



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

**Teacher Education in Assam: An Overview****Bimal Charan Swain<sup>1</sup> and Sewali Borah<sup>2</sup>**<sup>1</sup> Radhanath IASE, Cuttack (Odisha)<sup>2</sup> College of Education, Nagaon (Assam)Email: <sup>1</sup>bimalswain@yahoo.com, <sup>2</sup>sewaliborah10@gmail.comReceived: 21<sup>st</sup> Oct. 2015, Revised: 19<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2015, Accepted: 10<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2015**ABSTRACT**

Modern history of teacher education in Assam began during British rule. During the last century, there was not a single teacher education institution in Assam, though the first Normal School (elementary teacher education institution) was set up at Serampore (Bengal) by Carry, Marshman and Ward in 1793. In the Post-independence period, with the passing of the Second Primary Education Act in 1947, Government of Assam started Guru Training Centres for education of school teachers in most of the plain sub-divisions of the state. The development of secondary teacher education in Assam is of recent origin. In the British period, secondary school teachers were deputed for B.T. and L.T. to the Dacca Training College under Dacca University. At present there are 18 DIETs and 61 B.Ed. colleges in Assam. Teacher education institutions in Assam are facing many problems due to lack of adequate infrastructural facilities, teaching-learning materials, laboratory equipments and qualified staff. In this paper suggestions have been given for quantitative improvement of teacher education in Assam.

**Key words:** Teacher education, Modern history, Assam

**INTRODUCTION**

The state Assam is the biggest state of north-east India. The state has diversified cultures comprising a multi- ethnic society. Unlike other parts of India, educational expansion in the context of teacher education could not be started earlier in Assam.

**Development of Elementary and Secondary Teacher Education in Assam during British Period:**

The modern history of teacher education in Assam began during British rule. During the last century, there was not a single teacher education institution in Assam, though the first Normal School (elementary teacher education institution) was set up at Serampore (Bengal) by Carry, Marshman and Ward in 1793. In the history of teacher education, the recommendations of Wood's Despatch (1854) and Hunter Commission (1882) had made a revolutionary impact in India. Hunter Commission had recommended for the establishment of more Normal Schools in India. Along with it a special system which also sprung up in Bengal and Assam in 1885-86 was that of the "Guru System". According to this system, the headmasters of M.V. (Middle Vernacular) schools, who themselves had undergone the prescribed course of training in Normal Schools, tried to impart instruction to gurus in neighbouring Pathshalas. Subsequently a few guru training schools were established in Assam. In 1884, the provisional government accepted the principle of establishing one Normal School in each district. But by 1888-89, only six Normal schools were established one each in districts of Kamrup, Sivsagar, Lakhimpur, Khasi and Jayantia Hills and two in Darrang. In 1904, Government of India had adopted teacher education as a regular policy; accordingly Government of Assam had also revised its policies in the matter of maintaining only a small number of training schools. In 1905, the Government established 2 Normal schools, one each at Jorhat and Silchar, for the purpose of providing teacher education to MV (Middle Vernacular) and ME (Middle English) school teachers. Special classes were also attached to these schools for education of village school masters. By 1920, there were total 11 Normal Schools, 7 Government aided and 2 other

Government aided women's Normal schools. But the number decreased to 7 in 1931 due to financial difficulties. The duration of these in-service Normal schools course was for the period of 3 years and teachers were appointed after completion of the education in Normal Schools.

The development of secondary teacher education in Assam is of recent origin. In the British period, for education of secondary school teachers, teachers were deputed for B.T. and L.T. to the Dacca Training College under the Dacca University. This arrangement although inadequate, continued till 1936.

