



A STUDY ON STATUS OF SCHEDULED CASTE AND SCHEDULED TRIBE FEMALE STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN DIBRUGARH UNIVERSITY, ASSAM

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Abstract

Assam is a thickly populated state in the North-Eastern India. The seven upper Assam districts have nearly in an average of 5.1% of Scheduled Caste and 16.13% Scheduled Tribe populations. Most of the peoples live in the rural areas and the female literacy rates of these populations are lower than the male literacy. Population ratio wise Scheduled Tribes participation is lower, but the Scheduled tribes females are nearly equally enrolled in the post graduate studies with the males, whereas the females of Scheduled Castes, the Rest of the social groups and of the total female students have very high percentage of enrolment in comparison to the male counterpart.

Keywords: Dibrugarh University, Higher Education, Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe.

1.0 Introduction

Assam is a thickly populated state in the North-Eastern India and ranks 14th by population in the country.¹ Each of the seven upper Assam districts has nearly in an average of 5.1% of Scheduled Caste and 16.13% Scheduled Tribe populations. Most of the peoples live in the rural areas. The female literacy rates of these Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes populations are lower than the male literacy, which is clear from the average gap in male–female literacy rates of 13.41 % for Scheduled castes and 14.24% for scheduled Tribes.² The education is the prime weapon for the growth and development of a society or a nation. But there is only one state Public affiliating University in Dibrugarh that caters the need of educating the local youths. That is why a survey study was conducted to unfurl the fact that how many of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe females are accessing the higher education at the post graduate level in various departments of Dibrugarh University. There may be various reasons of lower rate of literacy amongst the SC and ST females; and lack of higher educational institutes in the region may be one of these reasons. The institutions have limitation; so, intake capacity of the institute by other means should be increased to provide admission to the eligible students to access higher education of their wish. A distance online mode of education may solve the problem faced by the deprived students. The online mode of education has been doing well at the time of Covid-19 pandemic situation. The intake capacity in the higher education is to be increased to fulfill the aim of the NEP 2020.

2.0 Background of the Study

The present study was confined to the teaching departments of Dibrugarh University to analyse the status of the Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) female students in Higher Education. The study was performed to highlight the enrolment pattern, prevailing gender disparity in enrolment of PG 1st Semester, in the academic year 2017-18 in Dibrugarh University. The upper Assam districts are mostly inhabited by the ethnic peoples of whom the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are also the parts. The territorial jurisdiction of Dibrugarh University covers seven districts of Upper Assam.³

The SC and ST Populations are given constitutional safeguards in acquiring education or in respect of finding a job. But the census data reveals after seven decades of Independence that the SC and ST peoples are lagging behind the rest of the populations in terms of accessing higher education. So a survey study was performed in Dibrugarh University teaching departments to find out enrolment pattern and procedure in selection of students in post graduate studies which may affect the SC and ST female students in their studies. The study also tries to find out the performance status of these SC and ST female students.

3.0 Literature Review

Jain, P., Agarwal, R., Shrivastava, A., (2016)⁴ stated that the gender inequality existed in the field of education in India and that too was found in the classrooms and elimination of the discrimination would strengthen the power of women. Chaudhary, R., (2018)⁵ has discussed on the factors causing gender inequality and stressed on neutrality of the issue so that girls would be able to break down the culturally determined pattern of employment and can speak in an equally shared society. Lal, K., & Arora, V.P.S., (2016)⁶ has examined the gender gap in the enrolment in higher education and mentioned that only a handful of literate women have accessed special education to have economic independence.

4.0 Objectives

4.1 To study the level of participation of the women of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Higher education in the teaching departments of Dibrugarh University.



4.2 To study if gender disparity exists in enrolment of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Higher education in the teaching departments of Dibrugarh University.

5.0 Research questions

5.01 Is there proportionate participation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Higher education in the teaching departments of Dibrugarh University?

