 1951 to 2011.

**Table 1:** Shows the literacy rate from 1951-2011 of Assam

Year	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
1951	32.3	9.5	21.7
1961	44.3	19.6	33.0
1991	61.9	48.03	52.9
2001	71.93	56.03	64.28
2011	78.8	67.3	73.18



**Figure I:** Graphical presentation of Literacy rate of Assam 1951-2011

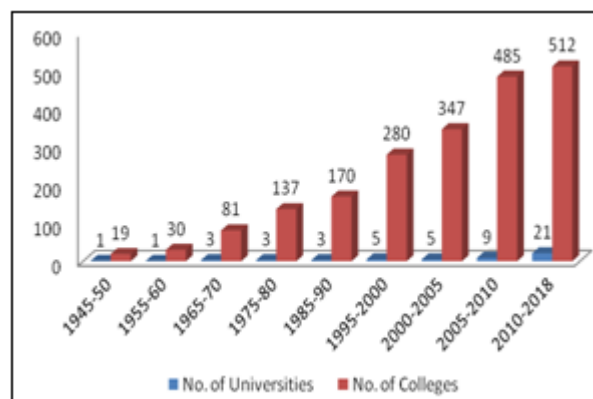
#### 4.1.2 Number of Higher Educational Institutions

The educational development of Assam prior to independence was very deplorable. Only after independence, a rapid expansion took place in the field of education. There were nineteen general colleges and one university during 1945-50. In the succeeding years there has been a phenomenon growth of general colleges in Assam. The establishment of the first University at Guwahati in January 1948 gave a real boost to the expansion of higher education from the pre-university up to the postgraduate and doctoral level in the whole of North East India. In spite of the late start, higher education in Assam had a very rapid growth in post independent era. The University network in Assam today consists of 2 Central University, 13 State University and 5 private University, 1 State Open University (KKH State Open University) and 1 IIT . These are Gauhati University (1948) , Dibrugarh University(1965), Assam University(1994), Tezpur University(1994), Assam Agriculture University(1968), Jorhat, Cotton state university(2011), Bodoland University(2009), Assam women University(2013), Rajiv Gandhi Cooperative University(2010), Srimanta Shankardeva University of Medical Health and Science (2007), Shankardeva university(2013), Kumar Bhaskar Barman Sanskrit University(2011), National Law University and Judicial Academy( 2012), Don Bosco University(2009), Kaziranga University(2012), Down Town University(2010), Assam Science and Technology University(2011) The Assam Royal Global University(2013), Jyoti-Bishnu Cultural University (Proposed), Madhabdeva University (Proposed), Bhattradeva University (Proposed), Rabindra Nath Tagore University (Proposed). Now, there have a total of 21 universities, 512 general colleges including 7 government colleges namely-Cotton College, Government Law College, Krishna Kanta Handique Sanskrit College, Institute of Science and Technology, Jorhat, Diphu Government College, Haflong Government College and Kokrajhar Government College. There have 297 colleges included under 2(f) & 12B, 19 colleges under 2(f). The total enrolment under regular mode is 537377 and women enrolment is 269690 (50.19%) during the period 2016-17.

The growth of universities and general colleges in Assam from 1945 to 2018 is presented in the Table. The Table No-2 reveals that there is substantial growth in the number of universities and general colleges.

**Table 2:** Shows the growth of Universities and Colleges in Assam from 1945-2018

Year	No. of Universities	No. of Colleges
1945-50	1	19
1955-60	1	30
1965-70	3	81
1975-80	3	137
1985-90	3	170
1995-2000	5	280
2000-2005	5	347
2005-2010	9	485
2010-2018	21	512



**Figure II:** Shows the graphical presentation of growth of Universities and colleges from 1945-2018

**4.1.3 Enrolment of students:** Students enrolment is also one of the indicators of educational development. The number of students' enrolment in higher education is also increasing in a rapid way in post colonial Assam. The enrolment of students in higher education at various levels during the period 2010-11 and 2017-18 (Regular Mode) are shown below-

**Table 3:** Shows the enrolment of students at various levels during the period 2010-11 and 2017-18

Stage/Level	2010-11			2017-18		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Under Graduate	232042	225872	457914	278600	277744	556344
Post Graduate	21156	12176	33332	39907	48393	88299
Ph.D	1092	715	1807	2633	1704	4337
M.Phil	39	50	89	129	224	353
PG Diploma	2211	384	2595	1735	1627	3362
Diploma	1888	3162	5050	10223	7709	17932
Certificate	291	187	478	1082	1353	2435
Integrated Course	972	1001	1973	2630	2651	5281
Grand total	259691	243547	503238	336939	341405	678344

