CHAPTER - I
“The aim of education is not the acquisition of information, although important, or acquisition of technical skills, though essential in modern society, but the development of that bent of mind, that attitude of reason, that spirit of democracy which will make us responsible citizens.”

Dr. Radhakrishnan

Introduction:

Education basically is a three-fold process of imparting knowledge, developing skills and inculcating proper attitudes and values towards life and society in general. It is the most vital input for the growth and prosperity of a nation. Education is the backbone of all national endeavours. The skill that it generates is not only highly valued by the society but is indispensable for various occupations. It has the power to transform human being into human resource. Education is needed to reshape the education system continuously in harmony with the latest demands, urges, aspirations and expectations of the society. Swami Vivekananda said “We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one’s own feet”. Realizing the significance of education, most economically advanced societies have invested heavily in education and this is
one of the key factors that accounted for their success. Thus, education is one of the most powerful instruments in shaping our future.

I. Education and Constitution of India:

Originally education was a State subject under the Constitution and was exclusively a responsibility of the States. The Central Government was concerned directly with certain areas like coordination, determination of standards in technical and higher education etc. In 1976, by a constitutional amendment (Forty-second Amendment) education became the joint responsibility of the Central and State Government. The implication of this amendment is that education has become a Concurrent Subject which enables the Central Government to plan in the matter of school education, maintenance of Central Universities and institutions of national importance etc.

Besides, some of the Directive Principles, set out in Part IV of the Constitution, also have a bearing on national educational policy. For instance, article 45 enjoins that the 'State' shall endeavour to provide for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years. Article 46 requires the 'State' to promote with special care the educational interests of the weaker sections of the people, which include, in particular, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Another provision in the Constitution which has an indirect but significant bearing upon the role of the Government of India in education is entry 20 of List III which is concerned with "Economic and Social Planning"
Education Planning being an essential element of economic and social planning, the Government of India and the State Governments have to work together in preparing and implementing the national plans for the reconstruction of education.

In 1956 the University Grants Commission (UGC) was set up by the Union Government as a statutory organisation for the coordination, determination and maintenance of standards of university education in India. It provides recognition for universities in India, and provides funds for government-recognised universities and colleges. UGC prescribes model course of studies for humanities, science and commerce for undergraduate and post-graduate level and for various diploma and vocational courses. Headquarter of UGC is in New Delhi and it has six regional centres in Pune, Bhopal, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Guwahati and Bangalore.

II. Socio-Economic Background of Commerce Education:

During the Vedic ages the Indian society was primarily divided into four castes- Brahmins, Kshaktriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. While each caste was vested with specific duties, the whole domain of commerce was in the hands of the Vaishya community. Education about business techniques, secrets of business success etc. were imparted by father to son and to his heirs, hereditarily. But with the passage of time, the members of the Vaishya community started to switch over to other professions. Similarly people belonging to other communities also entered into the arena of business. As
people belonging to different backgrounds entered into business without adequate knowledge in business, a need arose for imparting of formal education in the area of commerce and business\textsuperscript{1}.

Many changes took place in the business activities during the later part of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century and earlier part of 19\textsuperscript{th} century due to advent of industrial revolution. Big size enterprises have emerged and many of these are owned not only by one person but owned by many stockholders called shareholders. But there are other stakeholders also like the suppliers of resources (materials, finance etc.), the customers, the local community and society. Thus the study of commerce has been felt as the need of the society. Apart from these, demand for commerce education arose from the private sector of the economy for trained employees with knowledge and skill in commercial activities. After the industrial revolution, society, in general, was compelled to feel the need of commerce education, mainly due to the following reasons:

a) Increase in economic activities

b) Increase in opportunities for trained business workers

c) Increase in demand for trained workers in industry/ business

d) Migration of workers from farm sector to non-farm sector/cities

When the educational institutions did not meet the demand of the private enterprises for required trained personnel, they met the challenge by organizing

\textsuperscript{1} Aravanen S., 2002.
profit-making schools, which remained the dominant influence in commerce education for several decades\(^2\).