5.02 Is there any gender disparity in enrolment of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Higher education in the teaching departments of Dibrugarh University?

6.0 Population, Sample and Methodology

The population of the study includes all the female students of Post Graduate 1st semester, in the academic year 2017-18 in the Teaching Departments of Dibrugarh University. Moreover, the Heads of the Teaching Departments are also included in the population. The study was conducted in fifty percent of the teaching departments, which were selected by simple random sampling method-particularly by lottery method of sampling. A descriptive survey method was used in the present study to fulfil the specific research objectives. A self-constructed Questionnaire for the teaching departments and an information schedule for the Joint Registrar (Academic) of Dibrugarh University were administered to collect data regarding enrolment pattern of SC/ST female students and other academic issues. Several secondary sources e.g., official records, books and research articles; Government Survey Reports, Census Reports, notifications, Annual Reports of Dibrugarh University are also consulted for data collection.

7.0 Collection, Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The collected data are expressed in percentage for convenience of reproducing. The secondary numerical data obtained from the reports of the All-India survey of Higher Education, Government of India are also converted to percentage form for convenience in comparison. The results of the study presented with the help of appropriate tables and along with their interpretations. The data are self-processed by Microsoft Office Excel.

8.0 Findings

8.1 Findings on Enrolment

There was a total enrolment of 31.35% male and 68.65% female students in the sample teaching departments in Dibrugarh University of Assam in the academic year 2017-18. The enrolment rates of Scheduled Caste students were very low with only 1.89% male and 6.22% female students. The enrolment rates of Scheduled Tribe student's were also lower with 8.11% male and 7.84% females respectively in comparison to the Rest of the social category students, that shared 21.35% male and 54.59% female of the total enrolment. The findings are shown in Table-1.

Social categories	SC		ST		Rest of social groups		Total students		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M+F
Total Enrolment	7	23	30	29	79	202	116	254	370
% Enrolment	1.89	6.22	8.11	7.84	21.35	54.59	31.35	68.65	100

According to the 2011 Census data, the female population of different social categories in the seven upper Assam districts was 202715 (5.38%) for SC, 522725 (13.88%) for ST and 3040518 (80.74%) for rest of the people out of total 3765958 females. The ratio of the percent distribution of the female population was for SC: ST: Rest of the people was 1: 2.58: 15.01. A proportionate sharing of seat in enrolment by the females of different categories will indicate equal participation. The seat sharing of female students of different social categories in the PG enrolment was found to be in the ratio of 1: 1.26: 8.78 for SC: ST: Rest of the social groups. The result indicated 2.07 and 1.71 times more seat shared by the SC female than the ST and Rest of the females respectively. The ST females shared lesser seat by 1/2.05th and 1/1.2th parts of the SC and Rest of the female students respectively. The result clearly indicated that equal sharing was not found; the ST females were lagging behind to reach their proportionate participation according to their average population ratio in the respective districts. The ratio of seat share by the total students including male and female of different social categories of SC: ST: Rest of the social groups was 1: 1.97: 9.36; where the population ratio of the different categories was 1: 2.58: 15.01. The result revealed a higher seat share by SC students than the ST and Rest of the social categories in PG studies of Dibrugarh University in the academic year 2017-18.



8.2 Comparative Analysis of SC & ST Enrolment of the Teaching Departments with All India Enrolment Rate as reported by AISHE of MHRD, Govt. of India.

The Table-2 shows the findings of the comparative analysis of All India enrolment rate from 2011-12 to 2017-18 on Higher education to the enrolment rate of Dibrugarh University Teaching Departments for the academic year 2017-18.

