

Chapter: I

Introduction

1.0. Background of the Study

A society aims at economic prosperity coupled with equality of opportunity. At the same time, it has been realized that education, which creates efficient and equitable outcomes is key for economic prosperity and social cohesion. It is a critical factor to develop the long-term potential for competitiveness as well as for social cohesion. Thus, efficient education systems can create economic growth and equitable systems can create social cohesion.

The global community now accepts that education is one of the best places for investment on human resources. Education not only benefits those who receive it but also carries external effects or neighbourhood benefits. School education is a keystone of future educational progress. Every country of the world has emphasized the right to education of the child. United Nations' Universal Declaration on Human Rights 2010, Article 26 emphasis free and compulsory education at least up to the elementary level of education. In India, Article 45 of the Indian constitution state that *“The state shall endeavour to provide, within ten years from the commencement of this constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years”* Again Right to Education Act, 2009 has been passed in the Parliament of India which makes education a fundamental right. The concept of universalization of primary education is implemented in the field of primary education to make sure that every child can take education.

“Education has large external benefits- a higher level of education means higher earnings, better health and standard of life. Education produces substantial returns to the individual in terms of earnings and employability, significant effects on economic growth and noteworthy non-monetary benefits for the individual and society as a

whole”¹ (OECD, 2005a). An educated population is economically more productive and fares better on most social indicators. Given the effects of education on individual well-being, the distribution of education is also crucial for societal inequality. Since education plays a crucial role in the overall development of citizens of a country, so a fair and inclusive system that makes the advantages of education available to all is one of the most powerful mechanisms to make society more equitable.

Venu Narayan (2010) has stated “The formal education system in India has its roots in colonial history. Private and public initiatives in education have coexisted. Political independence and the recognition of the importance of education led to large-scale public investment in the sector. However, the experience has been varied, depending on the history of each state. Nowadays, all around us are signs of mistrust of the public education system and hear loud complaints about poor quality and management of government schools”. In many parts of the country, there are attempts to get the state to withdraw from education, or merely be a funding agency for private initiatives. Many governments, out of ideology or just fatigue, seem not completely unwilling to do just that. In addition to purely private and government initiatives, most states have a large number of private-aided schools where the schools are owned and administered by various private charities, individuals or groups of individuals. But it is noteworthy that the state education system is beyond repair. The failures and fault lines are multiple and a failure of provision. Despite the enormous amount of financial and human resources that have been dedicated, millions of children receive no schooling. For many of those are fortunate enough to be in school, the outcomes are barely worth the trouble. Poor quality is a malaise in the system and there are serious organizational failures in school administration.

Therefore, in the present study, the relative of equity and efficiency of public and private schooling in Chirang district of Assam will be portrayed.

¹OECD Indicator, Education at a Glance: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2005a)

1.1. Conceptual Framework of Equity and Efficiency

1.1.1. Equity

The approach of equity began to emerge in the late 90s. The concept of equity is sometimes imposed or often placed next to the concept of equality. Now-a-days these two are distinguished and equity is considered a development of equality.

“Equity is about fairness. It is about making some people get access to the same opportunities. Equity in education has two dimensions. The first is fairness, which means making sure that personal and social circumstances – for example, gender, socio-economic status or ethnic origin – should not be an obstacle to achieving educational potential. The second is the inclusion or in other words ensuring a basic minimum standard of education for all. Thus, in general equity means providing all the necessities to the deserving candidate to get equal outcomes” (Castelli et al., 2012).

“Equity is possibly summarized into six different ideas - pure meritocracy, equal treatment, inter-individual equality, minimum threshold, equality between social groups and advantages for disadvantages” (Benadusi, 2006 cited by Castelli et al., 2012).

In different concepts, equity can be formulated again as -

1. Equity as equal opportunities for all
2. Equity as equal treatment for all
3. Equity as equal results for all

Equity in the field of education can be explained as -

1. Access - to school
2. Opportunity - to legally recognized right
3. Treatment - of educational models and measures
4. Result - of opportunity for success

1.1.2. Efficiency

“Efficiency in education refers to the outcomes of education in comparison to its inputs. The efficiency of an educational system concerns the optimal use of resources (inputs) in producing its outputs” (Cherchye et al., 2008). It is the private and social benefits derived from investment in education. School efficiency is achieved by taking all the resources that a school has and deploying them in the way that best supports pupil outcomes. Thus, the concept of efficiency is associated with the decentralization of organizations. They further stated that the key to measuring efficiency in education is paying greater attention to the ultimate outcomes of the individual. Which occurs in the life cycle of the individual and these can be evaluated by income, health status, reduction of inequalities and good citizenship of the individual. In elementary education, the efficiency can be evaluated in terms of quality education, ultimate outcomes of the students in their further education and developed eligibility of the students.

