CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Assam a profile:

The science of history was known to the early inhabitants of Assam, and it is not till the Ahom invasion in 1228 A.D. that we obtain anything at all approaching a connected account of the people and their rulers. For several hundred years previously some scattered facts may be gleaned from a few ancient inscriptions and from observations of a Chinese traveller. Before then nothing definite is known, and our information consists of some dubious and fragmentary references in the Mahabharata and the Puranas and Tantras and other similar records.

Ancient Assam, known as Pragjyotisa or Kamarupa in the great epics; the Ramayana and Mahabharata, and in other Principal Puranas, occupied an area larger than that of the Modern Assam State, and extended westward towards the river, Karatoya. The kingdom comprised the whole of Brahmaputra valley, together with Rangpur, and Cooch Behar. The kingdom included Manipur, Jaintia, Cachar, and parts of Mymensingha and Sylhet.


Asaan, 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 valiant kings and generals and great humanitarians works done by well known saints and seers. Bhagadutta, Kumar Bhaaskar Burman, Sri Harshadev Burman, Lachit Berphukan, Sri Sankardev, Sri Madhabdev are amongst the many Historic names that adorned the pages of history. Though united with the rest of India at all times culturally and Geographically, Politically Asaan was an independent State till the advent of the British power in 1826, when the six hundred years old rule of the Ahom came to an end. Asaan was thus one of the latest victims of British imperialism in India, but it is gratifying to note that she was also one of the earliest to rise in national self consciousness forgoing ahead her destiny in resurgent India.

**Physical back-ground**

Asaan is the Frontier province of India on the North-East, extends from latitude 22°.19' to 28°.16' N and longitude 89°.42' to 96°.30' E. It is located between the foot hills of the eastern Himalayas and the Patkai and the Naga ranges, covering roughly a triangular area of 1,21,973 sq. kms. On three sides of the province is shut in by the great mountain ranges, inhabited by people mostly of Mongolian stock. To the north lie the Himalayan regions of Bhutan and Tibet. Below the high mountains is a range of sub-Himalayan hills, inhabited by small

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races of Bhuttia origin, and further eastward by Tibeto-Burman tribes, Akas, Daflas, Miris, Abors and Mishmis. To the north east lie the Mishimi hills curving round the head of the Brahmaputra valley. Continuing to the east is the Patkai range being chiefly inhabited by the various tribes of Nagas, and the native State of Manipur. To the south lie the Khasia Jayantia hills range being inhabited by the speakers of the Indo-Chinese language of the Mon-Khmer Group.

The modern name of the province, Assam, is of recent origin. It is connected with the Shan invaders who entered the Brahmaputra valley in the beginning of the thirteenth century A.D. and who were known as Ahoms. The tradition of the Ahoms, therefore is the present name derived from Assam, in the sense of "unequalled" or "peerless". With the Assamese prefix it would mean "undefeated", "conquerors". The name of "Assam" was applied to the country by the Muslim chroniclers after the name of the ruling people the Ahoms.

Assam is divided physically into two main parts, the highlands of the Frontier tracts to the north and east, and the plains below. The plain consists of the two river valleys; the Brahmaputra valley and the Surana valley. Between the valleys lie the broken hills of Assam range comprising Caro, Khasia, Jayantia hills, North Cachar hills, Karbi Anglong hills and Naga hills. The plain comprises the present districts of

6. ibid., - Barua, B.K., P.- 4.
7. ibid., - P.- 2.
Goalpara, Dhubri, Kokrajhar, Barpeta, Malari, Kamrup, Pragjyotis pur, Nagaon, Jorhat, Golaghat, Sibsagar, Dibrugarh, Lakhimpur and Cachar. The hilly region comprises the Districts of Garo hills, united Khasi and Jayantia hills, Karbi Anglong, North Cachar, Mizo hills and Naga hills. But except Karbi Anglong and North Cachar hills Districts, the other hills Districts have been separated from Assam identifying different names. The united Khasi and Jayantia and Garo hills forming a new State Meghalaya, Mizo hills as Mizoram, and Naga hills takes the name of Nagaland.

The Alluvial plains of Assam consists of (a) the valley of Brahmaputra and its tributaries and (b) the Surma valley. The Brahmaputra and its tributaries cover approximately an area of 56,274 sq. kms. while Surma valley, forming a triangle south of the Shillong plateau, is bounded on the east by the Mizo hills and on the south by the hills of Tripura.

River system

Due to heavy rainfall in the Himalayans and other water-sheds of the north eastern region, Assam is endowed with an extensive river system. Through the heart of the province runs the mighty river Brahmaputra or Lohitaya, extending from eastern part of Assam to the west covering a distance of 724 kms. It is the chief artery and high way of Assam. For generations the Assamese have watered their fields with its life giving floods and drunk of its blessed water; their whole history and culture are intimately connected with the Brahmaputra.

