CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

Assam, the eldest of the seven sisters of the N. E. Region, stands in the eastern part of India extending from latitude 22°.19 to 28°.16 North and longitude 89°42' to 96°30' East. She has a very close connection with the rest of the country - the bond of connection being not only geographical but also moral, political, social, educational and what not. The State of Assam can broadly be divided into two river valleys - The Brahmaputra Valley and the Surama Valley. She may again be divided into two Regions - the Plains and the Hills. The Plains region comprises the Districts of Goalpara, Dhubri, Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, Kamrup, Nalbari, Barpeta, Darrang, Sonitpur, Lakhimpur, Nagaon, Golaghat, Jorhat, Sibsagar, Dibrugarh, Karimganj and Cachar. The Hilly Region comprises the Districts of Garo Hills, United Khasi and Jayantia Hills, Karbi Anglong, North Cachar and Mizo Hills. At present the United Khasi and Jayantia Hills and Garo Hills have been separated from Assam and formed the State of Meghalaya. In the same way the Mizo Hills District has been given the status of a State known as Mizoram.

Now, central Assam includes the Districts of Darrang, Sonitpur, Nagaon, Karbi Anglong and North Cachar covering approximately an area of 29,679 Sq.Kms. The total population of central Assam is 38,53,773 according to the figures shown in the 1971 (Census records).

The boundary of central Assam can broadly be fixed as follows: On the North it is bounded by the Kameng Frontier Division.
of NEFA (Now Arunachal Pradesh) and parts of Bhutan. On the East is the States of Nagaland and Manipur. The Southern side is surrounded by the District of Cachar and Manipur. Meghalaya stands on the West with her hill tops covered with mist all the round.

Assam was known as Pragjyotishpura in ancient times as in the epic ages of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. According to E.A.Gait \(^1\) Pragjyotisha marks the city of Eastern Astrology. "Pragjyotish" was the name of the city where Brahma the creator of the universe is said to have stood at the time of creating the stars. 'Prag' means former or eastern and 'Jyotish' means the astrology as a star shining. Pragjyotisha, therefore, means the city of Eastern astrology. Thus the name "Pragjyotisha" is commonly associated with Louhitya, Kamarupa and Kamakhya. In the "Kalikapurana" both the names - Pragjyotisha and Kamarupa are mentioned. The name of the Kingdom Pragjyotish was converted to Kamarupa probably during the early centuries of Christian Era. But Pragjyotisha remained as the capital city of the kingdom of Kamarupa. This Pragjyotisha exists for a long period of the early history of Assam \(^2\).

The name "Assam" is of recent origin. The word is an anglicise form of the Assamese word "Asom". The word is derived from Assam having the meaning of "uneven" as distinguished from "Samatala". E. A. Gait \(^3\) suggests that the word is derived from the present designation of the Ahoms.

The word "Asama" was first given to the "Shans" (Ahoms) which was later on given to the country. S. K. Chatterjee⁴ also opines that the Ahoms a Shan tribe, who came to Assam in 1228 A.D. used to call this territory "Ahom" or "Asam".

**INHABITANTS OF ASSAM**

Assam has been a meeting place of various ethnic groups having diverse socio-cultural back-ground. These ethnic groups came to Assam at different periods from different directions. Central Assam has both plains and hills and the people living there are mingled together to give an integrated picture of the culture of the State.

The history of Assam starts with the traditional rules as mentioned in the "Puranas". They were called "Danavas" or "Asuras" and were evidently non-Aryan people. In the epics and "Puranas" they are mentioned as "Kiratas" and "Mlechas". The name of the earliest ruler, so far known from tradition in Assam was Mahiranga Danava. Mahiranga is the sanskritised name of the Boro name "Mairang".

The earliest inhabitants of Assam, referred to as "Mlechas" and "Asuras" are found in some early texts.