At the conceptual level, efficiency can be divided into two levels such as external efficiency and internal efficiency (Burney and Mahammed, 2002). They have stated “External efficiency is concerned with the cost-effectiveness with which the institution serves the broad economic and non-monetary cultural needs of society, whatever they might be. External efficiency refers to the success of the individual in terms of ultimate outcomes regarding non-monetary returns. It differs from the non-cognitive personal characteristics of the individual”.

Burney and Mahammed, 2002 has further stated that internal efficiency emphasizes on internal operations of the institution. The term internal operation can be broken down into technical operation and allocative operation. The effective teaching-learning process is the technical operation and good textbooks, libraries, class size, computer facilities and teaching time that should be used to produce the most cost-effective learning results and are included within an allocative operation. It is associated with various cognitive skills and proficiency of the individual which have an impact on production good outcomes. This is intended to capture the relationship between input and output.

In the study, the investigator focuses on internal efficiency than external efficiency. The study measures the components of internal efficiency to determine the whole efficiency at elementary level education of the Chirang district in Assam.

1.2. Development of Elementary Education in Assam

1.2.1. Pre-independence Period

Prior to the modern education system in India or Pre-British period some educational institutions ran by different religious organizations such as Pathsala, Tol, Madrasa, and Maktab were prevail in Assam to provide primary education in the state. In 1826, when Assam was included within British rule, the responsibility of education was taken over by the East India Company. The company's agent of the region David Scott soon after his arrival in Assam took an interest in the promotion of an indigenous system of education, through which they were able to win over the confidence of the indigenous people. He emphasized establishing schools in Assam and announced that the pass-out students of the schools would be offered jobs under the East India Company (Goswami and Sarma, 2014).

The famous Wood's Despatch, 1854 introduced the grant in aid system in primary education which helps in the improvement of schools in Assam. After shifting the power of administration from the East India Company to the British Crown, several changes took place in the field of education. In 1882, the first Education Commission, Hunter Commission was formed and it entrusted the responsibility of primary education to the hand of local boards. It also recommended a 'Payment by Result' system. The provincial government had to grant one-third of the total expenditure of local boards which adversely affected the primary education in Assam. Then Lord Curzon followed the same policy which gave an impetus to primary education in Assam leading the improvement in the number of schools. The everlasting effort made by Gopal Krishna Gokhale for the introduction of compulsory primary education during 1910-1913 made the provincial government to be concerned about the necessity of primary education which results in the passing of Primary Education Act, during 1918-1920. The

government provided a resolution in 1913 but it had a little impact in Assam (Agarwalla, 2008).

In Assam, the first Compulsory Primary Education Act was passed in 1926 (AHSEC, 2021). The major Provisions of the Act were -

- i.** The Act extends to the whole of Assam.
- ii.** Compulsion should be from the local authority with a majority of two-thirds of the member present in a meeting to resolve to introduce compulsory primary education in its jurisdiction for children between 6-11 years of age.
- iii.** The local authority shall submit the resolution to the government for consideration.
- iv.** Local authorities shall submit a statement showing all the particulars concerning the total existing expenditure incurred by the local authority and by the government and the additional cost required for the introduction of compulsory primary education.
- v.** The local authority of any area shall provide one-third of the additional cost without diminishing the current expenditure and shall levy an education process for this purpose.
- vi.** In the event of the proposal being sanctioned, the government shall provide the local authority with the remaining two-thirds of the additional cost.
- vii.** If the local authority fails to submit a scheme the government may call upon it to do so.
- viii.** No fee shall be charged to any student.
- ix.** The government may by the notification make rules regarding the education process, and how the education fund shall be maintained.
- x.** Poor children will be provided books and other materials, writing materials if the education committee recommended.
- xi.** The local authority and the education committee concerned shall be responsible for the enforcement of the Act.

However, the Act made slow growth in Assam due to the wrong policy in providing grants in aid, the inefficiency of local authorities, the indifferent attitude of the people etc.

1.2.2. Post-Independence Period

In 1947, when India got its independence, several changes took place in every aspect. Another Act on primary education was passed and the State Primary Education Council was formed, this Act also gave the responsibility of primary education to the local authority. But again, due to some reason, this Act did not materialize. In 1954, the Basic Education Act was passed (Agarwalla, 2008). Major Provisions of the Act were -

- i.** The constitution of a state board for basic education will advise the government on certain matters such as making grants to schools, control and management, recruitment and service condition of teachers, selection of textbooks, training of teachers etc.
- ii.** The State Advisory Board will maintain a fund to which the D.P.I. will be charged.
- iii.** The Act include the following as Basic School -
 - a. All government MV (Middle Vernacular) schools.
 - b. All MV schools are managed by private bodies.
 - c. All primary schools.
 - d. Any private elementary school.
- iv.** The state government may impose an educational tax in any area for this Act and can make rules regarding the age of a child, the curriculum, duration and standard etc.