**Flora and Fauna**

(a) Flora

The forest of Assam covers a large area. Therefore, perhaps Assam is known as a jungle State to the people of other parts of India. There are most valuable timber trees in the forest of Assam.

(b) Fauna

Assam is rich in fauna also. Different varieties of monkeys, tigers, bears and deers are found in Assam. Bison, buffaloes, wild goat, wild dog and cats and hyenas are also found in the forest of Assam. Elephants are quite common in Assam. Assam is world famous for its one horn rhinoceros.

Varieties of birds like, Sarus crane, Peacock, Myna, Peafowl, different kinds of local and migratory ducks, fish eating birds commonly known as Pelicans, Herons, Storks, Ibises, Egrets and Flamingos are seen in Assam.

Other important birds such as pigeons, green pigeons (Maitha), imperial pigeons (Porghuma), hornbill (Dhanesh), larks, swallows, martins, orioles, crows, bul-buls, wrens, sparrows, weaver birds, vultures, hawks, kites, parrots, owls, cuckoos, nightjars are also found in Assam. Over and above, fishes and reptiles, such as crocodiles, tortoises, ana turtles and snakes of different varieties are quite large in numbers.

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Climate, Rainfall and Temperature

Assam enjoys a cold winter and a pleasant spring. The climate is also characterised by a highly humid atmosphere and abundant rains. The south east monsoon sets in about the beginning of June and ceases in October. The rainfall is fairly heavy between May and September. The minimum temperature of Assam comes down to in between 6° to 11° Centigrade in the month of December to January, and the highest daily average maximum temperature does not rise over 35° Centigrade in the month of July.

Agriculture

Kalika Purana describes that the earliest inhabitants of Assam were the Kiratas, Cinas and other primitives commonly designated as Mlecchas and Asuras. The most important group of Tribes of the Tibeto Burman race are known as Bodo forms the numerous and important section of the non-Aryan people of Assam. The Bodo group of people includes the Koch, Lechari, the Lalung, Dimanche, the Garo, the Rabha, the Tipra and Chutiya and the Morans. The Tibeto Burman group and the Shaas to-day constitute the bulk of the population of the province, valleys as well as in hills. Risely remarks that Assamese are unmistakably Mongoloid. Elvin considers them a rather modified Mongoloid with a dolichocephalic or long head but with the typical flat nose, high cheek bones and oblique slit-eyes 12.

From the earliest times, Assam has served as a highway connecting the rest of India with south-east Asia, through which successive

hoards of people of diverse ethnic groups, having different cultural entities migrated to Assam at different times. The earliest immigrants were perhaps the Austro-Asiatic speaking Khasis and syntangs, who must have entered Assam many centuries before the coming of the Tibeto Burmans, and the latest were the Burmese, which had to be expelled by British Forces during the Viceroyalty of Lord Amherst in 1828 A.D.  

In the early centuries of Christian era, high class Aryans, such as Brahmans and Kayasthas came to settle in Assam from Northern India, but Kalitas are indigenous to the Assam valley.

Gait writes excluding immigrants during historic times a few communities like Kalitas of reputed Aryan decent, and few other, such as the Dome of obvious Dravidian origin, forming the bulk of the population of the Brahmaputra valley.

Assam is thus an Anthropological museum with varied socio-religious systems, and at different stages her history has been closely linked with India on one side, as on the other with south-east Asia and the Pacific world. Assamese culture is the sum total of primitive and advanced contributed by the Austric, Alpine-Aryan and Tibeto Burman elements. Beginning with the pre-historic period, the land has been exposed to invasion from all directions; but with the dawn of history her links became closer, both politically and culturally with the rest of India.

1.2 Constitutional provisions and conception of Elementary Education:

(a) Constitutional provisions

The constitution of India makes the following provisions under article 45. "The State shall endeavour to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of this constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years."

The expression "State" which occurs in this article is defined in article 12 to include "the Government and Parliament of India and the Government and the Legislature of each of the States and all local or other authorities within the territory of India or under the control of the Government of India."

It may be remembered here that, the constitution provides only "free and compulsory" education and there is no mention of the type of education i.e., basic or non-basic. Again, it gives only the upper age limit of compulsory school period, but there is no mention that when it should start.

