

Best Practice: 2**Title: Accessible, Affordable and Inclusive Higher Education in Sixth Scheduled Area****Objectives:**

1. Bodoland University set up by an act of the Legislative Assembly of Assam in 2009 is the outcome of Bodoland Accord signed between the Government of India (GoI), Government of Assam (GoA) and Bodoland Movement with the objective of accessible, affordable and inclusive higher education in Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) included in the Sixth Scheduled Area of Indian Constitution.
2. The objective of the university is to make higher education accessible to the remote far flung areas and Indo-Bhutan border inhabited by Adivasis, Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes, Other Backward Classes, Tea Garden Workers by granting affiliation to colleges located in such areas.

Context

It is well established fact that education is prerequisite for development and peace particularly in conflict zones and underdeveloped of the Bodoland Territorial Region. However, BTR in the sixth scheduled area of the Indian constitution did not have the fortune of having a university till 2009. Quality higher education is instrumental in bringing back to mainstream life by way of enhancing knowledge, skill and aptitude to seek jobs and inculcate righteous thoughts and feelings for the society.

Practice

The policy of 80% reservation in admission to postgraduate courses to students of the colleges affiliated to the university provide access to higher education to students of BTR who otherwise would not have pursue higher education. Seventeen academic departments offered options to students to study postgraduate in science, arts, humanity and social sciences and students are also promoted to pursue research in the university. Seven affiliated colleges provide B.Ed. and M.Ed. courses for providing training of in service teachers and teacher aspirants. An affiliated law college offered L.L.B. courses adding to providing legal education in BTR. Pursuing higher education is very much affordable as the admission and semester fees are among the lowest of all public universities in the state of Assam.

Evidence of Success

Intake to postgraduate courses in the university have considerably increase over the years from 20 to 40 in the science subjects of Botany, Chemistry, Physics, Zoology and Geography, from 50 to 60 in Mathematics, from 40 to 60 in Economics, History and Political Science, from 60 to 80 in Bodo and from 50 to 60 in English. Enrollment in Ph.D. has also sustainably increase from below 30 to over 100 in recent times. The number of students clearing UGC-JRF, UGC-NET, and SLET have also increased.

Enrollment in undergraduate courses offered in the affiliated courses have increased multifold from 2800 to 16,000.

Problems Encountered and Resource Required

Multiple problems the university has to face and the problems are related to lack of sufficiently large classrooms and lack of adequate laboratories to meet the growing need of increasing intake of students. The university is in dire need of generous funding from the Government of Assam and University Grants Commission.