III. **Commerce Education in Modern Era:**

According to Oxford English Dictionary, ‘Commerce’ means exchange of merchandise. If we go by the dictionary meaning of commerce, commerce education means education in the areas of trade i.e. exchange of merchandise and auxiliaries of trade including transport, banking, insurance, communication, storing and warehousing, advertising and publicity etc. Besides these, now commerce education embraces, industries of all types, service sector and even non-profit making organizations. In the light of above, some authors have termed it as business education also\(^3\). Commerce education is expected to enable students primarily in acquiring knowledge of the principles and practice of commerce and developing thereby their ability to apply knowledge to real business situations in different important areas like finance, accounting, management, personnel, marketing, etc. Thus, it is that area of education, which develops the required skills, attitude and knowledge for the successful handling of business enterprise.

Here it is thought appropriate to discuss the terminology “Commerce” vis-à-vis “Business”. At macro level, Commerce and business are one and the same. But at micro level, commerce is a part of business. Business includes

\(^2\) Aggarwal J.C. 1999  
\(^3\) Dey N. B. 1996
industry and commerce. Factory helps in converting the raw materials into finished products with the factors of production and commerce helps such functions by transferring the finished products, by financing such activities, by giving information about goods and services and by activating the buying and selling of produces, products and services. Thus commerce includes finance, transport, insurance, storage, advertisement and publicity. All activities and transactions such as how to manage the office, how to prepare accounts, how to bring the relations with other factors, how to plan, how to organize, how to direct, how to select the personnel, how to control, how to coordinate, how to communicate, how to report, how to budget and estimate etc., related to the banking, transport, insurance, storage, advertisement and publicity are called commercial activities. The education imparting knowledge and practice on such actions and transactions is called ‘Commerce Education’⁴. Commerce education equips us with specialized knowledge and techniques of business. Commerce, as a stream of education, bears its own significance in fostering industrial and commercial growth. It plays a catalyst role in preparing human resource required for a healthy industrial and trading society.

Commerce education began as professional education in India. This is evident from the report of the University Education Commission (UEC), 1949. It was only in 1961 that the Special Committee for Commerce Education known as V.K.R.V. Rao Committee identified commerce as a distinct educational stream. It admitted that the primary object of Commerce Education

⁴ Rajavel N., 2004
must be to impart liberal education of same kind as available to graduates in other subjects.\(^5\) A similar opinion is echoed in the documents of Five Year Plans, especially the initial three plans. The increasing demand for the management professionals owing to economic development in general and industrialization in particular, led to rise of management education in India as an offshoot of commerce education. These two streams of business education co-exist – the later providing a theoretical orientation and the former combining theory and practice of business\(^6\).

Many deliberations are going on at different levels in respect of the very nomenclature of the commerce education as it creates lot of confusion among the students and others. Unfortunately, commerce as a discipline is very often misunderstood by administrators, common men, students, parents and even by educationists. This misunderstanding is especially remarkable in the context of emergence of ‘Management Education’ on the one hand and on the other, professional courses like Chartered Accountancy, Cost and Works Accountancy, Company Secretary etc. Many other new areas like E-commerce, E- banking, E-business etc. have emerged to cater the need of business and a new era has started in the field of trade and commerce. But it has been observed that these new offshoot-branches of commerce education have occupied a significant place in the education system displacing the parent

\(^5\) Agrawal G.C., 1997
\(^6\) Shollapur M.R., 2006
stream ‘commerce’ from the front line. Most of these branches made their appearance much later in the business education horizon.

At present, commerce education has established itself as a distinct discipline which is relevant not only to the Indian economic environment but also to the global economic imperatives. The importance of commerce education has increased greatly with the expansion of trade, commerce, banking and other financial institutions more specially after the process of liberalization, privatization and globalization. Further with the advent and growing use of Information Technology in different segments of the economic system, and introduction of various commercial activities as a result of WTO agreements, commerce education has been able to attract more importance. This branch of education has the inbuilt flexibility to transform itself to meet the changes and developments which are taking place in the commercial and financial world.