(b) Conception of Elementary Education

Free India is making a herculean efforts to provide universal schooling to all children in the age group of 6 - 14. This education is conducted in elementary schools in different parts of the country. Elementary schooling generally covers two stages Primary and Middle. But there is at present a bewildering variety of nomenclatures used in
the States and Union Territories to denote at the elementary stage. The following Table shows the Nomenclatures of elementary education in India.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group 6-11</th>
<th>Age group 11-14</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Middle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary in some States</td>
<td>Middle or Middle Vernacular Schools in some States.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lower Primary in some States (Gujrat)</td>
<td>Junior High Schools (U.P.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Basic (Prevalent in all States)</td>
<td>Higher Elementary (Madras)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Elementary Schools (Madras)</td>
<td>Senior Basic (In almost all States)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is evident from the above Table of nomenclatures that, the stage of education covering from 6 years of age to the age of 14 is called the elementary education upto such class or standard beyond the eight class.

Secondary Education Commission, 1952 states that the elementary stage of education covers four or five years of primary or junior basic education followed by a three years duration of Middle or Senior basic or Junior secondary education.

According to Dr. D. S. Kothari, elementary education covers four or five years of lower primary education; (Class I - IV for the age group 6 - 11, and three to two years of higher primary education (Class V - VII, for the age group 11 - 14).


Table source - ibid - P.- 30.
In the province of Assam, up till now four different compulsory free education acts have been passed in different names. They are compulsory Primary Education Act of 1926 and 1947, Basic Education Act of 1954 and Assam Elementary Act of 1962.

Why the Government of Assam in 1962 has passed the education act in the name of Elementary Education, instead of Primary Education is a question to many. Generally the meaning of both Primary and Elementary education is same, and they indicate the education of the early years of the children. But in some cases some writers wanted to show a difference between the two. Again in some books without giving any identification of the terms, they misused it. It is also seen that, in different paragraphs of the same chapter, both the words primary and elementary are used simultaneously.

In the Dictionary of Education, compiled by Carter V. Good, the conception of primary education is defined as that Division of the elementary schools including grades 1 to 3, devoted primarily to instruction in fundamental skills and the development of social attitudes necessary for democratic living. In the same dictionary, the definition of elementary education is given as - the period of formal education beginning in childhood, usually at the age of 5 to 7 years, and ending approximately with the adolescence. From the above definition it may be conceived that the meaning of elementary education is to some extent wider than that of primary education.

3. ibid - P. - 98.
Hence, all Government Middle Vernacular Schools, all Senior Government Basic Schools, all Middle Madrassas, all M. V. Schools, all Primary Schools, and Senior Basic Schools maintained or aided by the Government shall be recognised as Elementary Education, under the Assam Elementary Education Act of 1962.  

1.3 Significance of the problem

It has already been mentioned in the last paragraph of the Assam profile, Assam is an Anthropological museum with many socio-religious groups of people. Assamese culture is the sum total of the primitive and advanced, contributed both by the Aryans and non-Aryan elements.

The absence of chronological treatment of socio-educational events of the past in India hinders the researchers in making a thorough probe of the growth and development of the Indian culture and nationalities. Although the Assamese chronicles and historical records are no doubt trustworthy to a certain extent, these also hardly give any liberal clue to the socio-educational growth of Assamese nationality.1

In certain respects India's educational system is unrepresentative of those found in most non-industrial societies. Its educational system is older and more extensive than most. With the beginning of 19th century, a nation wide educational system of western type was established immediately after following the Macalaya's minute of 1835. The educational system grew rapidly in response to the demand for educational opportunities. By independence in 1947, there were millions of students enrolled in an educational system embracing thousands of institutions of all types. After independence the system even grew more rapidly. By 1967 official statistics reported 51.2 million boys and girls enrolled in more than 4,00,000 primary schools. Unlike many developing countries, India has a large and elaborate educational system than reaches into almost every villages.2

However, with respect to enrolment and attrition patterns, India’s educational system is similar to those of many other non-industrial countries. Many children never attend school at all. Near about 8% of primary school aged boys and 17% of primary school aged girls never receive any formal education. Again more than 70% of the children who are enrolled in class one never finish primary school, 40% do not even reach class Two. Only a small fraction of the young pass through the education system successfully to join the ranks of the "educated"\(^3\). All these, make a probe into the mind of the researcher to take up a study in this line.

School in the past was confined in teaching of language, religion, philosophy and mathematics only to the children of priestly class and noble families. But modern society demands the education of all children. There has been a remarkable change in the role of the schools and of the Governments, in recent years. As a result of new discoveries in the field of science and technology as well as the developed means of communication and changes in social conditions, modern civilization has grown to such an extent that informal agencies of education have practically ceased to discharge not only its own educational functions, but also to provide what have and community provided in the past. Moreover, with the coming of democracy, universal education has not only become a social necessity in the modern world but also an accepted social ideal\(^4\). Education has come under the process of organisation and administration, and it will remain a joint responsibility of parents, teachers and society.