The Kalika Puranas described the earliest inhabitants of the territory which lateron came to be known as Assam as Kiratas. They were strong and well built, ferocious, ignorant and addicted to meat and liquor⁵. From time beyond the reach of history, successive herds

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4. Chatterjee, S.K., :- The place of Assam in the history and civilisation of India.

of people from Tibet, Burma, Yemen, Indo-China and other eastern countries had entered India through Assam by land routes. Passing through Bhutan came the tribes like the Aka, the Dafalla, the Abor and the Missimi. The earliest immigrants were perhaps the Austro-Asiatic speaking Khasis and the Syntago who entered Assam many centuries before the coming of the Tibeto-Burmese.

The Muslim first came to Assam in the early part of the 13th century. Muhammad Bin Bakhtiar Khiliji, a muslim General of Kutubuddin of the slave dynasty invaded Assam in the early 13th century but lost the battle. The muslim attacked Assam several times but could not conquer it. Many muslim soldiers were left behind in Assam on many occasions and these leftouts lateron joined the main stream of Assamese culture and traditions in the process of cultural assimilation and identification and enriched the culture and tradition to form the Great Assamese community.

The modern name of Assam was used by the Ahoms in the 13th century and the indigenus people living here came to follow the shows and use the same name given to their native land.

In the early centuries of the Christian Era high class Aryans such as the Brahmins, Kshyatriyas and the Kalitas came to settle in Assam from provinces like Bihar, Kanauj, and Mithila. Thus Assam became a common theatre place for diverse groups and tribes of people with a common cultural platform.
The most outstanding feature of Assam's prominence in the past is the ideals of human perfection that reveals itself in an inscription of the eleventh century as "It is adorned by the learned men, religious preceptors and poets who have made it their place of resort, just as the sky is adorned by Mercury, Jupiter and Venus."

The present day population of Assam may be divided into tribal and caste-groups. The caste-group or non-tribals inhabitant the rich and fertile alluvial plains of the Brahmaputra consists of the Brahmins, the Kshyatrias, the Kayasthas, the Kalitas and the Keota etc. Of all of them the Kalitas are said to be the earliest immigrants and were the first Aryan colonist of Assam. The actual period, the Aryan entry into Assam is not known. It may, however, be stated that the Aryans came to Assam at any early period. The Kalikapurana states that Naraka was responsible for the early settlement of the Aryans in this land. Naraka was the first Aryan ruler of Assam.

**LANGUAGE AND DIALECTS**

Sanskrit was the popular language of the people living in the plains of Assam during the period under discussion and it was also the court language of the time. Gradually, by the 12th century A.D., modern Assamese language had developed as an Aryan speech out of Sanskrit.\(^6\) The Aryans migrated to Assam from different places in

central Asia. The Brahmins and the Kayasthas came to Assam from Videha (Mithila and Kanauj).

Assamese is the major language of the people of Assam. It is spoken not only in the Brahmaputra Valley, but also in Arunachal, Nagaland, parts of Manipur and Meghalaya and by the people inhabiting the border areas adjacent to the plains of Assam. Assamese, the main language of this part of the Indian territory, is used as the lingua franca by all people including the tribes who have their own dialects and languages. At present it is the mother tongue of 57% of the total population of Assam. Another 15% of the population use Assamese as a second or subsidiary language.

There are innumerable dialects used in the spoken form by different groups of people in Assam. Some of these native dialects are Bodo or Boro, Kochari, Miri, Orang, Dimasha, Naga, Kuki, Khasi, Garo, Rava etc. As many as 192 languages and dialects including 31 non-Indian languages have been recorded as being in use in Assam as per the census report of India, 1961. Thus, we see Assam is a land of heterogenous racial strains with linguistic divergence but the modern Assamese language has occupied the place of vehicle of expression of a composite Assamese civilization and cultural heritage.