“Commerce Education”, “Business Education” and “Commercial Education”:

In the U.S.A., the term Business Education is preferable to the term Commercial Education/Commerce Education. Prof. Herbert A. Tonne (1955) of the U.S.A. in his writing on the purposes of Business Education argues that the term “Business Education” as understood currently is preferable to the term “Commercial Education”, as he explains that ‘business’ is much broader than

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7 Dey N.B., 2009
'commerce'. The term “Education for Commerce” was used in the U.K. Sydney Webb (1897) used the expression Commercial Education. The German concept of Business Education is in terms of Applied Economics Education. In Switzerland, the term is Commercial Science. In India, the expression “Commerce Education” is used to indicate college and university grades of Business Education. Commerce education is often distinguished from business education by many. Business education is used in a broader perspective while commerce education is used in a narrower perspective. The purpose of the both is same i.e. providing the students with occupational background, technical knowledge and understandings so as to make them more employment worthy or enable them to be self employed and become effective agents of industrial and economic growth.

*It is worth mentioning here that in the present study the term Commerce Education is used to mean the imparting of education leading to B.Com and M.Com Degrees.*

IV. **Commerce Education is a General Education:**

Different authors have defined Commerce Education in different ways. Freok Hooper and James Graham regarded commerce education as a practical education leading to employment of the students. They termed it as Commercial Education and defined as “a practical education suited to the needs of present day, and calculated to fit young people intended for business careers

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8 Aggarwal J.C. 1999
for work they will have to perform and to better equip for their work those already in business"9. On the other hand, commerce education is defined from the businessman viewpoint. Chessman A. Herrick defined Commerce Education as that form of instruction that both directly and indirectly prepares the businessman for his calling. Leveret S. Lyon stated that Commerce Education is “any education which a businessman has and which makes him a better businessman, is for him a business education, no matter whether it was obtained in the walls of a school or not”. Again Paul S. Lomax regards commerce education from the national development point of view. He observed that “Commercial Education is fundamentally a programme of economic education that has to do with the requirement, conservation and spending of wealth”. Fredrick G. Nichols defined commerce education as “Commerce Education is a type of training which, while playing its part in the achievement of the general aims of education on any given level, has for its primary objective the preparation of people to enter upon a business career or having entered upon such a career, to render more efficient service therein and to advance from their present levels of employment to higher levels”10.

According to Dictionary of Education edited by P.J. Hills (1982), the term Business Studies “covers a wide range of activities in education and training. It usually means all those activities that educate and train people at all

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9 Venkateswaralu K, Basha S. J. and Rao D. B., 2004
10 Ibid.
levels who work in organizations that deal in the purchase of and sales of goods and services”.  

Mohd. Sharif Khan defines Commerce Education as “that phase of the economic system which is devoted to the management and distribution of the products of industry and the professions; as such it is the essential integrating element in the whole economic structure”.

From these definitions, it is clear that commerce education on the one hand is a general and liberal education and on the other hand is a kind of training for skill formation for a business career. Commerce education is the area of education which develops the required skills, attitude and knowledge for the successful handling of trade and industry.

**Commerce Education and Management Education:**

Management education is a new dimension of the broad area of commerce education and aims at imparting skills in management at different levels. While Commerce education is liberal, management education is professional and has an inter-disciplinary approach. But both study the same subject-matter, i.e. business phenomenon, and, therefore, are inter-related and complementary and supplementary to each other. The facilities for management education are provided at present at various Institutes of Management and Universities in India leading to post-graduate degree. As a matter of fact, Commerce is the mother discipline and Management education

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11 Hills P.J., 1982
sister discipline. While Commerce is traditionally theory-oriented, mostly concerned with drawing of abstractions of business phenomenon and developing inter-disciplinary business science, Management studies, on the other hand, are practice-oriented and are devoted to develop skills for efficient management of business

V. Commerce Education and Economic Development:

Education may be referred as the process of social change. Intellectual development is the aim and function of education. Education is the key tools through which values, ideas, beliefs, skills, technique etc are transmitted from one generation to another. Through proper education, the achievement of economic and social development can be facilitated and expedited. Education in general and higher education in particular plays a significant role in bringing desirable human resource development. Human resource development has a multiplier effect on the utilization of all other resources. That is why the concept of education as an investment in the development has been increasingly accepted. In 1966, the Report of the Education Commission (1964-66) referred to education as the only instrument of peaceful social change. Economic development may be termed as the progressive changes in the socio-economic structures, more specifically the maximization of national income and its rate of growth. Education enhances the quality, efficiency and productivity of manpower. It helps in reducing income inequalities and thus

12 Tokhi M.R., 1997
13 Sadar S.B. 2002
promotes economic development at a faster rate. It also enriches the social and cultural standards of life. Through proper education, the achievement of economic and social development can be facilitated and expedited. Thus, the main aim of the education is socio cultural changes, which involves the changes in the composition of output, reduction or elimination of poverty, inequalities and unemployment.

