

Women in Higher Education of Assam with Special Reference to Dibrugarh University

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Abstract

Women participation in higher education is very essential as the women of any country have an important contribution in the progress of the country. It is noteworthy that higher education has a direct impact on empowering the female counterpart of our society. In this article an attempt has been made to study the trend of girls' enrolment in higher education of Assam with special reference to general education under Dibrugarh University of Assam. Here the trend of girls' education is analysed on the basis of indicator of students' enrolment, pupil-teacher ratio and teaching position.

Key Words: Higher Education, Women Enrollment, Social Education

Introduction

Higher education normally includes undergraduate and postgraduate education, as well as vocational and professional education and training after + 2 stages or higher secondary stage. Colleges, Universities, and Institutes of Technology are the main institutions that provide higher education. Higher education is defined in the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) Hand Book as more specialized study normally undertaken after successful completion of a good basic education lasting for at least eleven years. Women participation in higher education is very essential as the women of any country have an important contribution in the progress of the country. It is noteworthy that higher education has a direct impact on empowering the female counterpart of our society. In this article an attempt has been made to study the trend of girls' enrolment in higher education of Assam with special reference to general education under Dibrugarh University of Assam. Women participation in higher education in Assam primarily began from the establishment of first women college in 1935 namely Lady keene College at Shillong (Undivided Assam). After that in 1936, the missionary sisters of Catholic Society established St. Marry's college. Accordingly, Handique Girls' College in 1939, the first women college of entire Assam plays a vital role in the promotion and expansion

of women education. Gradually, in 1955, Devicharan Baruah Girls' College was established at Jorhat and it was the second oldest girls' college of Assam (Sonowal and Dutta, 2011).

Women in Higher Education of Assam

In 1927, Amalprova Das took admission in I.Sc class at Cotton College who was the first girl student of the glorious college and became the first M.Sc Degree holder in later days. Rajabala Das was the first lady principal of Handique Girls' college. In those earlier days enrolment of girl students in higher educational institutions was not encouraging. Swarnalata Barua, the daughter of Gunabhiram Borua and Sarala Devi, daughter of Udayram Das got higher education in Calcutta. Hemprova Dutta passed F.A for the first time from Bethun School situated at Calcutta. Sukhalata Duwarah and Sudhalata Duwarah were the first graduates and M.A degree holders in Assam. Sudhalata Duwarah was also the first woman who passed B.T. Suchibrata Rai Choudhuri was the first woman ACS and District Megistrate, Parul Das was the first IAS, Rajani Prova Saikia and Tiluttama Raichoudhuri were the first MBBS and Dr. Kamala Rai and Dr. Tiluttama Gogoi were the first Ph.D holder women in Assam. First woman Padmashri Nalinibala Devi was a literary pensioner who became the first woman president of Assam Sahitya Sabha.

In this article, the trend of girls' education is analysed on the basis of indicator of students' enrolment, Pupil Teacher Ratio and Teaching position. 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-

Students Enrolment:

Table No.1- 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 No.2-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 No.3: Total enrolment by course/stages of studies in Assam 2014-15

Course/Stage	Total Enrolment		SC		ST	
	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total
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 4: Shows Gross Enrolment Ratio in Higher Education (18-23 yrs) and Pupil Teacher Ratio in 2017-18

State	All categories			SC			ST		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	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-5: 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-5 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 courses than male students.