Next to the above, the Elementary Education Act was passed in 1962 to make provision for the management and control of elementary education. It emphasized on providing free and compulsory education in Assam in gradual stages (ibid). The main provisions of the Act were -

- i.** It extends the whole of Assam.
- ii.** The definition states - Elementary education means education up to such class or standard not beyond the eighth class, as may be prescribed. Local authority means a municipal board or a town committee or a Gaon Panchayat established under the municipal act and Assam Panchayat Act 1959.
- iii.** The Constitution of the State Board of Elementary Education was made to advise the government for the development, expansion, management and control of elementary education in the state with the Minister of Education as its chairman and other members. The members of the board will be holding office for five years.

iv. The state board will lay down the principle for the allocation of grants to local authorities. This act lay down the procedure for recruitment of teachers and the condition of their service, lays down the condition for recognition, expansion, amalgamation and opening of new schools.

v. The state government may make rules for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

In 1972, the Assam Panchayati Raj Act was passed. It has made a two-tier administration with Gaon panchayat and Mohkuma parishad, this Act was modified and accordingly, an Act was passed in 1986. Both the Acts were not applicable in autonomous districts.

The scheme “Operation Blackboard” was launched as per the recommendation of the NPE - 1986 to provide essential facilities in schools of Assam and has adopted the following measures to achieve the goal of Operation Black Board -

- i.** Establishment of schools in different villages.
- ii.** Provision for free textbooks and other materials.
- iii.** Construction of two extra classrooms in schools.
- iv.** Supply of backboard to schools.
- v.** Appointment of teachers in single-teacher schools.
- vi.** Establishment of teacher training institutions for primary education.
- vii.** Provision for additional post of school inspector for better inspection and supervision.

A review of NPE - 1986 was conducted during 1990-93. As a result, a new scheme District Primary Education Program (DPEP) was launched in some states of India including Assam. In Assam, the scheme covers the districts like Goalpara, Kokrajhar, Dhubri, Bongaigaon, Barpeta, Darrang, Sonitpur, Morigaon, and Karbi Anglong. Furthermore, a new concept in primary education has emerged i.e., Universalization of Primary education. The country is currently working hard on the purpose and one of the most effective schemes even in the Indian education system has been launched in the name of “Sarva Siksha Abhiyan.” This scheme is functioning from 2001 to date (Goswami and Sarma, 2014; Agarwala, 2008).

1.3. Equity and Efficiency in Right to Education Act, 2009

The right to Education Act, 2009 is one of the finest Acts in the history of Indian education. This act is remarkable as it includes education in the Fundamental Right of the Indian Constitution. This act is passed by the Indian government especially to bring utmost equity and efficiency to the elementary level of education and upgrade the quality as well as quantity of education at the highest level. The act is commonly known as an act for free and compulsory education as it emphasis on providing compulsory elementary education up to the age of 14 years of age. Education at least the elementary stage is prioritized to be made accessible to each and every child. The government has affirmed to provide all facilities for every student. All the cost of education is provided by the government and Mid-day-meal under SSA Scheme is provided to increase the attendance of the student in schools. All the necessary facilities for the development of education are supposed to be provided by the government to improve efficiency at the elementary level of education. The curriculum is designed based on the psychology of the age of students and the system and methodology of teaching are also taken to be designed depending on it. Training and short-term refresher courses are proposed to be provided to every teacher working in the elementary stage.

1.4. Educational Attainment in India

India's educational attainment even in the elementary stage of education is very slow. Neighbouring nations of India and some of the developed and developing nations of Asia had achieved a satisfactory level of elementary education from 1960 to the early 70s due to the introduction of free and compulsory education policy. For example, Japan was introduced very early in the year 1872 and increased school attendance up to 94 per cent in 1904 from 28 per cent in 1873 (Sen, 1998 cited by Boro, 2016). China had a 25 per cent of enrollment ratio in 1949 when it launched its compulsory education policy and it had increased up to 93 per cent in 1979. South Korea introduced the policy of universalization of elementary education in 1970 (ibid). Universalization of elementary education in India has introduced only after the 86th Amendment in 2002. A little change was brought about only after the RTE Act 2009. The 64th round NSSO survey, 2010

shows the net attendance ratio and enrollment ratio of India as 88 per cent and 91.12 per cent respectively.