Economic prosperity of a nation depends on its natural resources and the physical as well as mental capabilities of its citizen. Human capital is more important than natural resources. A study conducted by the World Bank (1994) in 192 countries found that physical capital and natural wealth account for only 16% and 20% respectively of the total wealth, whereas human capital account for 64% of the wealth\(^{14}\). This clearly shows the strong linkage between the socio-economic development and education. The development of human knowledge, skill and efficiency has a direct relationship with the improvement of industrial productivity and of over all economic development of a country. The economy is a consumer of the competent and qualified graduates of the educational system. It requires a wide range of manpower to manage its sectors such as agriculture, industry, trade, commerce, services, general administration etc.

The manpower requirements of the economy as a whole have a considerable influence on different branches of education. Commerce education is an important branch of education that imparts the codified

\(^{14}\) Panda B.N. & Pradhan N.,2007
experiences of business world (industry, trade and commerce) and infuses business skill in the students. It enables them to discharge their duties and responsibilities in the business sector. The strength of commerce education lies in its ability to prepare the right manpower, for right user-groups, for right jobs, at right time\textsuperscript{15}. With the emergence of globalization, the national boundaries are fast disappearing and global market reaches every urban and village areas, demanding more specific and purpose oriented commerce education to the new generation. A sustainable and prosperous nation can not be built without human resource development which mainly depends on the quality of the education system. Thus, Commerce education which is an integral part of the total education system has a great role to play in the socio-economic development.

VI. Objectives of Commerce Education:

The objectives of Commerce courses remained somewhat unclear till independence. After independence the social outlook and attitudes of India has been tremendously changed due to restructuring of the Indian economy as well as development of science and technology all over the country. Thus, to meet the basic requirement of new business environment of the country, the role of commerce education has taken new shape. The Union Government appointed the Special Committee for Commerce Education under the Chairmanship of Dr V.K.R.V.Rao, the eminent economist, in 1958 to examine the course contents in commerce stream after independence. In 1961, Rao Committee identified

\textsuperscript{15} Shollapur M.R., 2007
commerce as a distinct educational stream and opined the primary objective of commerce education as a liberal education of the same kind as available to graduates in other subjects\textsuperscript{16}.

The Report of the Special Committee for Commerce Education has outlined the objective of Commerce education in the following way:

"The students of Commerce are expected to develop knowledge of the principles and practice of Commerce, to understand and analyze the structure of operation of the world of business, recognize commercial data as they relate to specific situations, establish cause and effect relationship between commercial phenomena; and arrive at informed judgments regarding policy situations arising in the course of business"\textsuperscript{17}.

The Mussourie Seminar on "The Planning of Business Education and Research in India" held in June 1963 remarked that "it is a liberal discipline and in no sense professional or technical education... Its purpose is to give a broad and general education to develop the minds of the students as a sharp and sensitive instrument of analysis and constructive thinking, thought, functional competence also develops in this process spontaneously".\textsuperscript{18} Thus to summarise, the general objectives of commerce education are:

(a) to prepare and develop the required manpower for trade, commerce and industry;

(b) to train teachers and researchers in different areas of commerce; and

\textsuperscript{16} Das G.,1992
\textsuperscript{17} Rehman A.R.M.,1987
\textsuperscript{18} Deka P.K., 2004
(c) to train men to perform a variety of other related activities.

All education programmes at different level must have some objectives. If the objective of a particular education programme is not clear, it is difficult to train students to fulfil the objectives. The objectives of commerce education at different stage are as follows:

**Plus 2 stages (Higher Secondary):** The objectives at this stage are to allow the students to acquaint themselves with elementary knowledge regarding various functions of business houses and also to develop confidence of students regarding commerce education.

**Graduation level:** The objective of degree courses is to give the students a thorough idea regarding business accounting, business laws, business management principles etc.