\(^4\) Safaya, R., – School Organisation and Administration : (1974). P.– 17 and
Shaida, B.D.,– P. B. H. Press, Delhi.
The stage of elementary education is the gate-way of learning. Based on the importance of the stage of elementary education, the research has intended to take up the project.

Assam being the frontier province of India is far away from the capital city, deprived of so many facilities offered by the Government. Amongst all provinces of India she is the youngest sister to have the proper smell of western culture and tradition only after 1826. While Bombay had seven modern Colleges during 1580 to 1623, Assam was under the benign control of Ahom kingdom.

Assam was, and since it is still to some extent, an unknown country. It is an integral part of India. Its situation on the eastern-most frontier in immediate proximity to such independent foreign States as the Empire of China, the country of Bhutan, and East Pakistan (Bangladesh) has endowed with strategic importance to the whole of India. A thorough knowledge of the system of education in Assam is therefore a matter of great necessity to Indian in general and to the people of the province in particular 5.

The present work is an attempt to study the different administrative set up, facilities available, backwardness of education and problems of elementary education within the administrative boundary of Assam with a special reference to the district of Darrang.

Shillong being the capital of Assam since 1874, was a remote place for the inhabitants of Assam, to be in touch with the Government, because a poor communication. Moreover, as the boundary of the province

was much bigger in areas, Government could not make a balance look in
the subject of education. After the separation of Nagaland, Mizoram and
Meghalaya, the capital of Assam shifted to Guwahati has made the people
to come closer to the Government, and this has facilitated the growth and
development of education. The variety of socio–educational back ground
among the inhabitants was especially advantageous for exploring educational
research.

In the District of Darrang, the significance of the problem
lies in the fact that a sizeable portion of the population of the District
belongs to the scheduled tribes (Mongolid group) and immigrant Hindus
and Muslims from erstwhile Pub Pakistan (Bangladesh). Immigration of
tea garden labourers is also one of the factors that contributed to the
growth of the total population of the District.

The percentage of literacy in the District is 19.9 as against
28.72 in Assam and 29.35 in India. The average percentage of literacy
of the scheduled tribes population of the District is 17.3 which is lower
than that among the tribal communities of the State as a whole6.

Since 1873, Assamese was the medium of instruction in all
schools of Assam including those of the tribal areas. But now Bodo has
been recognised as medium of instruction since 1974, in the areas pre-
dominantly inhabited by Bodo people. It has made them isolated from
the average General Population. This isolation is likely to affect the
socio–cultural situation of the District adversely7.

Nov. 1977. PP. (Ed) XII, XIII.

Also Saikia, Hagen, - (Ed) Assamor Lipi Samasar, Asom Sahitya Sabha,
Special provisions have been made in the article 45 of Indian constitution that "the State shall endeavour to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of the constitution, free and compulsory education for the children until they complete the age of 14 years."

Besides, Article 46, 275, 330, 332, 335, 338, 340 provides safeguard and interest of the scheduled tribes and to protect them from social justice and exploitation. Government of India has been implementing special schemes for developments. The present work is an attempt to study the haves and have nots of the District in the field of elementary education, in the light of the recommendations of different educational Commissions and reports.

There is no denying the fact that, "the present is the fruit of the past and the germ of the future." So the study of the past on the basis of the present will certainly predict the steps to be taken in the administration of elementary education in future is felt by the researcher. If a society is to march forward, it should have a balanced system of elementary education.

A child of to-day is the responsible member of tomorrow to shoulder the heavy burden of the State. It is obvious that, the future of a nation depends upon a sound system of elementary education. The present Darrang District is treated to be one of the backward Districts of Assam in the field of elementary education, because of so many factors. With this end in view, the topic of the study is considered to be significant to the researcher.

The researcher is a native to the province of Assam by birth. The choice of the study area is influenced by the researcher's personal
knowledge of the region and its people having worked in Darrang District as a College teacher since 1972, the researcher has developed a knowledge of the area and an understanding of its socio-educational processes.

It is therefore, thought that, this would be an ideal area for undertaking the study of "Elementary Education in Assam with special reference to the Darrang District: an analytical study."
1.4 Scope and limitation

1. The present study is primarily concerned with the elementary system as it obtains in the State of Assam.

2. For the purpose of the study the researcher has taken only the elementary stage of education, which is a crucial and backbone of a nation. Because no system of education can be successful, until and unless a nation has a sound system of universal elementary education.

3. The study is confined to all provincialised, private and aided Primary and Upper Primary schools of both rural and urban places.