The importance of Assamese language was appreciated even by the eminent English scholars like Bronson and George Grierson in

the long past. Bronson in his Preface to the Anglo-Assamese Dictionary wrote about the beauty of the Assamese language which had distinct characteristics. Again George Grierson emphatically stated that Assamese literature was as old, if not older, than Bengali. It was Andrew John Moffat Mills, a judge of Sadar Court in Calcutta, who came to Assam who laid high emphasis on the Introduction of Assamese as medium of instruction in schools. The Government had declared Assamese as the medium of instruction in schools and as the language of the Court in 1873\textsuperscript{10}.

\textsuperscript{10} Assam Commissioner's Office, File No. 471, 1872-73, P. 43.
The concept of secondary education varies from the early Vedic period to the present post independence era. At that time, the concept of secondary education was the attainment of knowledge and skills only. But in the present times the concept of secondary is to attain all round development of personality of the learner.

The term secondary education is simple, yet it interpreted differently by different theorists. According to S. N. Mukherjee the concept of secondary education "Stands for three things - (a) a stage, (b) a type and (c) a standard. As a stage, it stands to what next to Elementary Education. As a type, it stands for something that, though related to a certain intelligible classification of things to be learnt, is constantly being modified and enlarged, but the fundamental of which can be expressed only by a still more elusive name, humanism or liberal education. As a standard, it aims at that measure of erudition of which universities can take cognizance. The part that secondary education has played as an element in the national system has depended largely upon the measure in which these three meetings have been brought into harmonious relation with one another.\footnote{Kochhar S. K., :- "Pivotal issues in Indian Education", Sterling Publishers Private Limited, New Delhi-110016, P. 113.}

The basic concept of secondary education lies on the preparation of better citizens for democratic living. All the nations of the world feel that it is education which can alone enable a country
to achieve progress for people. The secondary stage of education must be founded deeply on the long-charished ideals and traditions of its people. Moreover, the secondary schools are the light posts for higher education in which intelligence and adaptability to environment are required to solve the various complicated problems of the young adolescent. It is the founding stage of adolescence where they reshape and mould their whole personality characteristics. To-day the concept of secondary education rests on a great responsibility since it deals with the development of personality of the adolescents. Moreover, it is secondary education through which the structure of the society can be built up. The real meaning of secondary education lies on the fact that it is a source of inspiration for the entire development of the society and community.

1:3. BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

The historical background of secondary education of Assam reveals the actual existence of past records. No one can deny the influence of the past records. Because present is the product of the past and the past of a nation or race has its dominating influence on the present.

Historical records shows that there was no outstanding development in the field of secondary education in Assam in between the period of 1937 to 1947. The secondary education in Assam was non-existent in the pre-British days. In fact, it is gift of foreign
rulers. The system of secondary education in Assam was firstly introduced by the Christian Missionaries. The Christian Missionaries deserved credit for promoting the cause of education in Assam. The history of secondary education in Assam reveals the fact that through the encouragement of middle schools system, the secondary education came into existence. Prior to 1835 there was no such type of schools in Assam. But in 1835, the then Commissioner of Assam, Captain Jenkins started an English school at Gauhati, the present of City of Assam.

This school has established a good support. The total enrolment of the school rose from 58 in 1835 to 150 in 1838 and 340 at the end of 1840. Assam was constituted as a separate province only in 1874. Therefore, a separate Directorate of Public Instruction was created in Assam to look into the affairs of education. The newly created Directorate took maximum initiative for the expansion of secondary education in Assam.

Moreover, after the attainment of independence, many valuable Committees and Commissions have been formed for the wide development of secondary education throughout the country. As a result of independence the following Bodies were formed:

(i) Tarachand Committee of 1948.
(ii) University Commission of 1948-49.
(iii) Secondary Education Commission of 1952-53, and


All these Commissions and Committees took initiatives to develop the secondary education throughout the country. All the Commissions and Committees submitted their valuable recommendations and suggestions for the complete development of secondary education.