Dropout and Stagnation are other major problem that is yet to be solved in India. Only 89 per cent of the children from the total enrollment completed primary education in India (World Bank Report, 2007). Assam becomes highest in dropout rate with 33 per cent in 2017-18 (SEI Report, 2019). Whereas in the case of many East Asian countries like Vietnam, Indonesia, Korea and many others reached the mark of per cent primary education completion rate in 2004 (ibid). The World Bank Report, 2007 also shows that South Asian nations including India have very low literacy rates. Although India's adult literacy rate had increased from 28 per cent in 1960 to 74 per cent in 2011 census report, still the absolute number of illiterate persons remained at approximately 272 million. India ranked 134th in UNDP's Human Development Index (2011) even behind Sri Lanka (97th position). India's position is behind the countries with lower per capita income on Human Development Index. For example, Vietnam secured the 128th position despite having a lower per capita income (2805 PPP) than India (4934 PPP) (www.indiabudget.gov.in).

1.5. Educational Attainment in Assam

The Census Report, 2011 shows that the literacy rate of Assam is 73.2 per cent which is below than the national average rate. The percentage is far behind the top-ranked states like Kerala, Gujarat, Lakshadweep and all the North Eastern states except Arunachal Pradesh. Assam can be grouped with the worst-performing states like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh etc.

The 64th round NSSO Report shows that school enrollment ratio and attendance ratio are quite low in many parts of the country. In India, nearly 9 per cent of the children in the age group of 6-10 years are 'never enrolled' in any type of institution. Assam has 5.1 per cent of 'never enrolled' children (64th round NSSO Report). Only states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh and Mizoram have reached the mark of nearly cent per cent of enrollment.

Recently school performance in the state of Assam has increased remarkably. In School Education Quality Index of Assam secured 10th position with 56.1 per cent in the survey during the session 2016-2017 leaving 39.3 per cent in the survey (SEQI 2015-16, NITI Ayog 2019) whereas, Kerala has been securing the top position. The overall performance of Assam in equity outcomes is 37.9 per cent and it has 62.3 per cent of NER in the elementary state of education.

1.6. District Wise Educational Attainment in Assam

Assam is one of the states of the country with 31 districts (www.assam.gov.in Retrieved on 25th June, 2023). There is a huge variation in the educational attainments of every district. In 2011 census report, Jorhat topped the district-wise educational attainment ranking with 83.4 per cent followed by Sibsagar, Cachar and Dibrugarh with 81.4 per cent, 80.2 per cent and 79 per cent respectively. On the contrary, Dubri has ranked the lowest in educational attainment with only 59.4 per cent. Goalpara (68.5 per cent), Barpeta (65 per cent) and Darang (64 per cent) are other districts with lower educational attainment.

Again in the state, taking the privilege of the 6th schedule of the Indian Constitution, Assam has three 6th schedule area district councils. Firstly, Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) was created in April 1952. Secondly, North Cachar Autonomous Council (NCAC) was set up in June 1952 and thirdly Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) was set up in February 2003. The jurisdiction of KAAC and NCAC are confined to the district of Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao. However, the district of Karbi Anglong is now divided into two districts East Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong. But the jurisdiction of BTC is extended from the Kokrajhar district to the Bodo inhabited area of Dubri, Bongaigaon, Barpeta, Nalbari, Kamrup, Darang and Sonitpur carving the three new districts Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri are created. The 6th Schedule of the Indian Constitution provides separate provisions of administration, jurisdiction, execution and financial power to the tribal inhabited area of North Eastern States by identifying and designing autonomous councils for the development of marginalized societies.

The literacy rates of Autonomous Districts are much lower in comparison to those educationally advanced districts. It is even lower than the state average literacy rate. The literacy rate of Karbi Anglong is 73.5 per cent. Dima Hasao has a 78.99 per cent of literacy rate. Among the BTAD districts, the literacy rate of Baksa, Chirang, Kokrajhar and Udalguri is 70.53 per cent, 64.71 per cent, 66.71 per cent and 64.71 per cent respectively. Therefore, BTAD districts have lower literacy rates than the other two autonomous districts.

The Human Development Index, 2003 again reveals the variation in the attainment of Human Development. It shows all the districts that were carved to form districts of BTAD ranked lower compared to other advanced districts and also the state average in human development indicators. All these districts except Kamrup are lagging in Human Development Index. The state average value of Assam in HDI is 0.407. The districts of Dhubri, Darang and Bongaigaon are ranked in the bottom three with the ranks of 23rd, 22nd and 21st respectively. In sharp contrast, the top three districts in Human Development Index are Jorhat, Golaghat and Karbi Anglong. Jorhat topped the rank with an HDI value of 0.650. Whereas, Golaghat and Karbi Anglong districts ranked in the 2nd and 3rd position with the HDI values of 0.540 and 0.494 respectively.

