

Chapter-1

INTRODUCTION

1.1: Introduction:

Education has a prominent role to play in the development of modern society. In India, since adopting the liberal economy the education sector has also seen unprecedented growth with large funds infused from the private sector. This process has led to the growth of educational growth and stratification into government and private sectors. With the infusion of funds into the private sector, the improvement in infrastructure and quality of education has led to a competitive atmosphere among the educational institutions for larger visibility. This has been the case in the urban centers in India.

In rural areas usually we see a dismal picture of government schools functioning under administrative and financial shortcomings. Lacunas in infrastructure and pathetic student teacher ratio etc. have been the common feature in India in general and Assam in particular. Henceforth, education is very heterogeneous institution, where we can witness stratification within it, a hierarchy which confirms different qualities of education in the guise of different elite or private schools to good government schools or to poor vernacular medium government schools. Even within each of these categories in the stratification we can witness further hierarchies. Stratified education given birth to diverse kind of education or to produce diverse kind of human resource. Thus, school which is perceived as an agent of bringing positive social change, in reality reinforce the inequalities of the society. Consequently, those who are possessing and controlling resources are also controlling the best education.

Education is crucial in human capital formation. The quality of human resources is reflected in the quality of education of a country. Skilled manpower is the most pertinent prerequisite of sustainable economic development which is raised through productivity

and efficiency of individuals that is only realizable through good education (Z. Nasir and H. Nazli 2010). The diversity of educational institutes reflects the structural inequalities in the social system. All the schools are not accessible to everyone and the education system brings about a division between the elite and the masses and it serves to perpetuate the existing inequalities. Therefore despite all these achievements in India, the dream of an egalitarian society continues to be far from realization. We have still to go a long way to realize the path of equalization of educational opportunity, the universalization of primary education, women empowerment through education, improvement of the cultural environment of the marginalized and oppressed population, solution of the unemployment problem, etc. Widespread inequality of educational opportunity remains despite the introduction of free and compulsory state education including India. Many children coming from working-class and poor families face several obstacles and disadvantages to success in education, this means that they do not achieve as well as their ability should allow them to. The chances of upward mobility are thus restricted. Those who hold positions of wealth and power can make sure their children have the best available education, and this often leads them to prestigious and lucrative jobs. Hence it is to be said that education is not a homogeneous kind of institution. There is stratification within education. In the education system, a hierarchy and stratification exist which is reflected in the diverse qualities of education which is available in the market today like different elite or private schools to poor vernacular medium government schools. Though some elite schools are most similar, there is also some stratification among those schools. Stratified education has given birth to diverse kinds of education or to produce diverse kinds of human resources. So, education is no more equal or no longer equal. Those who are having resources are getting the best education. Therefore, in reality, education is totally, unequally provided. Hence education which is supposed to bring positive social change is responsible for creating an unequal society.

As education is a subject enlisted in the concurrent list of the constitution both the state and central government put their effort into the development of education. This has led to

the existence of multilayered educational institutions that provide diverse kinds of education. The vernacular medium government schools mostly are alleged of providing poor quality education due to lack of funds, trained teachers, infrastructure, outdated curriculum, etc. The private schools on their part have been confined to urban areas. Students from economically well-to-do families prefer to enroll in these institutions where the fee structure is comparatively much higher than the other categories of schools, which confirms the existence of most overall good infrastructure in these schools.

1.2: Statement of the Problem:

Guwahati being one of the fastest-growing cities in the country has become the educational hub of the state as well as for the North-Eastern region. In Kamrup metro district there are 435 high schools and higher secondary schools, out of 435 schools 66 are higher secondary schools out of which 29 are private schools and 26 are government vernacular medium schools, and 11 central government higher secondary schools. *(Source: RMSA, UDISE REPORT 2016-17, from Guwahati city)*

In Guwahati, the private institutions that are functioning are well equipped with all the modern amenities with smart classroom environments. On the other hand, many government institutions mostly depend on the traditional methods of teaching that lack modern tools of education. As a result, guardians prefer to opt for private institutions while considering the future of their children. Students from the other districts of the state also migrate and enroll themselves in these institutions for pursuing a better career. In the last two decades, we have seen such a general pattern of migration of students from the government to private schools. Only students from the family who couldn't afford to bear the expenditure and higher fees have restricted themselves to the government institutions without having other suitable options. Consequently, they are deprived of quality education in comparison to private schools' students.

These schools differ in infrastructure as classrooms (smart classroom), labs, toilets, and urinal facilities, security, playground, library, auditorium, qualification of the teacher, teacher-student ratio, and size of the class. We can also observe the diversity of the working environment and facilities and provided to the teachers in these institutions as salary, working hours, holidays, incentives, parent-teacher association, autonomy to work. Students of diverse socio-economic and intellectual background can also be found in particular categories of school. This is why the government schools are generally preferred by students of lower socio-economic and intellectual background as they (government schools) generally practices either no criteria for the selection of students or very liberal mechanism to select students. Whereas the private schools' employers' different layers of selection as, parent qualification and interview, students entrance test and students' interview, which helps them to select the best students who can afford the high fees asked by these institutions.

The existence of the diverse category of school can also be established by the annual result (2016-18) of the three government and three private schools selected for the present study in Guwahati city.

Table: 1.1: Relation of the result of the students in Higher Secondary level (Class XII) in the last 3 years with the category of school

Category of schools	Name of the schools	Total candidate appeared	1 st division			2 nd division			3 rd division			Fail
			2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	
Private Schools	Gurukul Grammar Senior Secondary School	(2016)373 (2017)349 (2018)406	373	349	406	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	0
	Srimanta shankar Academy	(2016)243 (2017)254 (2018)253	234	249	242	9	5	11	Nil	Nil	Nil	0
	Don Bosco school	(2016)433 (2017)----- (2018)241	431	-----	238	02	-----	03	Nil	Nil	Nil	0
Government Schools	Rajdhar Borah H.S school	(2016)233 (2017)242 (2018)199	03	06	05	31	26	32	186	167	114	3+43+48 (yearly)
	Sonaram H.S School	2016)233 (2017)112 (2018)103	05	05	03	29	15	15	98	64	62	23+28+18 (yearly)
	Arya Vidyapith H.S School	2016)214 (2017)226 (2018)235	24	25	20	87	75	76	76	82	101	44+38+27 (yearly)

Source: Primary data collected from the respective schools

The above table clearly shows that more than 90percent of the students in private schools have scored 1st division whereas a huge majority of the government school students could just pass their exams in the third division and the significant number of them also failed in their respective examinations.

In such a scenario, it will be pertinent to study this process of social stratification and mobility of students in the context of these various categories of schools. It may bring into focus the quality of education that we get and the success or failure of the education system in fulfilling the expectations of the masses in a global era.

Hence the present study attempts to bring out the major structural as well as the functional differences between the privatized and the public educational sectors which provide the

nation with a diverse quality of the human resource. The study is also aimed to find out the problems at different levels confronted by the different categories of schools in the area. Moreover, the study is also important as it will be carried out to find out where the students produced from these diverse qualities of institutions are absorbed?