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A Comprehensive Study of School Educational Status in the Districts of BTAD

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Abstract

School education is imparted through a number of pre-primary, primary, middle, high and higher secondary school. School education embedded with the higher education determines the quality of life and productive factors and thus promotes economic growth and provides a foundation for economic development. The present study is a comprehensive study of school educational status in the four districts of BTAD that highlights the growth of schools, performance of school education in terms of pass percentage in the high school leaving certificate (HSLC) examination. It has also highlighted the employment avenues in the primary and secondary schools and the obstacles face by these institutions. The study concludes with summary of findings.

Key Words: Employment, Growth, Performance and School Education.

Introduction

Education plays an important role in determining the quality of life and productive factors. Education specially, the primary and secondary education is the foundation stone to pursue higher education which promotes economic growth and development. It affects economic development in a direct and in an indirect way. Its direct effects are observed in productivity, employment, composition of labour force, division and mobility of labour while its indirect effects includes, thrift, savings, limitations in the size of family, formation of the right kind of attitudes and skills. So, it serves as an instrument for social welfare as well as a tool for the economic development of the nation as a whole.

It is a well-known fact that in most of the developing countries, there has always been a relatively low amount of investment in human capital, which gets manifested in terms of low labour efficiency, factor immobility, limited specialisation in occupation and trade, a deficient supply of effective entrepreneurship and management, customary values and traditional social institutions. Many studies of economic growth (both in developed and developing countries) confirm the importance of investment in human capital. And hence, human resources development (HRD) plays an important role in the whole process of economic growth and also in economic development (Rio, 2010). In 1776, Adam Smith, in his book *Wealth of Nations*, referred education as an investment in human resources.

HRD in any country can be achieved through education where primary and secondary education is the base for it. Whether educational policies focuses on primary or secondary education, ensuring access to and providing high quality education is crucial if societies are to achieve their development

goals. On account of this fact, the central government has initiated series of programmes to encourage primary education of which a few can be mentioned as:

- a. Sarva Siksha Abhijan (SSA) which aims to provide useful and relevant elementary education for all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years.
- b. Mid Day Meal (MDM) scheme which aims at universalisation of primary education by measuring enrolment, retention, attendance and simultaneously impacting upon nutritional status of students.

Economic characteristics of education

Several economists like Adam Smith, T.W. Schultz, William Petty and others have enumerated the economic characteristics of education in their writings. Some of the economic traits of education as enumerated are as follows:

- a. It yields a host of direct and indirect benefits.
- b. It brings technological change.
- c. It increases productivity.
- d. It exchanges the skills and ideas.
- e. It is both consumption as well as an investment.

Based on the above economic traits of education, it is clear that education acts as a powerful means of HRD which in turn is very helpful in economic development. Education leads to the skilled and talented human resource, research in different fields of education sector for which school education primary and secondary education lays the foundation stone, increases the efficiency of the financial operators which is helpful for the economic growth and development. Therefore, it is imperative to analyse the status of school education in the BTAD where the educational status is very low compared to other districts of Assam, which would open up the ways and means to accelerate the slow progress of education in the study area.

Review of literature

Das (1973) in his study on the development of secondary education in Assam revealed that the condition of secondary education was far from satisfactory which were implied by low salary and low social status. The professional level of teachers was also below standard. The infrastructural facilities like buildings particularly of private institutions were in deplorable conditions. Also, the study showed that the standard of co-curricular activities like physical education, moral training, debates, games, sports and publications of school magazines were generally very poor.

Desai et al. (2003) in their paper “Why Do the Girls Drop-out from Primary/Elementary Education? A Case Study of Sayla Taluka in Gujarat” observed a predominantly social phenomenon for the drop-out of girls from the school education which is mainly because of contemporary dogma such as “social beliefs”- girls should not be educated much, boys and girls after a certain age group should not sit and study in the class under the supervision of the male teacher.

Krushna et al. (2010) in their paper on “Trends in the growth of Higher Education in India: 1950-51 to 2005-06” has examined that growth in enrolment of students has exceeded the growth in the number of institutions and teachers. During the year 205-06, the student teacher ratio was 26:1. Despite a massive expansion of institutional facilities during the last 55 years, the goal has moved farther with the increasing number of students pursuing higher education. Moreover, there are glaring disparities based on caste, sex, religion and region in what has been achieved.

Dayal (2013) in his book, *Educational Planning and Development*, analysed the problems of primary and compulsory education and observed that many political, social, religious, economic and geographical factors created obstacles in the path of expanding primary education. Besides, he had also found that problem in the curriculum of primary education, wastage and stagnation and many other administrative difficulties. The constitutional failure to fulfil its promise has also acted a serious impediment in the growth of primary education.

Objectives

The study is undertaken with the following objectives:

- (i) To examine the growth of primary schools including both lower primary and upper primary, high and higher secondary schools.
- (ii) To analyse the performance of school education in terms of pass percentage in the high school leaving certificate (HSLC) examination.
- (iii) To evaluate the employment avenues in the school educational institutions.
- (iv) To highlight the obstacles faced by the schools in providing education.

Methodology and data collection

The study is descriptive and analytical in nature which is entirely based on secondary data. The secondary information is collected from different sources like books, journals, reports of various government organisations and relevant website. A simple statistical tool like percentage method is used after processing the data for the purpose of analysis.

Result and Discussion

Growth of primary, high and secondary schools:

The growth of primary schools including both lower and upper primary schools, high and secondary schools can best be analysed with the help of table-1.1 as given below:

Table-1.1
Growth of primary, high and secondary schools (*in numbers*)

Year	Primary Schools		High School	Higher Secondary Schools
	LP	Middle		
2010	3670	516	167	45
2011	3579	559	269	46
2012	4723	1119	288	48
2013	4712	859	291	47

Source: Statistical Handbook of BTC, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2014.