Tarachand Committee (1948) suggested some valuable measures for the upliftment of secondary education. This Committee report suggested that the secondary schools should be multipurpose type though unipurpose schools were not to be discouraged. It also urged on the necessity of appointing a Commission for inquiring into the problems of secondary education.

The University Commission (1948–49) reviewed the position of secondary education and remarked that secondary education is the real weak spot in educational system. The Central Advisory Board of Education was appointed in 1944 to examine the prevailing education system and offered some valuable suggestions for its improvement. Meanwhile, the successive five year Plans began to function both in the Centre and the State since 1951. This implementation of Five Year Plan programme towards the development of secondary education was also remarkable.

The most important among those Commissions was the Secondary Education Commission of 1952–53. The Government of Assam adopted a scheme for the reorganisation of secondary education as envisaged in the report of the Secondary Education Commission of 1952–53. The Commission suggested three major reforms in the secondary education:-
(i) Reorganisation of the educational pattern of education.

(ii) Diversification of the secondary curriculum and

(iii) Reforms in the examination system.

As regards reorganisation of the pattern of secondary education the Commission recommended as under :-

(a) Eight years of integrated elementary education for children in the age group of 6 to 14 years.

(b) Three years of secondary education from 14 to 17 years and two years of higher secondary education with a marked diversified courses.

(c) And, first degree course should be of three years' duration after higher secondary\textsuperscript{13}.

Moreover, there should be diversification of secondary curriculum through the conversion of selected high schools into multipurpose schools.

As a consequence of recommendations, high schools were upgraded to higher secondary schools and some high schools were converted into multipurpose schools. The recommendations of the Commission were integrated in the successive Five Year Plans began to be implemented, both at Centre and in the States since 1954. The Secondary Education Commission's Report is, however, a very lucky

blue-print since it was not placed in the cold storage and the Government tried to implement the majority of its suggestions. In achieving these objectives and reconstructing secondary education for the purpose, every efforts should made by all concerned.

The Education Commission of 1964–66 has examined the whole field of secondary education. This Commission made a radical structural change in the system of secondary education. It has recommended two types of secondary schools - a lower secondary or high school of three years from 14 to 17 years leading to matriculation examination and higher secondary school of two years and three years of University degree course. The sole purpose of this change is to strengthen the standard of secondary education. The impact of this recommendations has already been introduced throughout the State.

History of secondary education shows that the first Secondary Education Act of Assam was passed in 1961. The Act came into effect from January, 1962 and the first Board of Secondary Education of Assam was constituted from the same year. Prior to 1962, the secondary education was controlled by the Government and by the Guwahati University in Assam. Secondary education in Assam for the period under review registered progress both through State patronage and public venture.

In 1977 an Act was passed known as the "Assam Provincialisation Act of Secondary Education." It is expedient to provincialise secondary schools covered by the deficit scheme under the Government of Assam for its improvement, better control and management of such
schools in the State. But in spite of all these attempts, the secondary education represents a poor show till to-day in Assam.

Again in 1986, the Government of India appointed an Education Commission under the name of Archarjyee Rammurti to review the complete system of education from primary to higher education.

1: 4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

No nation can develop without a sound system of education. It is that instrument of education by which a nation is transformed and shapes its future. But the system that prevail in our State, particularly in secondary stage, is full of reasonable inequalities and imbalances. To investigate all these inequalities in the system of secondary education, is the main objective of this study.

Unless the academic standard of secondary schools improves, the required higher education cannot be achieved. To attend the academic standard of secondary education is the important objective of the study.

Some relative problems of secondary education are responsible for creating difficulties, hardship and handles. To inquire all these problems the study is of great importance.

Another basic objective of the study is to make a comparative investigation about the different types of secondary schools of the area.
The development of educational facilities to secondary schools are uneven in the study area. In order to highlight the unequal facilities of the schools is another objective of the study.

To suggest possible remedial measures for the improvement of existing conditions of secondary schools in the District of Darrang is the basic objective of the study.