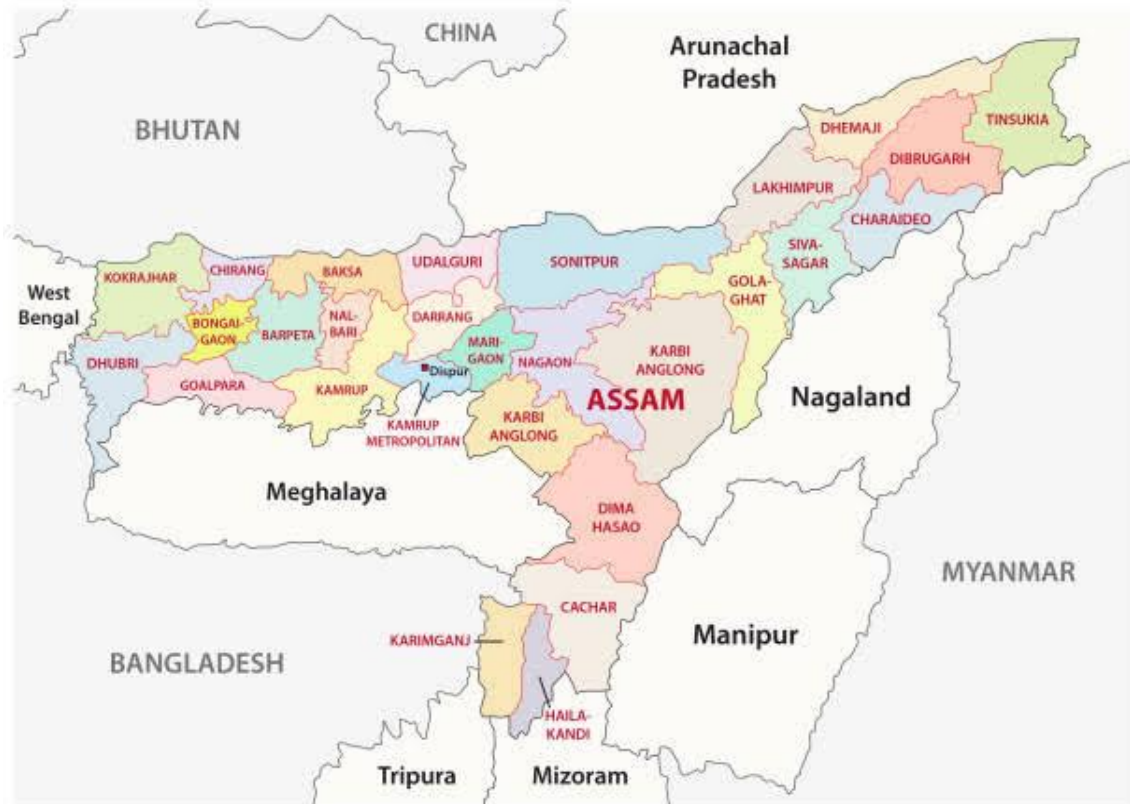
Again, in terms of the Educational Attainment Index, except Kamrup and Nalbari the districts carved to BTAD districts ranked lower than the educationally advanced districts of Assam but also the state average value. Jorhat top the rank again with 0.722 followed by Sivasagar (0.702) and Lakhimpur (0.657). The state average rank in Educational Attainment Index is 0.594. These are 0.452, 0.474, 0.514, 0.527, 0.552 and 0.557 respectively in the case of Dhubri, Kokrajhar, Darang, Barpeta, Sonitpur and Bongaigaon. These districts are placed in the bottom in the district-wise rank among 31 districts of Assam (Boro, 2016).

1.7. Area of Study

Assam is a state which belongs to the North East region of the nation. It is bordered by Bhutan, Arunachal Pradesh and Himalaya ranges to the north; Nagaland and Manipur to

the east; Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram and Bangladesh to the south and West Bengal to the west.

Figure 1.1: Map of Assam



Source: www.mapofindia.com

Chirang is a small district of western Assam created only after the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) Accord undersigned by three parties - Central Government, State Government and Revolutionary Party, then Rebel Association of Bodoland Liberal Tiger in 2003. The area of Chirang district is 1923 Sq Km. Chirang is mostly a rural district of 1910.94 sq. km (99.37%) of the total area covered by rural areas and only 12 sq. km. (0.62%) is a town area. Chirang district is divided into two sub-divisions Bijni and Sidli. It comprises 508 villages including 7 uninhabited villages and 2 towns. The surrounding areas of the district fall in the category of rural region (District Profile Chirang, 2021).

