PREFACE

The last decade has heralded a new era the world over, and has brought about rapid advancement in the fields of education, communication, entertainment, business, and above all, information. The factor that has contributed solely to this development is none other than information technology. Hence, the era is aptly termed as the information technology era.

The Government of India has also realised the importance of information technology, hence in order to get the best out of this technology, it is essential that proper computer education is imparted at an early age. The society also expects that the child of today who is the citizen of tomorrow should acquire the desirable skills with maximum achievement. Maximised efficiency and maximised acquisition of knowledge are possible only when educational technology and information technology are extensively and pervasively used in schools and in the society. This is more particularly so in context of the present globalization scenario.

Hence, with an aim to universalize computer literacy and to spread the use of computers the Government of India has introduced computers in the secondary school education all over India, so that the present and future generations of students can face the world after leaving the school, both in their personal and in their working lives.

The introduction of computer education in the secondary schools of Assam as a curricular subject was from the academic session of 1996
as an activity under work experience for class VI, VII, and VIII, and as an elective subject in class IX and X.

The present study is an attempt to obtain a detailed description of the status of computer education in the secondary schools of Assam, both government and private, focusing on the following variables –

Attitude of teachers and students towards computer education, educational background of the teachers and their experience with computer, infrastructural facilities in the schools, gender disparities in computer education if any, to assess the knowledge of the students in computer science and lastly to find out differences, if any, between the Assamese medium and English medium students.

In the methodology portion, the objective, sampling procedure, description of the tools used for the study have been indicated.

Findings of the study have been statistically analysed and significant findings are presented in tabular forms.

Analysis of the findings reveals that- students have a positive attitude and outlook, with regard to the computer education received in their respective schools. Also, it is interesting to note that some students have suggested a revamping of the traditional modes of teaching by introducing computers in teaching which they think will make their education more exciting and interesting.

From the study it is found that although the teachers are confident about their knowledge about the subject, they are not devoid of
anxiety. This may be because of general phobia associated with the new technology. Majority of the teachers have recognised the important role that computer play in today's society. According to them, computer education in schools would provide a strong foundation to the students to cope with the academic and professional needs in future.

The English medium students were found to display higher level of confidence, a sense of competence in their approach to and use of computers than the Assamese medium students.

It is to be regretted that, inspite of funding and all other infrastructural facilities provided by the North Eastern Council, in a collaborative venture with the Board of Secondary Education, Assam, nothing fruitful or long lasting evolved from the course of computer education imparted to the students of government schools.

From the study it is found that girls have a positive inclination towards computer education. They perceive computers as being more user friendly and express less anxiety about the use of computers. In the earlier studies boys appear to have a more positive attitude towards computers than the girls. But the scene appears to be changing in the present time. The girls are in no way lagging behind their male counterparts.

The findings of the present work will throw a light on the nature and functioning of computer course in the secondary schools of Assam, with implications for further improvement of the system.