4. The study covers two sub-divisions, Mengaldoi and Udalguri of Darrang District.

The scope of the study area is influenced by the researcher's intimate personal knowledge of the region and its people having worked in Darrang District as a College teacher for about last sixteen years, this researcher has developed a knowledge of the area and understanding of its socio-educational processes. However, it is felt that in the sampling of the areas, i.e. District, weighted representation of the educational development of the entire State has been achieved to some extent. Thus it is hoped, that the findings can be largely generalised to the entire State of Assam keeping the limitations in view.
1.5 Objectives of the study

The objective of the work is more academic rather than utilitarian. The main emphasis of the work is given on administration and management of elementary education as a whole, giving a special reference to District of Darrang. Further more, a thorough analysis of the have and have nots in different spheres of elementary education and relevance of the developmental schemes undertaken from time to time by the Government in the State and in the District of Darrang. The specific objectives are as follows:

(a) To analyse the demographic, social and economic aspects of the District.

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

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

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

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

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

It is, therefore, intended to study the problems arising out of the presence of different ethnic groups and their influences on the general backwardness of the District.
Based on the statements the following Hypothesis have been set up. These will be verified in the course of analysis and the correction, if necessary shall be made at the closing chapter.

**Hypothesis**

1. Poverty, ignorance, illiteracy and lack of Government facilities have contributed partly towards the general backwardness of Darrang District, in the field of elementary education.

2. Socio-cultural isolation of the elementary schools from the general population give rise to another cause of backwardness of the district in the field of elementary education.

3. Bad communication, flood prone areas, spatial pattern, distance from the town, deprivation of modern amenities are some of the causes, resulting backwardness of the District.

4. Educational backwardness of the population of the District, has contributed towards the general backwardness of the District in the field of elementary education.

5. The major influx of immigrants from different parts of the world has become a bar in the development of socio-educational structure in Darrang District.
1.6 Methodology

Design

The project under study is of survey type. For this, the entire Darrang District under six block areas were selected. These areas differ on population pattern, occupations of people, educational standards, enrolment, literacy etc.

At first, a pilot study was made to find out a general type of problems related to elementary schools of the State and Darrang District in particular. On the basis of the information collected, it was decided to meet the Headmasters of primary and upper primary schools, and collect from them their statements, opinions and suggestions regarding the problems they faced in their functioning.

The work has been carried out in four stages. The first stage consists of Library work. In order to prepare the thesis, the researcher has consulted different books on history of Assam and Darrang, pre-independent reports of Assam, reports of Indian Education Commissions and some allied books which are mentioned in the Bibliography.

Sampling

In the second stage the researcher undertook field work. For convenience at least 100 (one hundred) elementary schools of which 85 primary and 15 upper primary schools have been selected from the six education block areas of the District, by the researcher in stratified random sample survey for collecting primary data. The following steps were taken to make the sample as representative as possible:
(1) The school should cover a large area.

(2) The school selected should be road side one.

(3) The school should include both rural and urban areas.

(4) The sample must include all major communities of the region.

(5) Balance was maintained between educationally advanced and educationally backward areas by selecting six block areas of Darrang District, viz. Dalgaoa, Kalaigaon, Khairabari, Majbat, Udalguri and Sipajhar.

(6) Both Government, provincialized and some private schools were taken into consideration in the sample survey.

(7) Some Girls' schools were also included in the sample.

The census survey method has also been adopted to collect information. In doing it so, all the heads of the sample elementary schools, some teachers and members of Managing Committee have been interviewed. In most occasions the questionnaires have been used by the researcher.

Secondary data relating to the elementary education are collected from hand book of Census Report 1971 Darrang District, 5th All India Educational Survey Report - Assam State and Darang District 1986, Gazetteer of India, Assam State, District Darrang, 1978 and District Census hand books for 1961 and 1971. Further relating data have been collected from the concerning Government departments of Mangaldoi and Guwahati from time to time.
In the third stage of the project, the researcher concentrated on the findings of the data collected. Statistical techniques have also been applied to process the data.

The fourth stage of the project consists of interpretation of data arriving at findings of the thesis incorporating suggestion and prognosis.

**Tools**

To collect the information of Primary and Upper Primary schools from the Headmasters, one questionnaire schedule was constructed consisting different items of the school, which is shown in Appendix I-A.

The questionnaire schedule consists of personal informations, financial position of the schools, information regarding Managing Committees, information regarding the teachers and the pupils, inspection and supervision of the schools, private tuition, examination results, material conditions of teaching, co-curricular activities, and community relationship etc. Besides, the following items were included in the questionnaire:

1) Identifying information.

2) Information about the service held in the school.

3) Economic position.

4) Problems related to economic position.

5) General notion of people about teachers.

6) Position of teachers in the society.
vii) Reactions of teachers.

viii) Educational and professional qualifications of Headmasters and teachers of elementary schools and their quality.

ix) Attitude towards the profession and the post held.

tax) Reasons for choosing the profession.

On the basis of the items listed above, a questionnaire was constructed.

