

## Education of Students in the Rural Areas of Assam

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### Introduction:

The lack of basic learning opportunities is both a contributing cause and effect of rural poverty in low income countries. Even where schools exist, various economic and social obstacles prevent some children especially girls, from enrolling. The opportunity cost of schooling is one of the main obstacles for poor families, who often count on their children's labour and earning. Also school learning may appear quite irrelevant with respect to their more immediate survival needs.

In general terms, rural children and adults most of whom are poor have very limited opportunities to obtain a viable basic education that would help them break out of the poverty cycle. Many rural children have enter a school, many of those who do not enrol fail to complete the full primary cycle and even among those who do complete it, many leave school barely literate. The curriculum and sometimes the language of instruction are not suited to local condition. Rural schools are often in poor repair, poorly equipped and staffed with poorly prepared and poorly paid teachers. Programmes targeting rural adolescence and adults often are not well organised, not well adopted to local learning needs and depend on untrained or poorly trained low paid personal. Such programmes are difficult to expand on even sustained. Furthermore, rural learners of whether age are generally at a disadvantage in comparison with their cousins in the city who have access to relatively better educational opportunities which are often still well below the standard aimed at in government policy.

It may be recalled that the rural population of the country is about 72 percent. Against this 87.39 percent of the total 12,50,775 schools that impact elementary education in 20007-2008 are located in rural areas. Further, it is observed that barring the states of Chandigarh (17.05), Delhi (21.99), Maharashtra (78.84),

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Mizoram (69.92), Pondicherry (51.21) the percentage of school in rural areas in the rest of the states is above 80. In Lakshadweep, all the schools irrespective of school types, are in rural areas. A few states such as Arunachal Pradesh (94.15%), Assam (94.28%), Bihar (94.87%), Chattisgarh (92.29%), Himachal Pradesh (95.63%), Jharkhand (94.84), Meghalaya (93.39), Orissa (93.15), Sikkim (95.83), Tripura (93.39%), Uttar Pradesh (90.28%), Uttarakhand (92.61) have above 90 percent of schools located in rural areas as it was in 2007-2008. Further it has also been noticed that the majority of schools except integrated Higher Secondary Schools (60.96%) are located in rural areas. The percentage is as high as 90.44 for independence Primary schools 90.51 independent Upper Primary School, 80.80 for primary integrated with Upper Primary and 75.33 in the case of upper Primary integrated with secondary Higher Secondary schools. On the other hand, out of a total 95,974 integrated Higher Secondary Schools, only 60.96% schools are located in rural areas which are much lower than the other type of schools located in these areas. So the major portions of the Indian population are living in the rural area. Moreover in except few states of India all the states, education is functioning in the rural areas. So without the educational development in the rural areas we can't think for universalisation of education in India. Quality education in the rural area is the basis for the development of the future. Rural and remote areas make a major contribution to the economic development of any country. The continuing strength of our rural economy depends on a vibrant, skill force capable of sustaining rural development while at the same time embracing global trends.

#### **Review of Related Literature:**

1. Sharma (1981): Investigated the factor related to academic high achievement and under achievement of rural girls coming from the Secondary Schools of Haryana. It was found poor academic motivation, linguistic ability, planning of study work, adjustment and emotional insecurity contributed to under achievement.
2. Hussain (1982): Conducted a study on form of wastage, rate of stagnation of children in rural areas in Bhilwara District. He found that the rate of wastage was high and it was highest in the first two classes. Moreover failing once or repeatedly led to school leaving and non provision of all the three classes in the same institution resulted in discontinuing of studies by the students.