Source: AISHE Report 2017-18

**Table 4:** Enrolment of Students in Higher Education in Assam during 2017-18 according to social categories

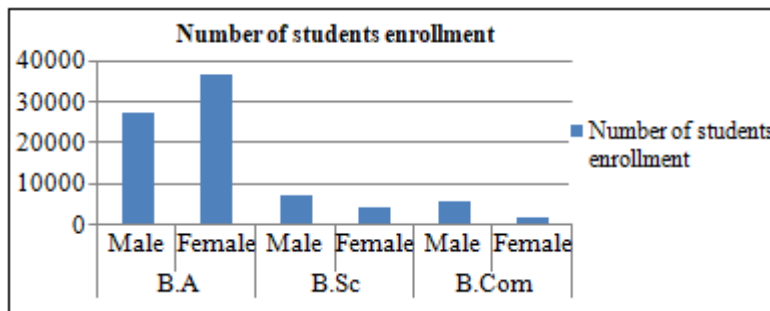
Categories	Male	Female	Total
All Categories	336939	341405	678344
SC	28384	26170	54554
ST	49517	48090	97607
OBC	86073	88615	174688
PWD	528	354	882
Muslim	45324	42480	87804
Other Minority	4268	4394	8662

**Table 5:** Total enrolment by course/stages of studies in Assam 2014-15

Course/Stage	Total Enrolment		SC		ST	
	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female
Ph.D/M.Phil/DSc	1393	626	116	49	118	58
M.A	9676	4134	746	374	1227	633
M.Sc	5331	1754	432	198	372	186
M.Com	1844	1620	211	86	173	41
B.A/B.A Major	180379	78251	24454	9069	21340	8055
B.Sc/B.Sc Major	37475	7121	1651	749	2412	813
B.Com/B.Com Major	21983	6072	2460	585	2658	632

Source: Assam Statistical Handbook, 2015

**Table 6:** Shows Gross Enrolment Ratio in Higher Education (18-23 yrs) and Pupil Teacher Ratio in 2017-18:



**Figure III:** Shows the students enrolment in UG courses

**Table 8:** Sex and category wise distribution of Students enrolment in the University departments/centre of studies during the session 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17

Category	2014-15		2015-16		2016-17	
	(M)	(F)	(M)	(F)	(M)	(F)
General	1507	2320	1594	2302	2047	2383
OBC/MOBC	1936	2320	1874	2302	1739	2145
SC	267	2320	258	2302	148	146
ST	568	2320	541	2302	313	293
Minority	118	2320	84	2302	51	54
Tea	NA	2320	NA	2302	7	5
Differently abled	NA	2320	NA	2302	2	3
Total enrolment	2076	4396	2049	4351	2047	4430

Source: Statistical Report-2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17DU

The Table-8 reveals that the trend of girls' enrolment/women enrolment in university departments and centre of studies under Dibrugarh University is increasing than male students.

**4.1.4 Distance and Open Learning in Assam:**

The distance and open learning was started in Assam after establishment of Regional Centre of IGNOU at Guwahati in 1996. After that the directorate of distance education was

State	All categories			SC			ST		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Assam	18.6	17.8	18.2	20.1	18.7	19.4	22.4	19.5	20.8
All India	25.8	26.3	25.4	22.2	21.4	21.8	17.0	14.9	15.9

Source: Report of AISHE 2017-18

**Trends of Students Enrolment in Higher Education under Dibrugarh University:**

**Table 7:** Sex wise distribution of students enrolled in the General Degree College during 2015-16

Stream	Sex	No. of students	%
B.A	Male	27480	43%
	Female	36601	57%
B.Sc	Male	7347	62%
	Female	4515	38%
B.Com	Male	5962	74%
	Female	2109	26%

Source: Annual Report-2016-17, DU

The Table-7 shows that the number of women enrolment in B.A Course is higher than that of male counterpart but it is low in B.Sc and B.Com course than male students.

opened at both Gauhati and Dibrugarh University. The Post Graduate Correspondance School was opened in the month of May, 1998 at Gauhati University. But, it was transformed to Institute of Distance and Open Learning (IDOL) in 2002. In 2001, the Directorate of Distance Education was established at Dibrugarh University. After that in 2005, The Krishna Kanta Handique State Open University (KKHSOU) was established in Guwahati for expansion of higher education.

**Table 9:** Enrolment of Students at post graduate level through distance mode in Assam during the period 2017-18

Level	Male	Female	Total
Post Graduate	27781	32421	60202

Source-AISHE Report 2017-18

**4.1.5 Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR):** The Pupil Teacher Ratio is also reflects the scenario of educational development. The Pupil Teacher Ratio is shown in the following table from the period 2011-18 in the university and colleges in Assam.