Procedure for collection of data

After reaching the schools and Headmasters were contacted and all efforts were made to establish a good relations with them, and the questionnaires were distributed among them along with the Schedule Proforms. The individual Headmaster was also requested to give his responses to the questionnaire prepared for the purpose which would be kept confidential. In some occasions the questionnaires have been filled up by the researcher himself by interviewing them on the spot. Most of the Headmasters took ten or fifteen days to give back their completed questionnaires.

Data treatment and analysis

The data collected by the questionnaire meant for the Headmasters and informations gathered from different sections of people like, teachers, Managing Committee members, village Headmen and persons having social status have been treated in appropriate ways.
The location of sample schools, kinds of schools, facilities available in schools, financial position, co-curricular activities, community relationship, objectives of Managing Committee, opinion of Headmasters about the management, medium of instruction, evaluation, wastage and stagnation, student teacher relationship, parents guardians attitude towards education etc. have been analysed in due course in time in appropriate place by computing their respective percentage values. The simple statistical techniques have been described in the text at appropriate place if necessary.

The schedule for the index of teaching aids and other facilities available in the schools have been analysed properly.
1.7 Description of the sample characteristics

The District of Darrang covering an area of 3465.3 Sq.Kms. and with a population of 8,34,574 (1971 census) touches river Pachmai and Sonitpur District in the East, Baranadi and Kamrup District in the West, Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh covering with a large and small hills in the North, mighty river Brahmaputra and Mugaon District in the South. There are 1424 number of revenue villages in six Block areas of Darrang District.1

By random sampling the researcher selected 100 schools of which 6.43 percent is Government, provincialised and private primary schools out of 1223 numbers of total primary schools in the District; and 7 percent of upper primary schools out of 203 total numbers i.e. 85 and 15 in numbers respectively making a total of 100 elementary schools.

The provincialised schools are fully financed and managed by the State Government, whereas the management of few private schools rests with the local community. Some private schools are partly financed and some others are fully managed by local bodies. There are few purely Government schools in both primary and upper primary stages of elementary education. Also there are some schools managed by religious organisations receiving no grant from the Government of equal standard.

Timing of the schools

The primary schools sit from 10 A.M. to 3 P.M., six days in a week. In urban areas, where there is a shift system some classes
are held from 6.30 A.M. to 11.00 A.M. In rural areas very few schools sit from 6.30 A.M. to 11.00 A.M. for the convenience of the guardians. Again the upper primary schools sit from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. six days in a week.

**Primary (Elementary) stage**

In the life of a child for the first time, a particular course of study is introduced in the primary stage of education. This stage is meant for the children of 6 to 14 years of age, or in other words the education meant for above mentioned eight years is called elementary stage of education. Dr. D. S. Kothari Commission (1964-66) has suggested to divide primary (elementary) stage of education under two stages. Four or five years of lower primary stage and three years of higher primary stage. Under no circumstances, the Commission has fixed that just to enter into class I, a child should attain at the chronological age of 6 years. The same is followed in Assam and in the District of Darrang also.

The education age under primary stage of education in different countries of the world are not similar. It differs from country to country.

**Objectives of Elementary Education**

The educational conference of the representatives of the Education Ministers of the countries of Asia, held in 1959 at Karachi, has decided the following objectives of primary education after a good
deal of comprehensive discussion.

1. Training of the proper use of the sense organs of the child.

2. Development of body, mind and soul along with their emotional, social aesthetic and moral sides.

3. To prepare the child for ideal life of a citizen, to develop the spirit of love for the nation, to make them loyal to the social taboos and to develop the spirit of social service in them.

4. To develop in the child the idea of brotherhood and internationalism.

5. To develop scientific attitude.

6. To make them prepare for dignity of labour.

7. The last but not least is to make the child prepare for a working life.

Thus, the objectives of primary education accepted by different educationists of the countries, have been taken into consideration by the educationists of our State also in the field of primary education.

Syllabus :: Lower primary stage

All lower primary schools under survey have mother tongue or regional language, Mathematics, Social study, Science, Drawing,

Creative activities and Craft subjects. Craft subjects are generally not taught in the classroom teaching, but it becomes a paper of 50 marks in the examination.

**Higher primary stage**

As per recommendations of Dr. D. S. Kothari (1964-66), the upper or higher primary schools of Darrang District have the following type of curriculum as follows:

1. The study of three languages vis. Mother tongue or regional languages, English and Hindi.
2. General Science.
4. Social Studies.
5. Drawing.
6. Co-curricular activities.

But in M. E. Madrasa schools besides these, Dinjat and Arabic is taught.

The Assam Secondary Board of Education has accepted the following types of curriculums for the higher primary stage of education in the following ways.