The above Table-1.1 revealed that the growth of primary and middle schools is very low. During 2010, the number of primary school was 3670 and that of middle school is 516. There was declined in the figure of LP school to 3579 in 2011 and increased to that of the middle school, this is possibly due to the upgradation of the LP school to middle/upper primary school. However, the figure of LP and middle school rosed to 4723 and 1119 respectively in the year of 2012. Again, the number of LP and middle school declined to 4712 and 859 in 2013. The reason is very sharp and clear, that there was an upgradation of LP school to middle school and middle school to high school. Thus, in a

straight forward, it can be rightly said that the growth in the number of LP and middle school during the period 2010 to 2013 is very low. The actual growth in the number is very marginal.

Observation to the same table reveals that there was a continuous rise in the figure of high school and higher secondary schools. During 2010, the number of high school was 167 which increased to 269 in 2011, 288 in 2012 and to 291 in 2013. Again, the number of higher secondary also increase marginally i.e. it was 45 in 2010, 46 in 2011, 48 in 2012 but declined to 47 in 2013. The decline may be the closure of higher secondary classes and continuation as high school. Thus there was a unit increase in the number of higher secondary schools during 2010 to 2012.

Performance of school education

The performance of school education in terms of pass percentage in the HSLC examination can best be analysed with the help of table-1.2 as given below:

Table-1.2
District Wise Performance of HSLC Examination in BTAD

District	Year	Total Appeared	Total Passed	Percentage
Kokrajhar	2010	8123	4251	52.33
	2011	8220	4742	57.69
	2012	8692	5125	58.96
	2013	12455	7686	61.71
	2014	13691	7101	51.87
Average				56.52
Chirang	2010	3935	1751	44.54
	2011	4471	2276	50.90
	2012	4613	2517	54.51
	2013	6896	3982	56.96
	2014	7533	2244	29.78
Average				47.33
Baksa	2010	4045	2638	65.21
	2011	8495	2795	32.90
	2012	10897	6995	64.19
	2013	14725	10111	68.67
	2014	12862	7620	59.24
Average				58.04
Udalguri	2010	6586	3002	45.58
	2011	7165	4009	55.95
	2012	6213	4280	68.89
	2013	9457	6151	65.04
	2014	9912	4437	47.76
Average				56.64

Source: Statistical Handbook of BTC, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013.

The average annual growth rate for Baksa district was the highest with 58.04 percent. Chirang district showed the lowest annual average growth rate while Kokrajhar and Udalguri approximately showed the same average annual growth. Among all the districts of BTAD, the Baksa district has

shown the best performance during 2010 to 2014. However, compared to other districts of the Assam, the performance of BTAD is very low.

Employment avenues in school educational institutions

The educational institutions, primary, high and secondary schools absorbed a huge number of educated unemployed youth both in the rural and urban areas. The status of employment opportunities provided by these educational institutions up to the secondary schools are highlighted in the table-1.3 as given below:

Table-1.3
Status of teachers' employment in school educational institutions in BTAD

Year	Primary	Middle	High School	Higher Secondary	Total
2010	9103	4276	3206	1220	17805
2011	8176	5343	3376	1149	18044
2012	8149	3832	3532	1471	16984
2013	9113	4830	3332	870	18145

Source: Statistical Handbook of BTC, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013.

Observation to the above table of the employment status indicates that there is a rise in the number of teachers employed in the educational institutions up to higher secondary level excluding the junior college in the study area as a whole. This fact is supported by the figure that in 2010 the number of teachers employed is 17805 which rose to 18044 in 2012 and then to 18145 in 2013.

Problems faced by the school educational institutions

Discussions with the headmasters and principals of some select schools of BTAD have pointed out certain obstacles faced by the schools in the study area. These are-

1. Most of the schools don't have library facilities and separate library buildings.
2. Many schools of the study area don't have adequate classrooms revealing high student-classroom ratio.
3. Pupil-teacher ratio is very high in the BTAD which hampers the quality of education.
4. The school administration faces Frequent Bandhs which adversely affects the performance of the educational institutions in general and the life of the students in particular.
5. The last but not the least problems faced by the educational institutions in particular and by the society in general are the frequent violence. Violence between the Bodos (Hindus) and the Muslims in 2012, between the Bodos and the Adivasi in 2014 can be cited as evidence in this aspect.

Findings and conclusion

From the above analysis, the following points can be summarised and concluded as follows:

- (i) The growth in the number of LP schools is the highest compared to that of the middle and high schools where as the growth in the number of the secondary schools is least. As a whole the growth in the number of educational institutions in the BTAD during 2010 to 2013 is very low.
- (ii) With regard to the performance of Schools in terms of HSLC examination, the Baksa district has the best performance while the performance of Chirang district is the worst. As a whole, compared to other districts of Assam, the performance in the BTAD is very poor.

- (iii) In terms of employment avenues provided by these educational institutions, there is a rise in the number of teacher's employment during 2010 to 2013.
- (iv) School educational institutions face several problems such as lack of well equipped library building, inadequate classrooms, high pupil teacher ratio, inadequate number of teachers, etc. Apart from it, the school administration is also confronted with the problem of frequent bandhs and violence that adversely affects the performance of school education.

Thus, the BTC government and the state government should take necessary steps to provide the required educational infrastructures and solve the problem of frequent bandhs and violence to accelerate the growth of school educational institutions and its performance.

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