3. Prasad & Sharma(1982): Assessed the basic educational facilities, enrolment of children belonging to the weaker section of society etc. Results indicate that the incidence of stagnation was disproportionately distributed across the various classes in both the district. The Harijan however showed more cases of dropout than the others.
4. Narrang(1982): Investigate the effect of socio economic status on the academic achievement of boys and girls in city, town and village area. The findings revealed that socio economic status did not affect performance in the city, town and village areas.
5. Das (1983): Investigated the variation of educational wastage with regard to its extend at the primary education level in urban and rural areas of the districts in the plains of Assam.
6. Mishra (1986): Studied the influence of socio- economic status on academic achievement of rural and urban high school students. He found that there was a positive relationship between socio economic status and academic achievement of the students. The academic achievement of the rural students was lower than the achievement of urban areas.

**Significance of the Study:**

In the new millennium, in which our daily news is often dominated by terrorism, we know that in equalities feed delinquency and crime, which in turn frequently constitute a sign of the poor's exasperation with world inequalities. One of the major inequalities affecting the rural poor is their unequal access to quality education which is so important for social and economic development.

According to census data released on July 15, 2011, nearly seven out of ten Indians still live in villages. The latest figures revealed a worrisome trend in the sharp drop in child sex ratio. The fall in child sex ratio in rural areas is around four times than in urban areas. In urban areas declined is much more gradual. At 914 Indians current child ratio is the lowest since the 1961. The literacy rate in rural areas however has improved by two times than in urban areas. The rural urban literacy gap which was 21.2 percent points in 2001 has come down to 16.1 percent points in 2011. But we can't say that the improvement is satisfactory there is a scope for more works to be done in this field. More over the educational problems of the rural areas are not similar with the urban areas. The socio economic status, educational awareness among the rural pupil is significantly different from the urban areas .So especial educational programmes should be

taken for this purpose. Because without the educational development in the rural areas we can't think for the progress of India.

So with the given rationale, the present study is an attempt to study the problems of the rural education and also try to find out some remedial measures in this respect.

**Objectives of the Study:**

1. To study the present status of education in rural areas of Assam.
2. To study the problems of education in the rural areas of Assam.
3. To find out some remedial measures of the educational problems in rural areas of Assam.

**Definition of the Key Terms:**

- i. Literacy: a person is literate who can both read and write with understanding, a short simple statement on his or her everyday life.
- ii. Rural area:
  - A space where human settlement and infrastructure occupy only a small space of land space.
  - Natural environment dominated by pastures, forests, mountains and deserts.
  - Settlement of low density (about 5-10000 persons)
  - Place where most people works in farms.
  - The availability of land at a relatively low cost.
- iii. Rural development: encompasses agriculture, education, infrastructure and health, capacity building for other than on farm employment, rural institutions and the need of vulnerable groups. Rural development aim at improving rural people's livelihood in an equitable and suitable manner, both socially and environmentally.

**Methodology:**

For this paper, qualitative method is used. Data are collected from secondary sources such as Survey of Educational Research, Books and Journals. Data are also collected from internet.

**Findings and Discussion:**

Present Status of Education in Rural Areas of Assam are shown below (Table-1 to Table-4).

**Table-1**  
**Children in Different Types of School**

Age group	Govt.	Pvt.	other	Not in School	Total
Age 6-14 All	77.1	14.5	3.5	5.0	100
Age 7-16 All	74.7	14.4	3.5	7.4	100
Age 7-10 All	80.2	13.7	3.3	2.8	100
Age 7-10 Boys	78.7	14.7	3.6	3.0	100
Age 7-10 Girls	81.8	12.6	3.0	2.6	100
Age 11-14 All	72.9	15.0	3.9	8.2	100
Age 11-14 Boys	71.3	15.6	4.1	9.0	100
Age 11-14 Girls	74.6	14.2	3.7	7.4	100
Age 15-16 All	63.8	15.1	2.8	18.3	100
Age 15-16 Boys	62.2	14.4	2.7	20.7	100
Age 15-16 Girls	65.8	15.9	2.9	15.4	100

Source: ASER 2010

**Note: Other includes children going to Madrassa and EGS.**

**Not in school: dropped out + never enrolled.**

**Table-2**  
**Pupil to Teacher Ratio Compared to RTE norms 2010**

School Enrolment	Number of Teacher							Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	>7	
1-60	44.4	23.1			32.5			100
61-90	68.1		15.9		15.9			100
91-120		84.0		8.0		8.0		100
>120			83.2		4.4	12.4		100

Source: ASER 2010

According to RTE norms state that a school with enrolment of 61-90 students should have 3 teachers.