A. **Main compulsory core subjects**:
   1. First language - Mother tongue or Regional language.
   2. 2nd language - English.
   3. 3rd Language - Any one of the following:-

---

(i) Hindi - For the students whose first language is Assamese within Assam.

(ii) Assamese - For the students whose first language is not Assamese within Assam.

(iii) Hindi or Assamese - For the students outside Assam, who have not taken it as first language.

5. General Mathematics.
6. History.
7. Geography.
8. Drawing.
9. Moral Education.
10. Work Experience.

B. Additional Subjects - Any one of the following (Not compulsory):-
Sanaskrit, if it is not taken as 1st or 3rd language, a pupil should take one from the following: -


C. Co-curricular activities:

Schools for elementary stage education:
According to the traditional structure of elementary education in Assam, among the seven classes of elementary education, four classes (from I to IV) are conducted in junior basic and lower primary schools, and the remaining three classes (from V to VII) are conducted in some Middle and Middle Vernacular schools separately. Besides, classes
V, VI and VII are conducted in all Secondary Schools of Assam. Quite naturally there are different organisations to share the responsibilities of elementary education in Assam and District Darrang.

**Administration of Elementary Education in Darrang District**

As Darrang is one of the Districts of Assam, it is abide by the same rules and regulations of Assam in matters of curriculum, organisation and administration of elementary education. The administrative machinery is given below in order of preference in the next page.
### Administrative Structure of Elementary Education in Assam and District Barrang

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State Level</th>
<th>Education Minister of Assam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Commissioner of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secretary of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Director of Elementary Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Level</td>
<td>District Elementary Education Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Divisional Level</td>
<td>Deputy Inspector of Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block Level</td>
<td>Block Elementary Education Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sub-Inspector of Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assistant Sub-Inspector of Schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Powers and functions of the Educational Officers

The Education Minister is generally not an administrative officer, but a policy maker political person, who neither goes through the files nor interferes with the activities of his subordinate educational administrators. But he has the power to veto over all disputed matters relating to education if he is not satisfied. He has the power to direct the Government for sanctioning special grants, appointment and transfer of teachers and officers, recognition, provincialisation and deficit grants to the schools and colleges out of his own capacity.

Actually in the top level there are provisions of two posts namely Secretary and Commissioner of Education. But at present the same person is holding the two posts. The Commissioner deals the all financial matters relating to all Departments of education. On the other hand the Secretary of Education is the executive head of the machinery. It is under who's signature, all Gazetted rank officers of the Department are transferred and appointed.

The Director of Elementary Education is the administrative key of the entire elementary education system, who is assisted by Additional Director of Elementary Education. The Director of Elementary Education is responsible for construction of curriculum, creation of new schools and new posts, approval to the appointment of primary and upper primary school teachers, making provision for training of teachers, preparation of text books and such other allied matters relating to elementary education of the State.

The District Elementary Education Officer (D.E.O.) is the administrative head and a powerful officer over the entire stage
of elementary education. He is the supervisor over the Deputy Inspector of Schools (D.I.) and Block Elementary Education Officers under his jurisdiction. His office generally deals with the transfer and appointment, sanctioning leave, retirement benefit, submitting reports to the Director of Elementary Education, disbursing maintenance grants and distribution of text books to the upper primary schools of the District with due approval to the Director of Elementary Education.

Next to the District Elementary Education Officer, there are Deputy Inspectors of Schools in each Sub-Divisional Head Quarters of all the Districts in Assam. At present their powers and functions have been minimized because of the decentralisation of powers. Earlier, before the creation of the posts of District Elementary Education Officer and Block Elementary Education Officer, they are all in all in the field of primary education. By now the Deputy Inspector of Schools are to deal with the primary and upper primary urban schools in matters of management and control. At present the Deputy Inspector of Schools can appoint teachers in the lower primary stage, only to the candidates selected by Advisory Board of Elementary Education. Besides, he deals leave, transfer and suspension benefit of the lower primary school teachers. Over and above he is the authority to conduct inspection and supervision either by him or by his subordinate Sub-Inspectors of Schools.

At the Block level, the Block Elementary Education Officer is a new post in Assam created very recently, who is responsible for passing pay bills to the primary and upper primary school teachers under his jurisdiction. Further, he is in power of distribution of free text books to the lower primary schools, free uniforms and
distribution of utensils supplied by the Government from time to time under Black Board Operation programme to the lower primary schools. Up-till-now no clear cut divisions of the powers and functions of Elementary Education Officers have been made in between District Elementary Education Officer, Deputy Inspector of Schools and Block Elementary Education Officers. But in near future a clear cut division is expected to come for smooth running of the institutions.