**Table 10:** Shows the PTR in Universities and colleges in Assam

Period	Regular & Distance mode	Regular mode
2011-12	25	21
2012-13	27	21
2013-14	30	22
2014-15	26	22
2015-16	26	22
2016-17	31	26
2017-18	41	35
All India(2017-18)	34	30

**4.1.6 Teaching Positions:** The Teaching positions in the higher educational institutions in Assam during the period 2017-18 are as shown in the following table in categories wise.

**Table 11:** Shows the teaching positions in Assam

Categories	Male	Female	Total
All Categories	11958	7770	19728
SC	726	447	1173
ST	1231	920	2151
OBC	2732	2012	4744
PWD	45	10	55
Muslim	2023	544	2567
Other Minority	235	212	447

Source: AISHE Report 2017-18

**4.2 Qualitative Changes in Higher Education in Assam**

**4.2.1 Ranking Status of higher educational institutions of Assam and Dibrugarh University:** The quality of higher educational institutions of Assam are also assessed by the different organizations like National Institute Ranking Framework (NIRF) under Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and some international organizations in time to time. The ranking status of higher educational institutions of Assam are shown below- Table No.12

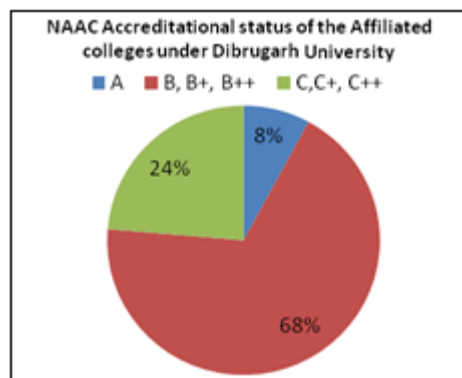
Institutions	NIRF Rank (MHRD)		ASIAN Ranking in 2017	World University Ranking in 2017	Times Higher Education Ranking 2018 (World Best Small Universities)
	2016	2017			
Gauhati university	22	27			
Tezpur University	5	30		the range 601-800	20
Dibrugarh university	74	74			
Assam University	77	92			
IIT, Guwahati			45	the range 601-800	

**Accreditation Status of Dibrugarh University by NAAC:**

There are 140 general colleges (Arts, Science & commerce), 14 B.Ed, 7 Law, 2 Engineering and other 12 institutes under Dibrugarh University. In NAAC assessment (2<sup>nd</sup> circle) Dibrugarh University is accredited as A Grade. At present only a total of 76 colleges are accredited by NAAC as in

1<sup>st</sup> circle -24, 2<sup>nd</sup> circle-51 and 3<sup>rd</sup> circle-1 and 64 general degree colleges are not accredited under Dibrugarh University. There are 13 girls' colleges under Dibrugarh University. Table No.13

NAAC Accredited Colleges under Dibrugarh university as on 2016				Grade		
1 <sup>st</sup> circle	2 <sup>nd</sup> circle	3 <sup>rd</sup> circle	Total	A	B, B+, B++	C, C+, C++
24	51	1	76	6	52	18



**Figure IV:** Shows the NAAC Accreditation status of the Affiliated Colleges under DU

**4.2.2 Foreign Students in Higher Educational Institutions in Assam**

The enrolment of foreign students in the higher educational institutions also reflects the qualitative standard of higher education. The enrolment of foreign students in the higher educational institutions in Assam during the period 2017-18 is shown in the following table-

**Table 14**

Level of Education	Male	Female	Total
Ph.D	58	10	68
PG	70	18	88
UG	98	38	136
Diploma and Certificate	10	4	14
All Total	236	70	306

Source: AISHE Report 2017-18

**Enrolment of Foreign Students in Dibrugarh University:**

At present, there have 22 foreign students enrolled in different departments in Dibrugarh University.

**Table 15**

Course	No. of foreign Students	Country
BBA	1	Lesotho
Ph.D in Bio-technology	1	Eritrea
Ph.D in Economics	1	Burundi
B.Tech	4	Yemen & Tanzania
M.A Mass Com	2	Zambia & Namibia
Applied Geology	2	Sudan
MCA	1	Lesotho
Ph.D in Pharmaceutical Sc.	1	Nigeria
Ph.D in Chemistry	1	Egypt
Ph.D in P.Tech & P.Tech	1+2	Libya & Malaysia
M.Ed	1	Namibia
Applied Psychology	1	Zimbabwe
M.Tech	2	Bangladesh & Libya
Geography	1	Spain



**4.2.3 Introducing new courses at the College and University Education:** The qualitative standard of higher education also depends on quality and innovative curriculum. In post colonial Assam, the various under graduate and post Graduate degree, diploma, certificate courses are introduced in the higher educational institutions in Assam. The Central university-Assam University & Tezpur University, State public university, private university as well as state open university are being introduced job oriented and innovative courses that fulfils the needs and demands of the students.