### **Development of Elementary and Secondary Teacher Education in Assam after Independence:**

In the post-independent period in Assam, with the passing of the Second Primary Education Act in 1947, Government of Assam started Guru Training Centers for education of primary school teachers in most of the plains sub divisions of the state. In 1951-52, the number of training institutions rose to 20 with accommodation for training of approximately 1000 candidates annually. As per the Basic Education Act of 1954, a number of Basic Training Centers were established throughout the state to train teachers teaching in primary schools. Pre-service education along with in-service education for Middle School teachers was introduced in the state in the already established Normal Schools. But it was discontinued in 1970's because of problem related to jobs for such trained teachers. A number of Basic Training Centres were also started to train teachers for the Junior Basic schools of the state, mostly in the rural areas when the Government of Assam decided to convert the traditional elementary schools into the basic pattern through the Assam Basic Education Act of 1954. A Post Graduate Basic Training College was also started at Titabar, near Jorhat for the education of teachers for the senior Basic school and sub Inspectors of school. Prior to the establishment of this Basic Training Centre, some teachers were deputed to Wardha to receive education on the Basic pattern. In 1967-68, there were 27 Basic Training Centres and 10 non- Basic Training Schools and pre-primary training centres for the education of primary school teachers.

NPE (1986) envisaged for setting up of DIETs with a view to improve quality of elementary education. In pursuance of the policy, DIETs were started in 1988-89 in Assam. At present the total number of DIETs in Assam is 18 in eighteen districts. Upon realization of the need for providing pre-service teacher education and also to clear the huge backlog of untrained teachers, Government of Assam re-introduced the pre-service teacher education for elementary level school teachers of 2 years duration in the year 2000 in 15 DIETs. However, this course discontinued from 2001 onwards.

After independence, for education of secondary level teachers, Gauhati University as well as Government of Assam established B.T. colleges under its direct management. The first post graduate training college was established at Jorhat in the year 1957 by Government of Assam. The college is affiliated to the University of Dibrugarh. A training college in the Cachar district was a long felt need of the people of Cachar. Some local people, therefore, started a training college in 1960 in a local school. Now, it is affiliated to Assam University, Silchar.

In Assam, first private B.T. College i.e. Banikanta B.T. College was established in Guwahati in 1966. The college is affiliated to the Gauhati University. The college was taken over by the Government of Assam on 1st April 1983. Now it is upgraded as Institute of Advanced Study in Education (IASE). The Second University of Assam was set up in 1965 at Dibrugarh and the B.T. course was offered by the university under the Education Department. In the year 1968, the Teachers' Training College, Nagaon which is named as Sikshan Mahavidyalaya, was started by some local people. It is affiliated to the Gauhati University. "Meanwhile, the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) as a non-statutory body took several steps for quality improvement in teacher education. It began to grant recognition to the teacher education institutions on the basis of certain norms and standards. Hence, the number of B.Ed. colleges started declining in Assam, i.e. from 65

to 51 (NCTE, 2012). Of these colleges, only 10 are run by the Government of Assam under CTE scheme sponsored by MHRD, Department of Education" (Sultana, 2013). Now there are 61 B.Ed. colleges in Assam. Out of 61 B.Ed. colleges 10 are Government and 51 are private (NCTE, 2015).

## PRESENT TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN ASSAM

### Normal Schools:

In 1826, at the time of extension of British rule in Assam there existed an indigenous system of education. In order to develop the competencies of teachers, the Government of Assam opened 16 teacher education courses attached to MV (Middle Vernacular) and ME (Middle English) schools. In 1905, for the first time two Normal schools were established at Jorhat and Silchar to impart teacher education for MV and ME school teachers. By 1920, the number of Normal schools was raised to 7. The nature of programme of these teacher education institutions included pre-service and in-service programmes for the elementary school teachers. In the beginning duration of this course was for one year with total intake capacity of 350. For some times JBT (Junior Bachelor Training) course of 6 months duration was running in Normal Schools. At present the duration of the in-service Normal Schools course is for the period of 2 years.

### Basic Training Centres (BTCs):

In Assam, Basic Training Centers were established in a phased manner from 1948. Initially 6 BTCs were established by the Government of Assam. In 1962, 19 more BTCs were taken over by the Government. Although this course was pre-service in nature, teachers were deputed for such teacher education courses after their appointment in different schools. But since 2000, two year pre-service education courses have been introduced for the development of primary school teachers in the near future. The total intake capacity of BTC is 4500.