Figure 1.2: Map of Chirang District



Source: www.mapofindia.com

1.8. Current Scenario of Education in Chirang District

In Chirang district, there are 919 public sector elementary schools and around 300 private aided elementary schools (www.school.org.in). As almost all area of the district is backward, most of the children access to public-aided Assamese and Bodo medium schools, but at present massive changes can be observed in schooling. In recent times, parents show willingness in sending their child to private schools. Enrollment in public elementary schools is decreasing. This raises a question on the performance of the public sector schooling. Thus, it is a high time to focus on the issues regarding equity and efficiency in public and private sector schools in the district.

The status of education within the proposed area can be considered a little less than satisfactory. The literacy rate of Chirang district along with the other three districts within the BTC area is lower in the chart of districts in the state. The literacy rate of Assam according to the census report of 1951 up to 2011 is presented in the following table.

Table 1.1: Literacy rate of Assam (in percentage)

Year	Person	Male	Female
1951	18.53	28.01	18.62
1961	32.95	44.28	18.62
1971	33.94	43.72	22.76
1981*	---	---	---
1991	52.89	61.87	43.03
2001	63.25	71.28	54.61
2011	73.18	78.81	67.27

**Note: The 1981 Census was not conducted.*

Source: Statistical Handbook of Bodoland, 2019

The literacy rate in Chirang is far below in comparison to other districts of the state. The following table shows the literacy rate of the proposed districts according to the 2011 census report.

Table 1.2: Literacy rate of Chirang District

District	District Wise Rank	Literacy Rate (in percentage)			Category-wise literacy rate		
		Person	Male	Female	ST(s)	SC (s)	Others
Chirang	25	64.71	71.35	57.87	37.06	7.29	55.65

Source: Statistical Profile of BTC, 2021

1.9. Demography of Chirang District

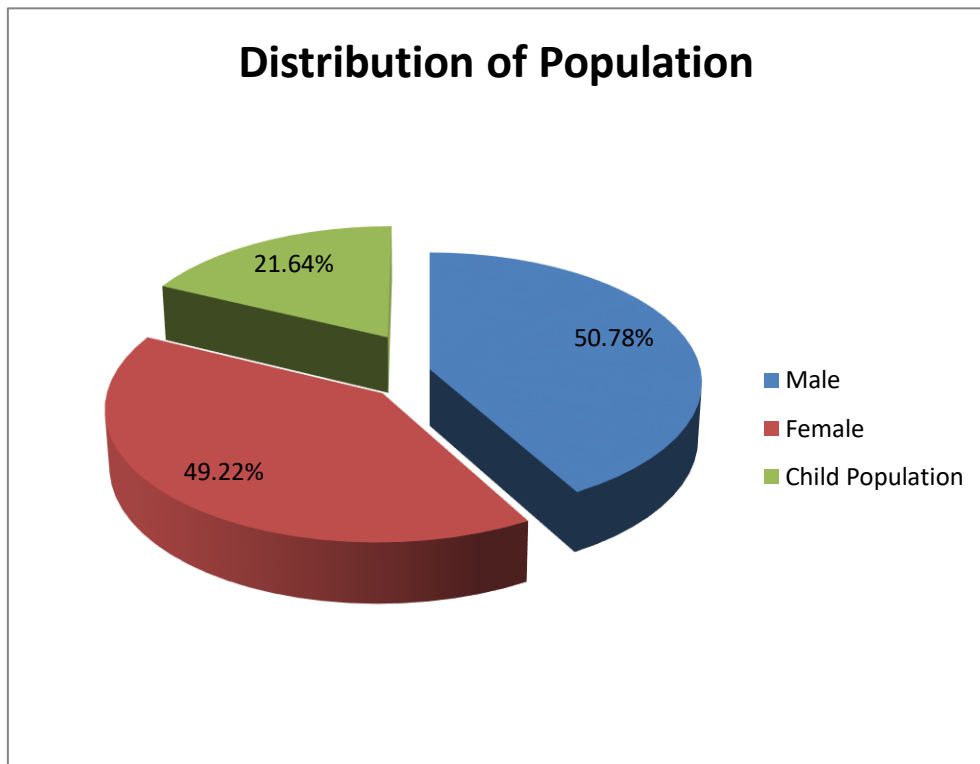
The district, Chirang was created in 2003, the population record of the district is available in the general census report of 2011. According to the census report the total population of the district is 48,2162, where only a small section of the area falls under urban with the maximum number of people belonging to a rural area. In the district, 92.67 per cent of the total population belongs to rural and only 7.33 per cent live in the urban areas. A high percentage of the population belongs to Schedule Tribe and lower economic class. The sex ratio of the district is 969. The distribution of the population of the district can be observed from the following table.

