

## Fraud in the Higher Educational Institutions in Assam, India: Issues and Challenges

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**Abstract :** Fraud is a social problem changing with social change and it has a regional and global impact. Introduction of private domain in higher education along with public institutions has led to commercialization of higher education which encourages unprecedented mushrooming of private institutions resulting in fraudulent activities in higher educational institutions in Assam, India. Presently, fraud has been noticed in in-service promotion, fake entry qualification by teachers in different levels of work-place by using fake master degrees, master of philosophy and doctor of philosophy degree certificates. The aim and objective of the study are to identify grey areas in maintenance of quality in higher educational institutions in Assam and also to draw the contour for planning and implementation. This study is based on both primary and secondary data collected through questionnaire and seeking information through Right to Information Act 2005. In Assam, there are 301 undergraduate and graduate colleges distributed in 27 (Twenty seven) administrative districts with 11000 (Eleven thousand) college teachers. Total 421 (Four hundred twenty one) college teachers from the 14 respondent colleges have been taken for analysis. Data collected has been analyzed by using 'Hypertext Pre-processor' (PHP) application with My Sequel Structure Query Language (MySQL) and Google Map Application Programming Interface (APIs). Graph has been generated by using open source tool Chart.js. Spatial distribution maps have been generated with the help of geo-references of the colleges. The result shows: (i) the violation of University Grants Commission's (UGC's) Regulation for the awards of M. Phil/Ph.D. clearly exhibits. (ii) There is a gap between apex regulatory bodies of higher education at national and as well as state level to check fraud. (iii) Mala fide 'No Objection Certificate' (NOC) issued by the Government of Assam have played pivotal role in the occurrence of fraudulent practices in higher educational institutions of Assam. (iv) Violation of verdict of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India regarding territorial jurisdiction of Universities for the awards of Ph.D. and M. Phil degrees in distance mode/study centre is also a responsible factor for the spread of these academic frauds in Assam and other states. The challenges and mitigation of these issues have been discussed.

**Keywords :** Assam, fraud, higher education, mitigation

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