8.1 Concluding remarks:

The progress of elementary education during last century has been really disheartening due to several mistaken policies. Firstly, the British Government crushed down the indigenous educational system, which had been in vogue in this country from times immemorial. Secondly, the East-India Company adopted a new policy in education which is popularly known as Filtration theory. Thirdly, the British Government neither recognised nor acknowledged that it was the primary duty of the State to give free and compulsory education to all children of school going age.

Elementary education, however, after independence also, is neglected chapter and an ordinary primary school presents a sorry picture in all respects. The only serious measure taken in this field so far is passing of compulsory Primary Education Acts but not its implementation. If a nation is to develop every man, woman and child of India has to be brought within the folds of good education. The elementary education schools are the backbone of a nation. Elementary schools, being the first formative stage of education, they have to make the foundation strong so that children do not fall even at the slightest jerking of socio-economical waves of the nation. Therefore, it should make a bold step to put elementary education on sounder footing and healthier surroundings.
The most important challenge before the nation at present is mass illiteracy and poor economic condition of the Indian people as a whole. Even after the 7th Five Year Plan also, there is a significantly high percentage of illiteracy in India, which stands in the way of meaningful success of the national planning.

After 1947, the year of re-birth of free India, we have tried our hands on many matters in the field of education. We have succeeded in some, failed in some others, and are still pursuing the rest.

One of our notable achievements relates to the quantitative expansion of elementary education. To-day, primary education facilities are available to practically every child in India within a walking distance from his home. But still then to achieve the qualitative expansion of elementary education, our tasks, in any case, are gigantic.

The present study reveals some of the notable learks which stands on the way of administration and management of elementary schools of Darrang District, representing Assam as a whole which are as follows:

1) Unexpected increase in population, poverty of the masses, illiteracy of the parents, inadequate financial resources of the Government and local bodies and resistance to the education of the girls have caused difficulties in implementing the constitutional directives of free and compulsory education for all children until the age of 14 years, vide Article 45 of the Indian Constitution.

2) The socio-economic condition of teachers is far from satisfaction. Hence, they resort tutions and other businesses as a source of their income. These factors contribute to a negative contribution to the progress of education.
(3) The furniture, equipments and buildings are quite inadequate in the stage of elementary education in Assam and District Darrang, which stands on the way of imparting proper education to the pupils resulting deterioration of the standards of elementary education.

(4) There are no required number of teaching personnel in the primary stage. Although the upper primary schools have the required number of teaching personnel, but the number of trained teacher in both the stages is not encouraging. Naturally, it creates obstacles on the way of the progress of elementary education, particularly when we need new dynamic methods of teaching in the changed educational policies and situation of the country.

(5) Both in primary and upper primary schools, due to the lack of funds and lack of proper facilities and proper initiatives on the part of the teachers, Government and guardians, co-currucular activities and physical education have been neglected which is very much essential for the building of harmonious development of personality of the students.

(6) The school is a social institution, created to serve specific social needs. Therefore, there should have intimate relationship between school and society. The study reveals that the school community relationship is not at all encouraging. So there is a lack of understanding between the teachers and the parents which is much essential for the people to understand the difficulties of the school.

(7) Regular departmental supervision is absent in both stages of schools. Some schools are not even inspected consecutively for two years. Backward and distant places are not covered by the Inspectors. Again the Inspectors give stress on class teaching but not on the total schools, and they do not represent any demonstration classes. On the other hand there are no special institutions for the service and in-service training of the Inspectors. Naturally they tagged in quality and cannot exert their influences upon the teachers and the taught.
The study reveals that the Managing Committees are only in name, they have no vital role to play in the administration and management affairs. Neither the Managing Committee members are interested nor the Headmasters seek their co-operation in its day-to-day management affairs. This has led them isolated from school resulting very many difficulties to the Headmasters in conducting their schools.

It is interesting to note that, due to the unfavourable socio-economic positions, the professional competency and social prestige of the teachers have been badly affected by the engagement of many teachers in different kinds of money making activities. The teachers are seen not enjoying a fair amount of prestige in the society than a political or a Government official person. This has led them to be pessimist causing many negative contributions to the progress of elementary education in the District.