**Post-graduate level:** At P.G. Level, the basic objective of commerce education is to give specialized knowledge with conceptual understanding of various sub-branches of commerce. At this level, research work is also undertaken on relevant topics connected with business houses and society.

**Integrated Approach:** Very recently a new approach in commerce education has been introduced by Gauhati University integrating undergraduate and post graduate level (B.Com and M.Com) from the academic session 2009-10. This course is known as Integrated Commerce Course. Under this approach there are ten semesters. After successful completion of first six semesters students will be awarded B.Com Honours Degree with an option of lateral exit. The students
may opt for continuing Masters level also and after successful completion of
next four semesters students will be awarded M.Com (Integrated) Degree.

VII. Status of Existing Commerce Education in India:

Commerce education started its journey in India as early as in 1886
when the first commercial school was started in Madras (Chennai) by the
trustees of Pachiappas Charities. Since then it has experienced tremendous
growth. Commerce faculties are established in many universities and colleges.
Out of a total of 214 Universities and 9703 colleges (1996-97) in the country
about 140 Universities and more than 5000 colleges are offering commerce
education\(^{19}\). It is observed that there has been a huge increase in the number of
students in the commerce faculty in India. The enrolment of commerce students
in higher education was 17.1 percent in 1975-76. It increased to 21 percent in
1984-85 and to 21.9 percent in 1995-96. But the percentage declined to 17.9 in
2001-02. However, enrolment position slightly improved in 2008-09 and it
increased to 18.2 percent. It is seen that colleges located in urban areas
generally offer commerce education. Also students from urban areas, more
particularly from industrially developed areas, show more interest in commerce
education as compared to the students of rural areas of the country.

In Assam, the scenario of enrolment in commerce stream is not very
much encouraging. The colleges situated in towns and cities draw few
meritorious students to the commerce stream. Assam ranked 13\(^{th}\) in 1970-71

\(^{19}\) Dey N.B.,2003
and 16th in 1995-96 in the all India ranking in the enrolment of commerce. It came down to 19th in 2006-07 (MHRD, 2009). But now it has been reported that more colleges have come up to open B.Com courses in Assam. This can be substantiated by the fact that the total number of colleges which have commerce stream was only 11 in the early Eighties and in 2010 there are 31 colleges under Gauhati University offering commerce courses.

Commerce education is a living discipline. The commerce curriculum has to be flexible enough to remain dynamic so as to incorporate all changes taking place in the business world. The new economic policy has brought about sea changes in the Indian economy. The process of globalization, privatization and liberalization and tremendous growth in Information Technology and emergence of e-commerce has drastically changed the situation of the business world. Opening up of education sector to the outside world due to WTO agreements is also major threat in the present education system. In this context, the question arises whether the present commerce education system is able to provide the students with skills and opportunities to face the challenges of a very competitive and complex world. Whether the commerce students find ready job placement after graduation or after a post graduate degree in commerce? It is said now-a-days, that commerce education as it stands today is isolated from the realities of business environment. Thus a systematic analysis and discussion on Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of the existing commerce education is the need of the hour.
VIII. Structure of Commerce Education in India:

The structure of commerce education is depicted in Chart I. The chart exhibits the stages, main objectives, and method of teaching and organizational set-up for commerce education in the country.

CHART- I

Structure of Commerce Education in India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Stages</th>
<th>Primary objective(s)</th>
<th>Method of Teaching followed</th>
<th>Organizations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>Secondary Stage</td>
<td>Awareness and development of interest among the students</td>
<td>Theoretical</td>
<td>Secondary Schools under various Boards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.(a)</td>
<td>Senior Secondary/Higher Secondary/+2 stage</td>
<td>Preparatory course for further studies and also to provide orientation in business issues</td>
<td>Theoretical</td>
<td>H.S. School, Junior College, and even Degree Colleges under various Boards/Councils/Universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b) Vocational stream</td>
<td>Practical and theoretical training for self-employment in some functional areas of business</td>
<td>Theoretical &amp; Practical</td>
<td>H.S. School, Junior College, and even Degree Colleges under various Boards/Councils/Universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>+3 Stages Degrees and Diplomas (B.Com./BBS/BBA)</td>
<td>To give orientation for functional or operational activities in organization/to make entrepreneur/to prepare for higher studies/to face competitive exams for jobs</td>
<td>Theoretical</td>
<td>Universities, Colleges and Institutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>Master’s Degree, M.Phil, Ph.D.</td>
<td>Specialised academic knowledge &amp; research</td>
<td>Theoretical</td>
<td>Colleges and Universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>Professional Courses like CA,CS,CWA, MBA, etc.</td>
<td>To make professionals for different functional areas of business</td>
<td>Theoretical &amp; Practical</td>
<td>Universities &amp; Institutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Structure of Education System in Assam:

Education system in Assam encompasses both public and private sector institutions starting from Nursery/ Primary schools to Universities. In between there are secondary schools, higher secondary schools, junior colleges and degree colleges. In junior colleges higher secondary level of education, i.e., class XI and XII only are taught. In degree colleges undergraduate courses are taught along with higher secondary courses, i.e., XI and XII. It is only very recently (in the year 2010) that discussion on separation of class XI and XII from degree colleges is going on. Education at secondary and higher/senior secondary level is imparted under the Boards and Councils, viz., Board of Secondary Education, Assam (SEBA), Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), and Assam Higher Secondary Education Council (AHSEC) etc.

After the announcement of National Policy on Education (NPE), the All India Pattern of 10+2+3 has been adopted in the Universities of Assam with effect from 1984-85 academic session. The three year Degree Course (TDC) at present consists of three parts: Part- I, Part-II and Part-III. At the end of each academic session of one year each, the final examination is conducted by the University at various permitted colleges.

Very recently the Universities in Assam have decided to start Semester system in colleges. Assam University has already started Semester system in colleges while Gauhati University and Dibrugarh University will start Semester system in colleges from the year 2011-12.
Degree level courses are offered through the affiliated colleges of the Universities and Master Degree level courses are offered by the University Departments and some degree colleges. Besides these, some professional institutes are also conferring diploma and certificates through the study centres in the urban areas of the state. National and state open universities are also imparting education through distance education mode awarding different degrees and diplomas.

The machinery for educational administration in the state is composed of the Department of Education headed by a Minister. The Education Minister exercises his authority through the officers of the Department and other agencies, like Universities, Statutory Boards/Councils etc. and is assisted by the Education Commissioner, Education Secretary at the Secretariats level and the Director of Education, who is the Chief Executive Officer of the Department. The number of educational institutions in Assam in 2008 is shown in the table 1.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Institutions</th>
<th>Number of Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. HIGHER EDUCATION (as on 30th Sept. 2008)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 University</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Institute of National Importance</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Colleges for General Education:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Arts, Science and Commerce College</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Junior College</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.1

Number of Educational Institutions in Assam in 2008

20 Deka B., 2000
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colleges for Professional Education:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Agriculture and Forestry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Law College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Management Institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Veterinary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Medical College including Homeo/Ayurvedic/Dental/Pharmacy/Nursing (as on Sept. 2008)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B. SECONDARY AND ELEMENTARY EDUCATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(as on 30th Sept. 2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. School for General Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Higher Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) High/ Post Basic School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Middle/ Senior Basic School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Primary/ Junior Basic School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Pre-primary/ Pre Basic School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Institution for Professional Education (Under graduate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Polytechnic Institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Technical Industrial Arts and Craft Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Teachers Training Institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Teachers Training College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Teachers Training School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. School for Vocational, Professional, Special and Other education (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Music and Dancing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Art and Craft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Junior Technical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Handicapped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Juvenile.Delinquent (Jail school)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Compiled from Statistical Hand Book, Govt. of Assam, 2008 and various documents of Education Department
Structure of Commerce Education in Assam:

Commerce education being a general education, its structure is same as that of Arts and Science. This is shown below.

Level-I: Higher Secondary or + 2 Stage (Two years)
Level-II: Graduation (Three years)
Level-III: Post Graduation (Two years)

Commerce education at present is started from higher secondary level (10 + 2). Higher secondary course is conducted under the supervision of Assam Higher Secondary Education Council as well as under the ISCE/CBSE. Of course, the schools under the ISCE/CBSE are offering commerce subjects as optional paper in the secondary stage and two commerce subjects’ viz., Business Studies and Accountancy are taught at the senior secondary level. The Higher Secondary course is provided through Higher Secondary (H.S.) schools, Junior Colleges and Degree Colleges of the state. The Vocational stream based on commerce subjects are also offered by Assam Higher Secondary Education Council mainly through H.S. schools.