**Table-3**  
**Teacher to Classroom Ratio Compared to RTE Norms 2010**

Number of Teachers	Teachers to Classroom compared to RTE norms 2010							
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	0.0	42.9			57.1			
2	19.0		26.2			54.8		
3		42.9		25.0		32.1		
4		75.0			18.8	6.3		
5			91.7			8.3	0.0	
6		100.0					0.0	0.0
>7				83.3				16.7

Source: Annual status of Educational Report

RTE norms indicate that there should be one classroom for every teacher. This table shows, for example that for school with 3 teachers, 25% of schools are at norm (i.e. have 3 classrooms), 42.9% are below the norm and 32.1% are above the norm.

**Table-4**  
**Facilities Compared to RTE norms 2010**

BUILDING	OFFICE/STORE/OFFICE CUM STORE	57.3
	PLAYGROUND	61.5
	BOUNDARY WALL	19.3
DRINKING WATER	NO. OF FACILITY FOR DRINKING WATER	23.2
	FACILITY BUT NO DRINKING WATER AVAILABLE	16.0
	DRINKING WATER AVAILABLE	60.9
TOILET	NO TOILET FACILITY	19.1
	FACILITY BUT TOILET NOT USABLE	46.0
	TOILET USABLE	34.9

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GIRLS TOILET	% SCHOOL WITH NO SEPARATE PROVISION FOR GIRLS TOILET	52.2
	TOILET LOCKED	18.5
	TOILET NOT USABLE	15.3
	TOILET NOT USABLE	14.0
TLM	TEACHING LEARNING MATERIALS STD. 2	71.4
	TEACHING LEARNING MATERIALS STD 4	67.1
LIBRARY	NO LIBRARY	79.2
	LIBRARY BUT NO BOOKS BEING USED BY CHILDRENS	10.3
	LIBRARY BOOKS USED BY CHILDRENS	10.5
MDM	KITCHEN SHED FOR COOKING MIDDAY MEAL	80.0
	MIDDAY MEAL SERVED IN SCHOOL ON THE DAY OF VISIT	66.6

Source: Annual status of Educational Report

**Educational Problems of the Rural Areas:**

- I. The quality of primary schools inputs (i.e. teachers, facilities, materials) also affects school enrolment, attendance and completion rates. A good school gains parents repeal and tends to attract and retain pupils. Teachers are a key 'input', but the rural teachers is generally poorly trained, supervised supported and remunerated. Many teachers must cope with ill equipped classrooms overcrowded with children of several ages. Teachers of urban origin are often reluctant to take up rural assignment and those who do accept are hard to retain in rural communities.
- II. Another serious problem in many rural communities is the frequent absence of teachers, whether due to ill health or to other employment to make ends meet.
- III. The quality of instruction depends as well on the availability of adequate and culturally relevant textbook, suitable writing materials for pupils, such as pencil and workbook, as well as teaching aids, such as maps and blackboards. After the SSA, the primary schools get the aids. But they hardly use these materials.
- IV. Regular attendance is a minimal requirement which unfortunately is often not meet in rural schools. Health problems, malnutrition, domestic demands on children's time seasonal demands for their labour in the fields all takes

their fall on attendance and therefore on learning achievement. Disrupted learning on lead to grade repetition which in turn leads to over age children filling primary school classes. Also repetition is often linked to drop out.