Considering all the above objectives, the researcher selected this study with the following reasonable hypothesis:

(i) The most dominant among those hypothesis is the regional imbalances between the rural and urban high schools.

(ii) Non-availability of teaching facilities in the secondary schools of Darrang District is also a sufficient cause for backwardness.

(iii) Spatial structure of population of the District has created much difficulties for proper development of secondary education in the Darrang District.

(iv) Low standard of teaching, lack of school administration and supervision are also responsible for slow progress of secondary education in the Darrang District.

(v) Major drop-out in the secondary stage is also a cause for deterioration of the standard of education in Darrang District.
(vi) Lastly, the most vital hypothesis lies on poor financial assistance to the secondary schools. Hence, it is necessary to establish by research study to inquire into and to find out certain reasonable solution about these problems.

1:5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SECONDARY EDUCATION

The secondary education has a significant role in the entire field of education. In fact, it is that stage of education which helps children to become full members of a complex society. Secondary education develops to the highest potential ability, aptitudes, interests and qualities of character. It enables the individual to enter life as a knowledgeable, active minded social individual. Secondary education is really a nation building education and the maintenance of good quality therein is of great importance. It determines the quality of all stages of education.

As primary teachers come from secondary schools, good standard in secondary education help ultimately to improve primary education. The University students too are drawn from secondary schools. So the standard of higher education depends on considerably upon those of secondary education.

It is obvious that secondary education forms the central link in the chain of education. Elementary education has to be structured as to strengthen foundation of secondary education and secondary education has to be so structured that students can be sufficiently equipped both in knowledge and skills to join any part of economic life. Moreover, secondary education is of decisive importance in the economy of a developing country. It has a determining qualitative influence reaching out into all important sectors. Secondary education determines the quality of a nation's citizens, since it deals with the children between the age of 14 to 16 years which is the most critical and precious period of an individual's life. The most prominent among those significances of the secondary education is the utilitarian and cultural aspects. It has another part to play that is the attainment of development of entire community. In fact, it is an undeniable fact, that the type of education given at secondary stage plays a significant part in the field of education.

From the above significance of the study, it is evident that the study will contribute much towards the growth and development of secondary education in Assam and particularly in the District of Darrang which is considered to be most backward District in all aspects.

The study will also help the administrators, educational policy makers to re-design the secondary education and plan for effective execution.

Unless and until the basic drawbacks in this stage is not removed, the improvement of higher education is not possible. Considering the above significances the study is of prime importance.
DESIGN OF THE STUDY

METHODOLOGY

The method that has been used for this study is of survey type. The study area is mostly differ in population structure, educational standards, literacy and enrolment etc. The study area covers two Sub-Divisions of Darrang District - Mangaldoi Civil Sub-Division and Udalguri Sub-Division.

At first, a polit study was made to find out the general problems related to secondary schools of the District. In connection with the survey the following persons or Bodies were decided to meet :-

(i) Headmasters of Secondary schools.
(ii) Teachers of Secondary schools.
(iii) Members of the Managing Committee.

The researcher through his personal contact with these persons collected opinions and suggestions regarding the problems faced by them in their functioning. The study covers both types of secondary schools - Rural and Urban as well as boys' and girls' schools.

By random sampling technique, thirty number of secondary schools have been selected out of 123 total number of high schools in the District15.

15. Fifth All India Educational Survey of Assam, 1986. Table No. 5.
The sample schools selected from both of the Sub-Divisions of the District. The following steps were taken to make a thorough inquiry of the District schools as far as possible:

(i) A comparative study between Rural and Urban schools were selected to finalise about the reasons of educationally advanced and educationally backwardness.

(ii) Government and Private High schools have been selected.

(iii) Some selected Girls' High schools were also included in the sample.

The researcher utilised some useful tools to collect necessary data from the survey. For the collection of informations from the different persons, some important questionnaires were constructed and distributed to the concerning persons. These were the Headmasters of Secondary schools, the teachers of Secondary schools and the members of the Managing Committees. Some questions were also served to collect information about teaching aids, facilities available in the schools, which are shown on findings.