Fig-I- Shows the students enrolment in UG courses

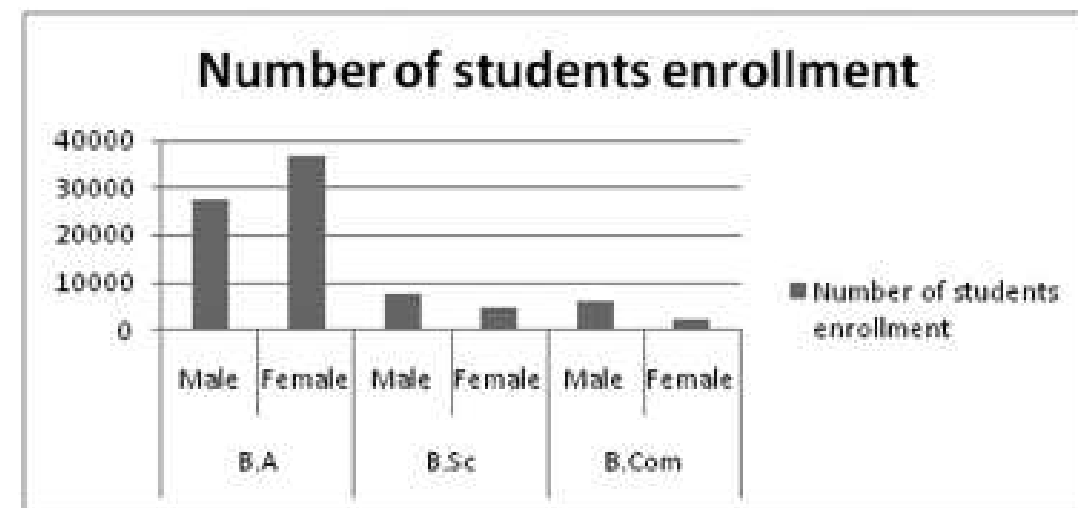


Table-6: Sex and category wise distribution of Students enrolment in the University departments/centre of studies during the session 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17

Category	2014-15		2015-16		2016-17	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
General	1507	2320	1594	2302	739	740
OBC/MOBC	1936		1874		789	1145
SC	267		258		148	146
ST	568		541		313	293
Minority	118		84		51	54
Tea	NA		NA		7	5
Differently abled	NA		NA		2	3
Total enrolment	2076 (M)	2320 (F)	2049 (M)	2302 (F)	2047(M)	2383(F)
	4396		4351		4430	

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

The Table-6 reveals that the trend of girls' enrolment/women enrolment in university departments and centre of studies under Dibrugarh University is increasing than male students.

Women enrolled in Distance and Open Learning Systems in Assam: The distance and open learning systems were started in Assam after the establishment of Regional Centre of IGNOU at Guwahati in 1996. After that the Directorate of Distance Education was opened at both Gauhati and Dibrugarh University. The Post Graduate Correspondence School was opened in the month of May, 1998 at Gauhati University. But, it was transformed into the 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 No.7- 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

Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR): The Pupil Teacher Ratio 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 No.8-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

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 No. 9- 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

Some problems of women education in Assam

The women of Assam have been suffering from so many problems in various fields. Most of the women are still lagging behind in social, political, cultural, economic fields for which their position and status in the society are not so satisfactory. Due to the lack of

proper education, the rural women are quite unable to stand before the society in case of demanding their fundamental rights. Some of the problems that have been observed by the investigator are as follows:

Economic backwardness of the rural community

The girls are thought to be useful at home for carrying out domestic duties and the parents are reluctant to send them to school. They want to engage the girl child in some domestic works instead of sending to school. So, poverty stands as a problem of women education in the rural areas of Assam.

Illiteracy

Illiteracy is also a common problem of women in rural areas of Assam. The literacy rate of women is very low in comparison to male literacy in Assam.

Lack of a proper social attitude in favour of girls' education

The 'Pardah' system and certain other harmful social customs in these states stand as a hindrance in the development of girls' education.

Lack of adequate transportation and communication facilities

The transportation and communication facilities in the rural of Assam are not satisfactory. So, this also acts as a hindrance towards development of women education in Assam.

Lack of adequate educational facilities

The educational facilities in the rural areas of Assam are not adequate. There are lack of suitable school buildings and equipments. Most of the schools do not provide separate sanitary facilities for girls in the mixed schools and non availability of a school within walking distance posit problems for girls to pursue education in Assam.

Lack of social education for adult women

The problem of girls' enrolment is very closely connected with the problem of social education of adult women. In fact, the success of girls' education depends in a very large manner on the successful implementation of social education programme for adult women, especially in rural areas of Assam.

Lack of supervision and personal guidance

The development of girls' education in Assam have been seriously hampered because of the inadequate machinery to look after the various programmes in this field which require concentrated attention, special care and individual guidance.

Conclusion

The National Policy on Education, 1986 states that education will be used as a driving force of basic change in the status of women in society. Access and equity are the two most important components to empower women. In order to achieve and sustain the high growth rates in present India, we have to train and employ our available women work

force. The UGC has been gradually intertwining gender equality and gender justice in to its policies and the curricula of higher education. From the analysis of the information it clearly reflects that there are still more that needs to be done. Gender disparities still continue to prevail in different forms. For the betterment of women in higher education, certain special arrangement should be made like-provision of more scholarship, part time facilities, reduce tuition fees, suitable curriculum, hostel facilities, establishing women college and universities, reservation of seats in higher educational institutions, appointment of women teachers, establishing women studies centre in universities and colleges etc.

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