- V. Rural pupils who manage to complete the primary cycle, opportunities for further study are quite limited, much more so that in urban areas. Rural secondary schools are far fewer and even less well distributed than rural primary schools. Very few have hostels and other boarding arrangement, so unless families can find suitable accommodation for their child in proximately to a secondary school distance select out many potential pupils.
- VI. Perception of irrelevant can be exacerbated which the language used in schools differs from the language spoken in the community or in the home. This can also pose problems for recruited teachers who do not masters the official language of instruction in any case, young children obliged to learn in an unfamiliar language have an additional obstacle to overcome and are put at a great disadvantage in respect to other children learning in their mother tongue.
- VII. Formal government schoolteachers do not live in the village. If the teacher permanently resides in the village it will help students to guide the children academically as well as morally. Then poorer households are unable to afford private tuition for their children, a resident teacher would also able to tutor them after school hours, without charging extra.
- VIII. The content of the primary school curriculum: Most developing countries like India have unitary, centrally determined curriculum, which is generally designed for pupils familiar with an urban environment and may contain elements that conflict with local customs and beliefs. This urban bias complicates the task of rural teachers and makes learning that much more difficult for rural children.

**Measures to Remove the Educational Problems in Rural Areas:**

1. Education and training policies for rural areas should also be seen as citizenship building mechanisms which reinforce the ability of rural poor to access and analyse information, to voice their opinions in public debates and possibly to establish strategic alliances with other members of the Community, including in urban areas. The emerging institutional and



Political contexts, particularly increasing democracy and decentralization, should eventually contribute to reducing the urban bias.

2. The training policy for rural areas needs to be refocused to take into account and benefit from the wider reform of technical and vocational education and training. In particular, principles like linking education and work experience need to be applied in the rural context beyond the farm. Therefore, rural vocational schools need to engage more in various forms of collaboration with employers to provide company-based training and job placement services to students and also to offer continuing education and other types of support to enterprises. However, rural zone areas are not homogeneous. There is a need to treat poverty-stricken and wealthy rural areas differently. In the former, skill development strategies should aim at developing the capacities of rural poor to gradually access better informal sector jobs. In the latter training provision should be diversified, as well as including the encouragement of private providers to take an interest and a part, in order to match a developing rural labour market.
3. Another area where *increasing intervention is required* concerns community-based responses, linking training provision to basic needs and to local development initiatives. Although there is wide recognition of the merits of such an approach actual examples are still relatively rare.
4. Funding is a major obstacle to skill provision; it is even more so the case in rural areas, which often are poverty-stricken areas. The concept of funding partnerships, as illustrated in the set up of training funds, seems a promising way to support skill development in rural areas within an integrated framework, taking into account functional linkages between rural and urban economies and labour markets. But more experimentation is needed to implement innovative funding schemes for financing, in a sustainable way, access to training for the poor. Recent initiatives which are undertaken to support training for farmers point out new directions that deserve further exploration.
5. Honest and efficient implementation of various rural welfare and employment generation schemes such as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Pradhan Mantri Gram Sarak Yojna (PMGSY). National Rural Employment Generation Programme (NREGP).
6. Agriculture can no longer provide sustainable livelihood for our rural population. Local skills based self employment in college industries should

be encouraged through micro finance with high economic growth and proliferation of service industries (Telecom, Retail, Finance, Security and other support services), our cities are starved of trained man power in skilled and semi skilled categories while our rural youth is unemployed and frustrated, we need to fill this demand supply gap.

7. The rural and remote educational framework for action recognises that the characteristics of rural and remote communities are diverse and that the learning context and needs of students in these communities are varied. So school will work actively with their local community to identify issues of mutual concern and generate innovate responses that build on community capacity.

**Conclusion:**

In this age of globalisation where things are changing rapidly, taking care of child right at every stage has taken a back seat. Poverty can force children out of school, into work and drive them from home on to the street. The presence of a large number of street children who receive no protection either from the family or the state, makes the situation more complex. Government has given many provision and programme to protect the right of children however issues are at large.

We need to provide non agricultural jobs in rural areas with local skills based self employment, vocational training to education and semi educated rural youth in collaboration with industry with reasonable assurances of job opportunity. Eradicating school drop out or out of school children requires an in depth researches and linking research on how the shift in agriculture sector, rural poverty, hunger, out of school and child labour issues are interconnected.

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