### District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs):

At present there are 18 DIETs in Assam which provide- (a) District Primary Teacher Education (in-service) for 2 years duration with intake capacity of 1500, and (b) Bachelor of Elementary Level Education (B. EL. Ed.) for duration of 2 years (pre-service and in-service) with intake capacity of 600. The nature of this teacher education programme is pre-service and in-service teacher education for the elementary stage.

### Institutes of Advance Study in Education (IASEs):

There is only one IASE in Assam named Banikanta B.T. College with intake capacity of 100.

### College of Education:

There are 61 B.Ed. colleges in the state which provide B.Ed. course with intake capacity of 5,170. Graduate teachers are deputed to selected B.Ed. Colleges/ CTEs for in-service education. From the session 2015-16, two year B.Ed. courses have been started in all secondary teacher education institutions of the state.

### State Institute of Science Education (SISE):

This institute provides in-service short term course on subjects such as Science, Mathematics and Environmental Science for teachers of Primary, Middle, and Secondary schools.

### State Institute of Education (SIE):

This institute provides in-service short term courses on school subjects and teaching methodology for teachers of primary, middle and secondary schools.

**English Language Teaching Institute (ELTI):**

This institute provides (in-service) short term courses on English language for teachers of middle, secondary and higher secondary stage.

**Secondary Education Board of Assam (SEBA):**

This Board provides short term training in school subjects for middle and secondary level (in-service) teachers.

**State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT):**

The SCERT as a part of their extension service activity provides teacher education to various organizations and institutions for the primary and upper primary school teachers on many academic issues related to approach, philosophy and pedagogy.

**Dibrugarh University, Gauhati University, Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University (DU, GU, and KKHSOU):**

Dibrugarh University and Gauhati University conduct regular B.Ed. and M.Ed. course (pre-service) for secondary teachers. Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University conducts D.El.Ed. two years pre-service diploma course for elementary school teachers.

**FALLING STANDARD OF TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN ASSAM:**

Teacher education institutions of Assam at present are facing many problems due to lack of adequate infrastructural facilities, Teaching Learning Materials, laboratory equipments and qualified staff. They are being run without minimum facility i.e. lack of experimental school, library, hostel facilities and other equipments. The institutions do not have adequate number of computers with internet facilities. Most of the teacher education institutions do not have adequate physical facilities. Most of the institutions even do not have provision for each teacher for safe keeping of text books, reference books etc. and students copy books (Kalita, 2004).

There is mismatch between theory and practical courses in the curriculum of elementary and secondary level teacher education. Besides faulty methods of teaching, poor academic background of student teachers and insufficient financial grants are the major problems being faced by the teacher education institutions of Assam. Professional development programmes for the teachers are largely inadequate in Assam. Most of the secondary teacher education institutions do not follow systematic procedure for selection of the candidates. In the name of practical activities, only formalities are observed in most of the teacher education institutions of Assam. Research in education has been considerably neglected area in Assam. There has been an enormous growth in the number of private secondary teacher education institutions in recent years. Most of the secondary level teacher education institutions are still being run by the fee collected from student-teachers. The private secondary teacher education institutions are completely free from Government control. This lead to create different problems such as a high fee structure, capitation fee, exploitation of teachers and imparting education through unqualified teacher educators to save their salaries for fulfilling the commercial benefit.

The mid-term review of teacher education scheme in the state done by Teacher Education Resource Group in the NCTE (June, 2007) indentified some shortcomings which are listed below

1. The physical infrastructure of DIETs and CTEs is reasonably good but lacks maintenance.
2. Majority of faculty members in the CTEs do not possess requisite qualification as per NCTE norms.
3. There is no scope for professional growth of faculty members in DIETs/CTEs/SCERTs.
4. There is no difference in the functioning of the CTEs and ordinary B.Ed. Colleges. The faculty members of the CTEs do not know much about the role and functions of the institutions.

5. Faculty of the SCERT is not organized in terms of academic departments.
6. EDUSAT facilities have not been extended to the SCERT.
7. There is hardly any promotional avenue for teacher education in the entire cadre. This creates a feeling of frustration among the faculty members at all levels.
8. The ICT component is conspicuously absent in teacher education institutions.
9. There is no provision for induction level education for the DIETs, CTEs and SCERT.