Generally, professional and general competency improves the social prestige. But the study reveals that many teachers enter into the job without having any professional training. Almost half of the teachers are Matriculates. As the teacher holds the key position in education and it is upon his competence and sense of duty that the standards of education will ultimately depend. Therefore, the standard of general and professional training should be raised at all cost.

At present, except free distribution of text books, there is no provision of ancillary services in the elementary stage of education. But text books are received by the schools very lately causing inconvenience to the pupils and the teachers. So lack of ancillary services contribute some element of difficulties in improving the standard of instruction in the elementary schools.

Another bottleneck in the elementary education in the District of Darrang, is found to be wastage and stagnation, which is the major aspects of the findings. The rate of wastage and stagnation
is very high in lower primary stage, but higher in upper primary stage in case of girls, of which the percentage is 80.62 percent. Naturally, the problem of wastage and stagnation stands like a dragon on the way of the progress of elementary education in Assam and in District Darrang. Therefore, the Government should make all endeavours to stop it by providing better facilities of education to all sexes of the community.

(13) The average number of teachers per school is not upto the requirement. Naturally, there can be no alternatives but to take multiple class teachings by the same teachers in different classes with different subjects losing efficiency. The study indicates that small number of teachers per school is also one of the cause for the poor progress of elementary education in the District. So, there should be one teacher for each class.

(14) The study reveals that, the courses taught in the schools of Assam and in Darrang District, are not related to the child's environment. New methods of teaching science and mathematics, recommended as essential ingredients of the elementary curricular, are being ignored; and most of the schools do not have even the relatively in expensive teaching aids developed by the N.C.E.R.T. quite often, these encourage memorising the contents of books and repetition of the expected questions. The programme of work-experience or socially useful productive work, on which Gandhi's basic education laid stress, has not been implemented in most schools.

(15) Another important trend in the study is that the percentage of lady teacher is very small in numbers, which cannot motivate the girls for encouraging enrolment. This may be established as one of the important cause for the poor enrolment of girls in the elementary stage of education. The girls do not feel secure when they cannot find teachers of their own sex in the schools resulting high drop-out. Therefore, Government should make bold steps to appoint lady teachers specially in the lower primary schools.
Thus, it may be concluded from the study that there are so many factors involved in the process of slow progress of elementary education in Assam, and District Darrang, out of which socio-economic condition and ignorance of the people in general, are the two main roots of all the evils, for which the condition of the system of elementary education in the District is in a backward stage.
8.2 Summary:

Assam, known as Kamrupa in ancient times, has a glorious ancient heritage. She has a history going back several centuries before the Christian Era. That history is full of heroic deeds done by great humanitarian works done by well known saints and seers.

Although for long, Assam had her indigenous system of imparting elementary education through formal institutions like Tola, Madrassa and Pathsales before the advent of East India Company and Christian Missionaries, because of the curtain of ignorance and superstitious beliefs which had pervaded almost all classes - the progress of education was too distressingly slow, in fact no serious attempt was made at any level of introduce a liberal system of education in Assam.

Assam came under the East India Company's rule after the treaty of Yandabu in 1826. It was David Scott, who procured the sanction of the Government of Bengal to establish a number of schools in upper Assam and lower Assam for the promotion of indigenous education. Thus the East India Company started the beginning of the modern elementary education in Assam.

Side by side, the Missionaries in Assam, also made notable contributions in the field of elementary education. Not only that they wrote for the first time, the Assamese Grammar and Dictionary, but also rescued the Assamese language from the grip of Bengalee language.

Mass enthusiasm for education marked the remaining years of the country in which the education of the masses made considerable progress following the recommendation of Wood Despatch 1984, wherein a grant of Rs. 1.00 was paid to every 10 boys attending elementary school.
Since then, with the co-operative effort of East India Company and Missionaries and with the local educated gentlemen of Assam, the number of educational institutions and attending children began to increase at a rapid rate in the subsequent years.

Again due to the awakening consciousness of nationalism, and with the enforcement of compulsory Primary Education Acts in different provinces, consecutively four compulsory Primary Education Acts were passed in 1926, 1947, 1954 and 1962. Those Acts have adversely affected in the rapid growth of primary schools in Assam. In 1947-48, the number of primary schools was 7574 with an enrolment of 456,972 pupils and 10,015 teachers increased to 18,928 schools 15,20947 pupils and 34,983 teachers in 1968-69. Again it increased to 25,873 schools 22,75961 pupils and 62,833 teachers in 1985-86.