Three universities viz., Gauhati University, Dibrugarh University and Assam University are offering higher education in Commerce at the B.Com and M. Com level. Graduation level courses (B.Com) are conducted through affiliated colleges under the Universities. From 2009, the Department of Commerce, Gauhati University has started a unique course, ‘Five Year Integrated M.Com. Course’ integrating B.Com and M. Com levels. At the post graduate level Departments of the Universities and colleges having PG
department are offering post graduate courses (M.Com). Besides, Institute of Distance and Open Learning (IDOL) of Gauhati University is providing M.Com course. Moreover, IGNOU and K. K. Handique State Open University are also offering B. Com Course through distance mode. Three Universities viz., Gauhati University, Dibrugarh University and Assam University are providing M. Phil and Ph.D courses in commerce. Undergraduate courses are conducted on annual basis while Post Graduate courses are conducted on semester basis.

**Review of Literature:**

There are a few published literatures on the subject ‘Commerce Education’. The Indian Commerce Association, U.G.C., Colleges and Universities publish various publications on the subject from time to time. Mention may be made to the following books, journals, reports and proceedings of various seminars and conferences that have been gone through in the course of study. These include: ‘Commerce Education in India’ edited by D. Bhorali (1987), ‘Great Thoughts of Commercists’ edited by Prof. Om Prakash (1997), ‘Teaching of Commerce’ by J.C.Aggarwal (1999), ‘Commerce Education in the New Millennium’ by I.V. Trivedi (2002), ‘Teaching of Commerce’ by Dr. Y. K. Singh (2005), ‘Commerce Education in Assam’ edited by Dr. H. Deka (2009), Commerce Education in North-East India edited by A Rajmani Singh (2010). The Indian Journal of Commerce, Gauhati University Journal of Commerce, Annual Reports of the U.G.C. and
The seminar on ‘Commerce Education in the North-East Region of India’ organized by the Department of Commerce, Gauhati University on December, 1984 recommended that the objective of Commerce education at the graduate level should be to lay firm, factual and fruitful foundation in understanding business environment and operation of its mechanism. Commerce courses should lay considerable stress on practical orientation and developing analytical skills relevant to the world of business and it should be employment based. At the post graduate level the objective of Commerce education should be to train the students for higher position in priority sectors and in some cases preparing them for teaching and research.

Bhorali D. and Hazarika P. (1987) views that the urge for business education in our country may be attributed to two reasons: (i) growing social consciousness and (ii) a desire to equip our people for the gradually emerging job market. But the quantitative expansion and the existing facilities for commerce education may be said to be inadequate.

Narayan B.(1987) stated that commerce education have lost its social relevance because of various ills such as lack of uniformity in curriculum, indiscriminate admission, no linkage with professional bodies, apathy of Government and UGC towards commerce education, non availability of suitable text books, absence of practical approach, lack of interaction with industry and professional approach. To make commerce education socially
relevant, there is an urgent need to reorient the commerce education and restructure the curriculum.

Deb Kalipada (1987) has described that the performance of North Eastern Region in commerce education is so distressingly poor because of low growth in economic activities, inadequate recognition of Commerce degrees by the employers, lack of initiative of universities towards development of commerce discipline, etc.

Das Surya Kanta (1987) views that commerce courses should have been modernized, improved and revitalized to meet the needs of the students and requirements of trade and industry.

K.C. Rout and M.K. Nabi (2003) have stated in their paper that present system of commerce education became irrelevant to meet the challenges and problem of the changing time. To make the commerce education purposeful, it should focus on developing specialization with a global orientation, a minimum uniformity in syllabus, which must be reviewed periodically, inclusion of enough practical knowledge and faculty development programme.

A.C. Bhavsar and H.B.Rakibe (2003) emphasizes that business education should be restructured according to the changes taking place in the environment. Business education should incorporate the knowledge of Information Technology (I.T) in relation to business.