At the grass root level the Sub-Inspectors of Schools are the last inspecting officers of elementary education stage. Sub-Inspectors of Schools are mainly responsible for inspection of the schools and to demonstrate new methods of teaching to the elementary teachers and to submit reports to the Deputy Inspector of Schools from time to time. Besides they are to submit reports to the Deputy Inspector of Schools for permission and recognition of new schools. As Sub-Inspectors are a wing of the Deputy Inspector of Schools, they are subordinate to the Deputy Inspector of Schools only but not to the Block Elementary Education Officer.

Building

Almost all the sample schools have their own buildings wherever it is pucca building, partly pucca, kucha or thatched hut in the elementary stage of education. The sanitary conditions of the school is not satisfactory. Most of the Headmasters of primary and upper primary schools stated that the repairs to the school building is seldom done due to the lack of funds and official formalities to be maintained with the appropriate authority. Repairing and white washing in some private schools are done occasionally out of their fund available.
The primary schools have neither office rooms nor common rooms for the staff. Out of the sample schools of primary stage, it was found that only 5 schools have common rooms for the staff. In case of upper primary schools at least there is a common room for each school which is used for both office room and common room. There is no special arrangement for students' common room in both primary and upper primary schools.

Library

There is no provision of library in primary schools. In case of upper primary schools very few of them have an almirah of books in the name of library, which are not issued to the students. The Headmasters are not interested in organising library, as there is no provision of grant for purchase of books.

In most of the schools under survey, there are no required number of teachers and the number of trained teachers are meagre. There are no craft and work experience teachers in any of the schools under survey.

The detailed statistical feature of the sample schools have been shown in Table No. 1.7 – A in the next page.
## TABLE NO. 1.7 – A

**DEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES OF SAMPLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS OF DARBANG DISTRICT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Provincial schools</th>
<th>No. of Private schools</th>
<th>Mean age of the Institution in years</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Mean No. of students</th>
<th>Nature of the Institution</th>
<th>Mean No. of attendance</th>
<th>Mean No. of teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td></td>
<td>Co-education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(88.24)</td>
<td>(11.76)</td>
<td>(94.12)</td>
<td>(5.88)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(96.47)</td>
<td>(1.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Primary</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(6.67)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(80%)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage.

Continued....
### TABLE NO. 1.7 - A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean area of School (in Katha)</th>
<th>Nature of Building</th>
<th>Adequacy of Class Room</th>
<th>Facility of Drinking water</th>
<th>Availability of play grounds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pusca</td>
<td>Partly Pusca</td>
<td>Thatched</td>
<td>Sufficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(23.52)</td>
<td>(56.48)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>(11.76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Primary</td>
<td>(26.67)</td>
<td>(73.33)</td>
<td>(93.33)</td>
<td>(6.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE NO. 1.7 - A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean average population per school</th>
<th>Mean distance from the H.Q. District</th>
<th>Provision of co-ocular activities</th>
<th>Sitting arrangement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>450</td>
<td>30 Kms.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>900</td>
<td>20 Kms.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(6.67)</td>
<td>(93.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Primary</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage
An examination of Table 1.7 - A, indicates that there are no provisions of co-curricular activities in primary schools. But in upper primary schools 6.67 percent schools have co-curricular activities whereas 93.33 percent schools have no co-curricular activities.

The mean area of the schools is 3 and 5 kathas in primary and upper primary schools respectively. 11.76 percent primary schools have sufficient class rooms whereas in 68.24 percent of schools, the number of class room is insufficient. In upper primary schools 93.33 percent have sufficient class rooms and only 6.67 percent have no required class rooms. Facilities of sufficient drinking water is available in 43.33 and 66.66 percent of primary and upper primary schools respectively.

It is observed from the Table that 41.17 percent of primary schools and 40% of upper primary schools have at least manageable play grounds, while 58.82 and 60 percent respectively have no provision of play grounds.

The perusal of Table No. 1.7 - A, reveals that the total number of provincialised primary schools taken in the sample is 88.24 percent, whereas the number of private schools is 11.76 percent. In case of upper primary school the same is 93.33 and 6.67 percent only. Again so far the location of the schools are concerned, 94.12 percent primary schools are situated in rural areas and the rest 5.88 percent schools are in the urban areas. The mean age of both primary and upper primary schools is 35 and 30 years respectively.
Further, Table No. 1.7-A, shows that the mean number of students per school is 80 in primary and 180 in higher primary schools. Again the mean number of teachers per school is 2.7 and 7 only in primary and higher primary schools respectively. Out of 85 primary schools, only 23.52 percent schools have good pucca buildings whereas 56.48 and 20 percent schools have partly pucca and thatched houses respectively. In case of upper primary schools 26.67 percent schools have pucca buildings and rest 73.33 percent have partly pucca buildings.