The questionnaire schedule covers the following items relating to the Headmasters, teachers and members of the Managing Committees of Secondary schools - such as the location of the schools, kinds of schools, facilities available in the schools, financial position, co-curricular activities, community relationship, functions of the Managing Committee, relationship with the Headmaster, criterion
of selection of teachers, load of teaching, teaching aids, opinion of teachers about the management, steps taken by the management for the improvement of schools, information about hostels, time-table, syllabus, examination, student-teacher relationship, parents and guardian's attitude towards education etc.

Questionnaires for Headmasters consists of personal information, financial position of the school, information regarding Managing Committee, inspection and supervision of the school, private tuition etc. As regards the organisational climate of schools, there were certain items in the questionnaire for the Headmasters which dealt with topics like examination results, teaching aids, science apparatus, publication of school magazines.

Besides the collection of informations from the Headmasters of Secondary schools there were some questionnaires served towards the teachers of the High schools. The questionnaires consists the following items for the teachers of High schools :-

(i) Information about economic condition.
(ii) Information about salary and other benefits.
(iii) General impression of people about teachers.
(iv) Relationship with community.
(v) Educational and professional qualifications.
(vi) Private tuition.
(vii) Reasons for choosing the profession.
(viii) Work for professional growth etc.
Information regarding the above are collected by the researcher by visiting personally to those schools with the help of the questionnaire schedules.

Next questionnaires used to obtain desirable responses from the members of the Managing Committee about the school management. The questionnaires for Managing Committee members comprises personal information about the members, objectives of the Managing Committee, steps taken for raising the economic status of teachers, code of conduct of teachers, experiences gained during supervision, suggestion for improvement of management of the schools etc.

The above questionnaires were served to the Headmasters of Secondary schools, its teachers and the members of the Managing Committees covering the whole study area.

The researcher met the concerning persons in the schools and established a good relation with them and distributed the questionnaires within the school hour. Moreover, both the Headmaster and the teachers of the schools were requested to give their free opinion relating to the questions. Informations given was strictly confidential. Most of the teachers took two to three days to give back their complete questionnaires while some few returned the same within the same day. The Headmasters usually took the help of the office Assistant to fill up the schedule.

In the same way the members of the Managing Committee were requested to give their opinion freely and completely. Of course, during their interview they were assured that their opinion would completely
be kept confidential. They returned the schedule with short period of time. All the relevant informations were collected by the researcher by personal efforts and initiatives.

The data collected by the questionnaires meant for the Headmasters, teachers and members of the Managing Committee have been finalised in appropriate ways.

The location of the sample schools, types of schools, facilities available in schools, financial position, facilities for co-curricular activities, community relationship, selection of teachers, load of teaching work, use of teaching aids, opinion about management, steps taken for improvement of schools, information about the hostels, information about medium of instruction syllabus, evaluation, student-teacher relationship, parents and guardians attitude towards education etc. have been analysed. By the above methodology the researcher has analysed the entire data for finding the important trends in them.

1.7. LIMITATION

(i) The present study is primarily concerned with the secondary education of Assam with reference to Darrang District.

(ii) The study involves the secondary stage of education in the State of Assam.

(iii) It is an accepted opinion that the three stages of education are inter-related and inter-dependent,
still the author has delimited the study area to secondary stage considering the vital role it has to play in fulfilling the nation's expectations by preparing the students both for higher education and to be productive citizens.

(iv) The study is limited within two Sub-Divisions of the Darrang District - Mangaldoi Civil Sub-Division and Udalguri Sub-Division.

(v) The present study is confined only with the lower secondary stage, ranging Classes from VIII to Class X and includes both Government, Provincialised, Government Aided and Private schools of Darrang District.

It is expected that the findings can largely be generalised to the entire Darrang District and to the entire State of Assam as well, keeping the limitations in view.