Table 1.3: Demography of Chirang District

Year	Total	Male	Female	Child Population
2011	482162	244,860 (50.78%)	237,302 (49.22%)	104318 (21.64%)

Source: Statistical Profile of BTC, 2022

Figure 1.3: Distribution of Population in Percentage



1.9.1. Caste-Wise Distribution of Population

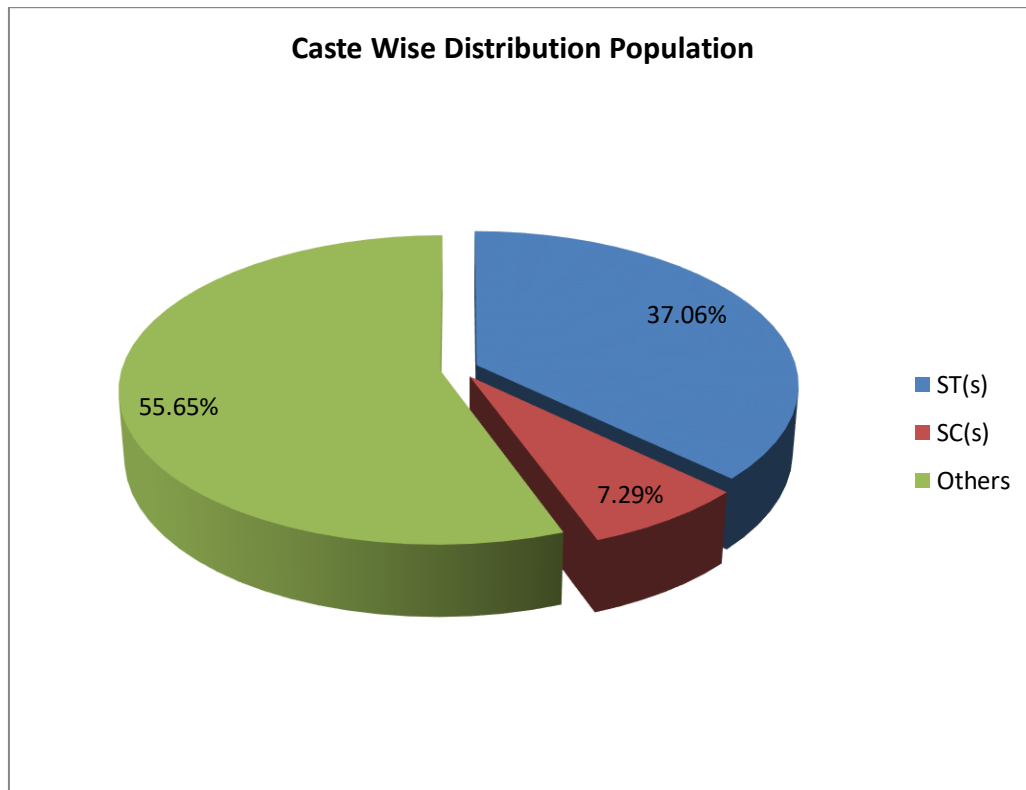
Chirang district is inhabited with variety of population belonging to different castes. Caste wide distribution of population can be presented as below -

Table 1.4: Caste-Wise Distribution of Population

Year	Total	ST (s)	SC (s)	Others
2011	482162	178688 (37.06%)	35135 (7.29%)	268339(55.65%)

Source: Statistical Profile of BTC, 2022

Figure 1.4: Caste Wise Distribution of Population in Percentage



1.10. Statement of the Problem

School education is the most crucial stage of educating the children. It is the preparatory stage of the formal education system. The child's future educational career is mostly determined by the school education and elementary stage of education. It is the foundation stone of the education of the children. The main objective of elementary education is to develop skills in reading and writing. It aims at the development of social and emotional qualities, development of confidence and independence, improvement of communication skills etc. The elementary level of education has been divided into two different stages Lower Primary and Upper Primary. On the other hand, secondary stage of education follows the elementary level. In India, it is included within the fundamental right of education. The single authority is responsible for regulating both lower primary and upper primary education in India such as the Director of Elementary Education.

Various attempts have been made by the government to make elementary education accessible and of quality. Equality in elementary education is one of the greatest targets of education in India. The government of India passed RTE, 2009 under Article 21A of the Indian Constitution and makes education a fundamental right. Many other schemes are launched to promote RTE, 2009 and free and compulsory education to the children between age group of 6-14 years under Article 45th of the Indian constitution. Now the challenges are that to achieve quality and equality in education maintaining equity and efficiency in functioning is mandatory.