**4.2.4 New Examination and Evaluation System:** The new examination and evaluation systems are being introduced in the higher educational institutions of Assam keeping in view the national and international standard. Now, The semester system, Grading System and Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) are introduced. The Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) are also used in the higher educational institutions in Post Colonial Assam.

**4.2.5 Adoption of New Methods of Teaching:** Methods of teaching are intimately connected with the teaching learning process. When we talk of the teaching process we are considering methods of teaching that leads to learning. The instructional methods are concerned with the ways and means of transmitting the subject matter to the learner. The various methods of teaching are practiced in the higher educational institutions in post colonial Assam. Besides lecture methods, the methods like seminar, group discussion, Brain storming, projects, Computer Assisted Instruction are adopted in the higher educational institutions.

**4.2.6 Governance and Management System:** Quality higher education also relates to management. Only good and efficient management can produce better quality. The higher educational institutions especially colleges and university are governed by a Governing Body, Court and other bodies. The Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) in both colleges and universities plays a vital role in maintaining quality in the institutions. Now a day, ICT (Information and Communication Technology) are used in governance and management of the institutions. The various activities are done through online system.

**4.2.7 Emphasis on Research Activity:** The quality of higher education goes along with the quality of research. The trend of research activity is also gradually increasing in the higher educational institutions in Post Colonial Assam. But, one of the reasons for poor quality education in Assam is that we are lagging far behind in terms of research. Research must be socially and economically more relevant which calls for a greater interface between universities, research institutions and various sectors of society. Teachers of colleges and universities should be motivated to conduct relevant research work

**4.2.8 Infrastructure Development:** The infrastructure development is intimately connected with the qualitative standard of higher education. The development of infrastructure of the higher educational institutions in post colonial Assam is increasing in a rapid way but still we are waiting for all round development

**4.2.9 Organisation of Extension Activity:** The Extension activity is also one of the key functions of higher education. The organisation of extension activity in the higher educational institutions is also increasing in the post colonial Assam. The NCC, NSS, Career Counselling Cell, Women Cell etc. are undertaking various extension activity in and out side the campus.

**4.3 Suggestions for improving quality of higher education:**

- 1) **Action plan for improving quality:** Academic and administrative audit should be conducted once in three years in colleges by external experts for ensuring quality in all aspects of academic activities. The self finance colleges should come forward for accreditation and fulfill the requirements of accreditation. Universities and colleges should realize the need for quality education and come forward with action plan for improving quality in higher educational institutions.
- 2) **Need based job-oriented courses:** Higher educational institutions should introduce job-oriented courses as per local conditions and needs for enhancement of employment.
- 3) **Industry and academia connection:** Industry and academia connect necessary to ensure curriculum and skills in line with requirements. Skill building is really very crucial to ensure employability of academia to understand and make sure good jobs.
- 4) **Student-centred and Dynamic methods:** Methods of higher education also have to be appropriate to the needs of learning to learn, learning to do, learning to be and learning to become. Student-centred education and employment of dynamic methods of education will require from teachers new attitudes and new skills.
- 5) **Innovative practices:** The new technologies offer vast opportunities for improving learning situations.
- 6) **Fair quality assurance system:** All higher educational institutes should set up Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) and must follow a ethical standard and adopt activities for improving quality.
- 7) **Focus on quality research work and stipends to Research Fellows:** Higher educational institute should focus on quality research work and government should provide adequate stipends to attract students into research and teaching.
- 8) Focus on five goals, which include Greater Access, Equity, Quality and Excellence, Relevance and Value Based Education.
- 9) Bringing about a qualitative improvement in the physical infrastructure, provision of adequate student support, services, counseling and guidance.
- 10) Academic and administrative audit should be done appropriately.

## Conclusion

Assam is a land of full potentiality for future development in all spheres. The educational scenario of Assam has been changing in all stages of education since independence. Yet, there have been containing some problems in primary, secondary and higher education of Assam. Issues challenging the higher education in Assam as well as N.E

Region are multi faceted and quite complex. It is high time that our universities and colleges pursue the goals of excellence and participation in right earnest. Quality education is the outcome of a multifactor system involving intrinsic factors like curriculum, teaching learning, evaluation, infrastructure facilities, learning resources, managerial and organizational efficiencies and innovative approach to cope with the emerging challenges. Apart from the general challenges of access, equity, relevance, quality and privatization among others and development specific to the North-East have brought in some specific challenges and opportunities in the field of higher education. Our universities and colleges must gear themselves.

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