M.R. Shollapur (2007) comments that there is a need to consider the Industry’s reflections such as involving industrialists in curriculum designing, introducing practical training, work exposure, project studies etc., and
maintaining a good rapport with the industry. A successful customization of commerce education is possible only when the industry also joins its hands with the University in designing a suitable curriculum and standing by the University in implementing it.

Most of the studies cited above mainly explain the relevance and weaknesses of commerce education, and the need for redesigning of commerce education to meet the need of the society and changing business world. They have provided some suggestions like restructuring of commerce curriculum, introduction of job-oriented courses, awareness programme, establishment of linkage between universities and business houses, etc. for making commerce education relevant in the society.

Many deliberations have been going on for the development of commerce education in the different platform in the country. In Assam, not many research works have been undertaken as yet in respect of commerce education for its upliftment. There is a need to study many important areas like growth and development of commerce education, infrastructure facility, changes in course curriculum, employment opportunities, need and feasibility of introducing commerce subjects in the secondary school, comparative study between commerce discipline and other discipline of general education, role of the Government, universities and college for its all-round development. The present study is an effort to examine and analyze the progress, problems, and prospects of commerce education in Assam. The study attempts to identify the causes of the problems of commerce education and to draw a road map of
commerce as a discipline of formal education and to give measures to solve the problems.

IX. Objectives of the Study:

The research study is conducted to achieve the following objectives:

1. To study the historical perspective of commerce education in India and in Assam.

2. To examine the enrolment of students in commerce stream vis-à-vis in other streams in Assam.

3. To examine the changes in the course curricula adopted by the Academic bodies, viz. Assam Higher Secondary Education Council and Universities in Assam since its inception i.e.1939.

4. To examine employment prospect of Commerce education in the State of Assam.

5. To analyze the problems of commerce education in Assam.

X. Key Research Questions:

Considering the above objectives, the study is developed to address the following Key Research Questions:

1. What is the historical perspective of commerce education in the country in general and Assam in particular?

2. What is the status of commerce education in Assam in regard to student enrolment at different period of time?
3. What changes have been brought about by the concerned authorities in the commerce course curricula in Assam since 1939?

4. What are the employment prospects of Commerce education in the State of Assam?

5. What ails the commerce education in Assam and what are the probable remedies?

XI. Methodology:

Collection of Data:

The study is based on primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data are collected with the help of schedules and questionnaires and by conducting personal interview. Since very little written information is available on the history of commerce education in Assam, personal interviews were conducted with the senior academicians who were the teachers in Commerce Department of Gauhati University. To collect the data on enrolment of students the Annual Reports and Result Sheet/Booklets of Gauhati University (GU), Dibrugarh University (DU), Assam University (AU) and Assam Higher Secondary Education Council (AHSEC) were consulted. To collect the information on changes in course curricula, the syllabi adopted by these institutions from time to time were studied. In cases where the required syllabi were not available information on course curriculum has been collected from Mark Sheets.
To evaluate the usefulness, in the real business situation, of commerce education imparted in the colleges of Assam, schedule of questions are prepared to collect necessary information from the proprietors of business establishments, industrialists, bankers, heads of financial institutions, academicians etc.

Secondary data are collected from the reports and documents of UGC, Universities, AHSEC, related books, journals, News papers, Seminar Proceedings and internet search.

XII. Analysis of Data:

Collected information is classified and analyzed with the help of statistical tables and conclusions are made accordingly.

XIII. Period of Study:

The study covers Commerce Education in Assam since 1944 to 2008-09.

XIV. Chapterisation:

The whole study is organised in seven chapters.

Chapter – I : Introduction
Chapter – II : History of Commerce Education in India
Chapter – III : Growth of Commerce Education in Assam
Chapter – IV : Course Curricula in Commerce: Changes and Improvements
Chapter – V : Commerce Education and Employment Generation
Chapter – VI : Problems of Commerce Education in Assam
Chapter – VII: Summary and Recommendations
XV. Limitations of the Study:

The study has suffered from some limitations. They are:

1. Management education and other related professional education is not included in the study.

2. As mentioned in the methodology part, in the absence of main sources of information, the researcher has to resort on other sources, like Mark sheets, Result Sheets/booklet etc. to collect changes in the course curriculum and students enrolment.

3. Study on the history of commerce education is mostly based on the personal interview in the absence of documentary evidence.
References:


10. Ibid


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