#### RELATED STUDIES

In a study Bordoloi (1990) found that the TTIs in Assam suffered from lack of adequate physical and educational facility. Bora (1997) found that the practice teaching schools attached to the teacher education institutions were not well equipped with Teaching-Learning Materials. Kalita (2004), reported there was no provision for each teacher for safe keeping of text-books, reference books etc. Ahmed (2006), reported that the teacher education colleges in Assam having infrastructure facilities and learning resources were found with better performance than the teacher education colleges having below standard facilities in infrastructure and learning resources. Most of the teacher education colleges were having a few number of under qualified teacher educators working temporarily against the permanent vacancies. Kalita and Upadhyaya (2013) found that the B.Ed. course in Assam was not effective in changing the attitude of student teachers. In the study of Baruah (2014) it was observed that sessional works and practice teaching were held in all the institutions as part of the curricular transaction while other practical works were not practiced in all the teacher education institutions of Assam. The Principals of the private B.Ed. colleges were not qualified as per NCTE norm and were not getting their salaries as per UGC/ Government scale. Only a consolidated amount was given to them.

#### SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions may be given for quality maintenance in teacher education institutions of Assam.

1. All the teacher education institutions need to have two store rooms, psychological laboratory, ICT laboratory, digital classroom, staff quarters, canteen, boys' and girls' common room with attached washroom, equipments for physical education and cultural activities, generator facility etc.
2. Curriculum of Normal Schools and BTCs is different from the curriculum of DIETs. It is suggested that steps may be taken by the SCERT of Assam to maintain uniformity in curriculum of all types of elementary teacher education institutions (Normal Schools, BTCs and DIETs).
3. Co-curricular activities may be properly placed in time table and teacher educators may take keen interest to organize such activities involving the student teachers.
4. Adequate games and sports materials may be available in both elementary and secondary teacher education institutions for proper organization of games and sports.
5. Along with lecture method other innovative methods may be used by teacher educators to provide instruction. Use of ICT such as internet, LCD projector, videos, computer and OHP may be given importance to make the teaching-learning process effective. Demonstration classes and remedial teaching may be organized by teacher educators.
6. It is suggested that entrance test may be conducted by the SCERT of Assam and Gauhati University to admit the student teachers to D.El.Ed. and B.Ed. courses.
7. In order to evaluate co-scholastic area of student teachers, institutions need to follow a systematic evaluation procedure. Institutions may also take steps to evaluate school based activities of student teachers.
8. The Principals and teacher educators may be appointed in the teacher education institutions as per NCTE norms. Adequate salary may be paid to the teacher educators of private secondary teacher education institutions.

9. Teacher educators need to participate in different professional development activities such as in-service education programme, seminars, workshops, conferences, orientation courses, refresher courses, ICT programme etc. in regular intervals.
10. Teacher educators may be encouraged to engage themselves in research activities and publish papers in journals and write books in concerned subjects.
11. Active community participation is necessary for maintaining quality of teacher education institutions. It is suggested that student teachers need to involve themselves in different community development activities such as plantation programme, organization of blood donation camp, environmental awareness programme, NSS, flood relief camp, health check-up camp etc.
12. There is need to develop linkages of teacher education institutions with schools and community.
13. Teacher education institutions may organize in-service education programmes in regular intervals for school teachers on preparation of lesson plan, preparation of teaching aids, joyful learning, teaching of English, teaching of Hindi, teaching of Mathematics, teaching of Science, teaching through dramatization, teaching through story telling method etc.
14. Teacher education institutions may take steps to publish annual magazine, institutional calendar and journals on education.
15. Adequate funds may be provided by the state Government to the teacher education institutions to organize different programmes successfully.
16. Adequate staff may be appointed and books and sitting facilities may be available in the library. There is need of allocation of adequate funds to make library computerized.
17. Initiative may be taken for accreditation of teacher education institutions by NAAC.

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