In the District of Darrang, there are 1323 primary and 203 upper primary schools. Out of 1323 schools, 1294 are provincialised and 29 are private schools. On the other hand, out 203 upper primary schools, 175 are provincialised and 28 are private aided schools.

There is always a belief that District Darrang is one of the backward District of Assam in the field of elementary education. It is sure that, District Darrang is largely inhabited by a large section of Bodo, Nepali, Tea garden labours and immigrant peoples who have shown little interest in education. Perhaps this is because of the fact, the average percentage of literacy is not so high.

Inspite of all these facts, it is believed that after independence, either because of the negligence of Government or because
lack of initiative of the people of the area has contributed a negative contribution in the progress of elementary education. Hence, it is necessary to establish by research study how far the elementary schools in Darrang District, survives in quality and in their problems. Inspired by all these considerations the investigator choose to take up the present problem entitled "Elementary Education in Assam, with special reference to Darrang District an analytical study."

Objectives of the study :-

(1) To analyse the demographic, socio-educational aspects of the District.

(2) To assess the stages of elementary education and the existing facilities offered by the Government in the field of elementary education.

(3) To find out the nature of the problems, which have been responsible for creating various difficulties, hardships and handicaps for the elementary schools.

(4) To examine the educational attainments of the general population.

(5) To assess the administrative set ups of the District, in the field of elementary education.

(6) To suggest possible measures for the improvement of the existing conditions.

Method :-

Design :- The project is of survey type. For this, the researcher has selected 85 primary and 15 upper primary schools of Darrang District, so that it can represent the State as a whole. At
first, a pilot study was made to find out the general types of problems related to elementary education in the State. On the basis of the information collected, the investigator constructed a questionnaire schedule proforma consisting of nearly 75 items to collect personal information about Headmasters, teachers, Managing Committee members and to collect information about the index of teaching aids and other facilities available in the selected elementary schools of Darrang District. The following steps were taken to make the sample of schools as representative as possible:

1. Balance was maintained between educationally backward and advanced areas of the District.
2. As far as possible, road side schools were chosen.
3. Schools of rural areas as well as schools of urban areas were selected.
4. Private as well as provincialised and some girls schools were selected.
5. Stratified random sampling had to be used while selecting schools. After establishing a good relation with the Headmasters, the questionnaire was administered.

Data Treatment and Analysis:

The data collected with the questionnaire meant for the Headmasters have been analysed for finding the important trends in them by using appropriate techniques.
Summary of the Findings:

Summary of the findings in respect of Headmasters, teachers, Managing Committee members, co-curricular activities, material conditions of teaching, wastage and stagnation, inspection and supervision and ancillary services etc. have shown a negative contribution towards the development of elementary education in the District of Darrang.

Discussion on the salient features of the findings:

After a good deal of discussion, it was arrived at a conclusion that poverty, ignorance, illiteracy, lack of Government facilities, lack of school community relationship, bad communication, spatial pattern of population, distance from the towns and deprivation of modern amenities are some of the causes resulting backwardness in the field of elementary education in the District of Darrang.
8.3 Suggestions for Improvement:

I. Headmaster and Teachers

(1) Residential facilities should be offered to the teachers of elementary schools for those who have to cover a long distance from their residences.

(2) Pre-service training of teachers should be encouraged and gradually it should be made compulsory.

(3) In-service training should be made compulsory before the retirement of a teacher.

(4) The Headmasters should be given some more powers to make them abreast with the institution.

(5) The service condition and scale of pay of all the teachers should be improved to attract men of talent. To enable the teachers to function at their highest efficiency certain minimum facilities in the class room, teaching aid and co-curricular activities should be provided for them.

(6) A person with higher I.Q., equipped with various qualities should be selected for the job of teaching. The minimum qualification to be a teacher in the primary stage should be Higher Secondary
examination pass or above, on the other hand the same should be B.A. pass or above with professional qualification in the upper primary stage. Under no circumstances, simply Matriculate candidate should be selected as teacher in any of the stages of education.

(7) The duration of the training course should be increased to a minimum of two years duration for the existing Matriculates and Higher Secondary course pass candidates. It should be at least three years for non-Matriculates. For graduates joining the elementary schools, a course of one year duration will do.

