Preface

A century of primary education in Assam (1874-1974) has not been investigated by any one to the best of my knowledge. In 1874, Assam was constituted into a Chief Commissioners' Province. The 1974 is the last year of management and control of primary education by a statutory body, after which the same was taken over by the State Government. Primary education is that branch of education which is intended for children of the age-group of six to eleven.

The thesis is divided into twelve chapters. The first chapter deals with geographical, historical, social and cultural background of Assam. It also indicates the aims, objectives and methodology. In the second chapter progress of primary education in the pre-British days, under East India Company (1826-1858) and during the period 1858-74 has been examined. In the third chapter, progress of primary education during 1874-1974, has been dealt with. In fact, the chapter is a summary of the development of primary education in various aspects dealt with in the subsequent chapters.

The fourth chapter deals with the role played by local bodies for the extension of primary education. In the next chapter, arrangements made for primary education for special classes, such as girls, Muslims, low-class people, tea-garden labourers, have been examined. The arrangements made for primary education among the hill tribes have been dealt with in chapter six. The role played by the Christian missions also has been assessed in this chapter. In chapter seven, the medium of instruction, the courses of study, physical plants and equipment available in the primary schools have been examined. The arrangements made for management, control and inspection have been examined in chapter eight. In chapter nine, the arrangements made for the training of teachers, their condition of service and educational qualifications have been dealt with. The sources of funds by which primary education has been financed and the system of grant-in-aid have been examined in chapter ten. In chapter eleven wastage and stagnation in primary education have been evaluated. The impact of the primary education and other conclusions and recommendations flowing from the investigation are given in the last chapter.
The work is based mainly on official documents, published and unpublished, preserved in the Assam Secretariat Record Room, Office of the D.P.I., Assam, Assam Assembly Library, Cotton College Library, Directorate of Historical and Antiquarian studies, Gauhati University Library and the library of the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Assam. Published books of eminent authors were also consulted.

I could not have completed the investigation without the help and encouragement of a large number of well-wishers, friends and relatives. I am highly indebted to all of them. I am particularly indebted to my superior officers Shri M.C. Narasingham, I.A.S., Shri A. Bhattacharjya, I.A.S., Shri S.K. Agnihotri, I.A.S., Shri R.R. Mishra, I.A.S. for encouraging me to conduct the research, to my colleagues Shri Paramananda Chiring, Shri Subhas Chakravarty, Shri Basir Ali, Shrimati Sabita Devi, Shrimati Bandana Deb, Shri Profulla Bhuwan and many others for helping me in various ways, to my friends Dr. D.D. Mali, M.A., Ph.D. and Dr. (Mrs) B. Lakhar, M.A. Ph.D. for helping me by lending books and offering me suggestions from time to time. I am also thankful to the authorities of the various libraries for permitting me to consult rare books and reports preserved therein, to the officers and staff of the statistical Branch of the office of the D.P.I., Assam for furnishing me all educational data required by me and to the Keeper of Records, Assam for permitting me to consult records in the Record Room at Shillong.

My wife, Shrimati Pratima Baruah, Head of the Department of Philosophy, Sankardev College, Shillong not only inspired me but also bore cheerfully the monotony of the lonely sundays and holidays for three years when I was busy with my research work. Further she also fair copied the drafts which I prepared. My children, Rajiv, Ritu and Roni allowed me to do my work during my stay in Shillong. My eldest son Rajiv fair copied some chapters. But my greatest debt is to Dr. V.V. Rao, Professor Emeritus of Gauhati University who kindly supervised my work and placed at my disposal some rare reports for my use.

I also offer my thanks to Shri Nishi K.P. Choudhury of Shillong who kindly typed the thesis in a very short time.

Dispur September 1980

(N K BARUAH)