Social category	Enrolment in percentage							
	All India							D. U
	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2017-18
SC Male	6.68	5.97	6.14	5.86	6.16	6.20	6.64	1.89
SC female	5.12	4.9	4.86	5.03	5.25	5.55	6.11	6.22
ST Male	1.7	1.56	1.69	1.84	1.9	1.79	2.02	8.11
ST female	1.23	1.11	1.15	1.34	1.52	1.61	1.8	7.86

There was a gradual increase in national enrolment rate in both Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe women categories from the academic year 2011-12 to 2017-18 according to the All-India Survey on Higher Education Report.⁷ The Teaching Departments of Dibrugarh University data showed a higher rate of enrolment for Scheduled Caste women's, which was 6.22% against 6.11% of all India women enrolment rate; whereas the male enrolment was lower. The enrolment rates of ST females as well as for male were exceptionally higher than all India enrolment rate for the academic year, 2017-18, which was 7.84% against 1.8% of national enrolment for females and 8.11% against 2.02% of national male enrolment.

8.3 Intra-group enrolment in the Teaching Departments

The Table-3 shows the Intra-group percent enrolment of Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST) with Rest of the social groups to total in the Teaching Departments of Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh.

Social Category	SC		ST		Rest of groups		Total students		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M+F
Gender									
Total	7	23	30	29	79	202	116	254	370
Group %	23.33	76.67	50.85	49.15	28.11	71.89	31.35	68.65	100
GPI		3.29		0.97		2.56		2.19	-
AGPI		1.70		0.97		1.61		1.54	

The Intra-group enrolment in the Teaching Departments of Dibrugarh University showed a higher enrolment by the SC females with 76.67% to 23.33% male and a nearly equal enrolment rate of the ST females with 49.15% to 50.85% of the ST male enrolment. The findings related to group enrolment in the Post Graduate studies in the Teaching Departments of Dibrugarh University are shown in Table-3.

8.4 Analysis on Objective-2

To study the gender disparity in SC and ST students in Higher level of education with reference to the Teaching Departments of Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh.

The Table-3 shows the Gender Parity Index (GPI) as well as the Adjusted Gender Parity Index (AGPI) of Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST) with Rest of the social groups and to Total students in the Teaching Departments of Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh. The Adjusted Gender Parity Indexes (AGPI) for SC, ST, Rest of the social categories and Total populations were found to be in the order 1.70, 0.97, 1.61 and 1.54 respectively. The gender equality or gender parity is indicated by the Gender Parity Index (GPI) in the range of 0.97 to 1.03. The lower GPI than 0.97 favours male enrolment and higher GPI than 1.03 favours female enrolment. But the unadjusted Gender Parity Indexes (GPI) of the Teaching Departments of Dibrugarh University are higher than 1.00, therefore adjusted Gender Parity Indexes (AGPI) were calculated according to UNESCO-2003.⁸ The adjusted gender parity indexes (AGPI) for SC, ST, Rest of the social categories and Total populations are in the order 1.70, 0.97, 1.61 and 1.54 respectively. These AGPI values are higher than 1.03 for SC, Rest of the social categories and Total populations, which indicate higher enrolment of female students in all these social categories. The AGPI is equal to 0.97, the lower limit for the gender parity for ST category indicating gender parity or equality within the Scheduled Tribe community in the Teaching Departments of Dibrugarh University. The



index values indicated no gender inequalities amongst the SC and ST student; instead, females have equal participation in higher education with the males.

9.0 Conclusion

The study on the enrolment of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes female students of teaching departments of Dibrugarh University, Assam, revealed females are more inclined to the post graduate studies than the male students in the upper Assam districts. Population ratio wise Scheduled Tribes participation is lower, but the Scheduled tribes females are nearly equally enrolled in the post graduate studies with the males, whereas the females of Scheduled Castes, the Rest of the social groups and of the total female students have very high percentage of enrolment in comparison to the male counterpart. This might be an effect of present trend that the male students are searching for job-oriented education rather than general higher education. The study has shown that no gender variation or discrimination against women exists in the studied University or indirectly the particular districts under jurisdiction of Dibrugarh University. So, it can be predicted, may be partially that women education will no longer going to be a major factor hindering sustainable future rural development in the seven upper Assam districts.

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