(8) Training institutes should be nationalised and taken over by the centre. There should be a training college meant for the elementary teachers in every State and one training institute in each Sub-Divisions level. The existing curricular of the training institutions should be revised and more appropriate teaching methods have to be adopted.

(9) It is a mistake to have schools having only classes from 1 to 4, and tag on classes 5, 6 and 7 with separate M.E. and M.V. schools with secondary schools. By raising the structure of the present primary schools we can divert better staff and facilities to this stage in education in the same complex remaining it as elementary education.

(10) Women education and selection of them to teaching profession should be encouraged. They should not be placed in a distant place, they should have their schools nearby to their residences.
(11) Private tuition should be stopped.

(12) In the S/C and S/T areas, the proportion of S/C and S/T teachers should be increased.

(13) The real edifice of good education can only be built on the fruitful endeavours of a happy satisfied and contented teacher. Therefore teaching has to be made a prestige profession in all respects. The importance of services and sacrifices of the teachers should be recognised by the society.

(14) One teacher in each classes should be made available in primary stage of education.

II. Managing Committees

(1) Some more powers should be entrusted to the Managing Committee members, so that they may take keen interest in the schools.

(2) Certain minimum qualifications be laid down for being a member of the Managing Committee. The Committee should have an educational expert and an expert financial adviser.

(3) The Manager or the President of the Committee should be selected from such persons, who have keen interest in education. If possible retired Headmasters or teachers should be selected.
(4) Regular sittings of the Managing Committees according to the procedure should be made compulsory.

III. Inspection and Supervision

(1) The staff of inspectorate should be sufficiently increased so that regular visit by an Inspector to a school is done twice a year.

(2) The post of Inspector should be filled by people of merit having a good measure of organisational ability and academic background, so that they may create confidence in the mind of the teachers. They also need constant in-service refresher courses, languish orientation courses during vacations, workshops and seminars.

(3) Monthly seminar of Inspectors may be arranged at the Sub-Divisional and District Head-quarters, where D. E. O., D. I., Block Elementary Education Officer and teachers of B.Ed. colleges also be involved in this process.

IV. Curriculum and Co-curricular Activities

(1) The curriculum of the schools needs to be reformed suiting the diverse tests and temperaments of the pupils and the local needs. Some teachers need to be trained to give proper guidance in the subject like craft. Complicacy of curriculum should be avoided
at all cost. In the rural elementary schools teaching of elementary agriculture should be stressed.

(2) Co-curricular activities are very much needed for the proper development of the children in the elementary stage, therefore, these activities should be encouraged by giving proper financial assistance from the Government.

V. Material conditions of teaching

(1) Adequate provision of instructional rooms, furniture, black-board, maps, coup-boards and ancillary services should be extended to the elementary schools by the Government, out of the available resources.

VI. Organisational Climate

(1) Frequency of examination should be increased. The provision of oral test and internal assessment should start from the elementary schools.

(2) Provision of pure drinking water, lavatory and urinals should be extended to all elementary schools at the cost of Government.

(3) Teachers should be provided adequate scope to take active part in community development programme.
(4) Organisation of parent-teacher associations and other social activities for maintaining good school community relationship should get top priority. Headmasters should be directed to organise such activities as the Government should organise parent-teacher associations at the State and District level.

(5) Like French system of elementary school administration, more responsibilities should be given to the local authorities or the village communities to make the mass people associated with the schools.

VII. Wastage and Stagnation

When poverty, ignorance and illiteracy are the main causes of wastage and stagnation the following suggestions for improvement may be made:

(1) Provision of mid-day meal, drinking water, co-curricular activities and ancillary services in which the children are naturally interested should be made available.

(2) Parents must be educated so that they can appreciate the value of their children's education. Therefore, mass spreading of adult education should receive increased attention.

(3) Provision of pre-primary classes with one more additional teacher in each school should be immediately extended.
(4) Besides scholarship and uniforms to the pupils, financial assistance should be given to the guardians, those who are needy.

(5) Special assistance should be made available to the under-developed schools.

(6) Girls education should receive cordial support.

VIII. Financial Assistance

(1) In fine, it may be said that to give effect to all these, sound financing is a must by which the schools, can adopt themselves to new circumstances and changed context.