The present study is confined to examine the issues of equity and efficiency in functioning of school education. Therefore, the research problem is entitled as:

“Equity and Efficiency in Public and Private School: A Study in Chirang District of Assam”

1.11. Significance of the Study

“To a great extent even than education, equity is associated with the life of a society. Focusing on equity reflects on the issues of social segregation, racism and gender or status discrimination or other forms of potential discrimination” (Castelli et al., 2012). Ensuring equity in education is a powerful predictor of the quality of education being provided to the more vulnerable sections of society. Efficiency reflects on optimal development with the best return on the resources used. Equity and Efficiency are both concepts that are crucial in the education system. Study on the issues of equity and efficiency in the field of education is important to access the quality, policies and practices of education. The empirical evidence from the studies carried out in different regions says that there is a tradeoff between equity and efficiency in lower levels of education (Ferraro and Poder, 2017). “In India, only 16 per cent of children in class I, surveyed in 26 rural districts can read the text at the prescribed level, while almost 40 per cent can’t even recognize the letter. Only 41 per cent of children could recognize two-digit numbers” (ASER Report 2019, NGO Pratham). It is also common in the commencement study area. Chirang district is one of the districts of Assam where a high percentage of the population belongs to Schedule Tribe and lower economic class.

General survey and Census Reports show that the literacy rate of STs is far below that of other upper social classes. GER, NER and women literacy rate of STs are very low and the dropout rate is high among the said social category which raises the question of issues in equal distribution of resources and opportunities (District Profile Chirang 2021). The position of Chirang district in district-wise rank in Board examination is far lower in comparison to other districts. The state government has planned various schemes and a huge amount of financial packages to set for the development of the elementary education. Despite various initiatives, elementary education is not accessible to every child. It is observed that the outcome of public education is still poor. People's faith in public education is decreasing rather they are showing willingness in sending their children to private schools. Thus, the proposed study focused on finding the reason behind poor outcomes in public education. The study intended to contribute to planning and policy-making in elementary education and developing the quality of public schools, to be competitive enough to the private aided schools. However, in India, both public and private aided schools are co-existed. But privatization in the field of education is one of the burning issues in most developing countries both the sectors are working independently but there is also a provision for partnership for the welfare of the school education. Likewise, public schools need to be rejuvenated and private school should sympathize with the children.

Therefore, this study aims at strengthening of the public school system and to help the private school to provide sympathetic treatment. An analysis of the parameters in Chirang district will surely give an impetus to the present education quality and provision of the district. Similarly, on the basis of the findings, various precautionary steps may be taken by the authority towards the rest of the districts in the region.

1.12. Objectives of the Study

Objectives are one important part of the research work. Research objectives are necessary to do the study systematically and for avoiding unnecessary staff in a study. In

the present study, following objectives are taken carefully to achieve the main goal of the research.

- i. To examine the equity in public and private schools in Chirang district.
- ii. To examine the efficiency of public and private schools in Chirang district.
- iii. To make a comparative analysis of equity and efficiency between public and private school education in Chirang district.

1.13. Research Hypotheses

- **Ho₁** There is no significant difference between the Equity of Public and Private elementary schools.
- **Ho₂** There is no significant difference between the Efficiency of Public and Private elementary schools.
- **Ho₃** There is no significant difference between the Outcomes of students of Public and Private elementary schools in respect to gender.
- **Ho₄** There is no significant difference between the Outcomes of students of Public and Private elementary schools in respect to the medium of instruction.
- **Ho₅** There is no significant difference between the Equity of Public and Private elementary schools in respect to medium of instruction.
- **Ho₆** There is no significant difference between the Efficiency of Public and Private elementary schools in respect to medium of instruction.
- **Ho₇** There is no significant difference between the Equity of Public and Private elementary schools in respect to locality of the schools.
- **Ho₈** There is no significant difference between the Efficiency of Public and Private elementary schools in respect to locality of the schools.

1.14. Operational Definition of the Term Used

- i. **Equity:** Equity means the quality of being fair. It is the measure of fairness. In the study, equity refers to the fair distribution of facilities, opportunities and provisions of education to the deserving candidates or group fair ownership of all provisions.

ii. Efficiency: The term efficiency means careful use of resources or good working. Efficiency is the state of being efficient. In the present study, efficiency refers to the effectiveness of functioning, and effective uses of resources in schools.

iii. School Education: School education is the beginning level of education. It generally refers to the stages of education from class I up to class XII. In this study, the term is used to refer only to the students from class I up to class VIII.

1.15. Delimitation of the Study

i. The study is confined only to the Lower Primary school and Upper Primary school levels of education.

ii. The study is confined only to Chirang District.

iii. The study is confined to SEBA Board public and private elementary schools.