Chapter VI

Conclusion and Suggestions

The foregoing chapters should give an overall view of the secondary education in Assam with particular reference to the various changes introduced in the period between 1964-74. In the light of a new awareness for bringing in necessary changes in the system of secondary education in the country, a number of significant changes were introduced in the secondary education of Assam. The changes were comprehensive and included all its aspects viz., structure, organisation, administration, curriculum, evaluation and teaching. In the present work an attempt was made to give a clear picture of secondary education in the state before and after independence. The considerations which necessitated the changes in Secondary Education in Assam (1964-74) and their resultant influences upon higher education in general have been examined in detail in the preceding chapters. The study has shown why it was necessary to replace the old pattern by a new one which would provide dynamism to society and also prepare the individual to participate effectively in the technological and scientific world of to-day.

Chapter I of the present work, after defining the meaning and purpose of secondary education, the problem of the present
study, i.e. whether secondary education in Assam, in the context of the various changes introduced between 1964 to 1974 has been able to attune itself to the task as already defined, has been raised after briefly indicating the methods and procedure adopted for the study and also taking note of some other like studies, thereby establishing the importance and the justification for the present study.

In Chapter II a rapid survey of the development of education in Assam prior to the British rule as well as under the British has been presented. In an examination of the influence of secondary education upon higher education in Assam of the British days, it has been found that it was intended largely to produce the personnel who would have the proficiency to man some of the services under the alien rulers. Mainly on the excuse of financial constraints, no worthwhile attempt was made to bring in necessary changes to make secondary education truly purposeful according to its generally accepted aims and purposes. The kind of education imparted hardly fostered in the students a habit of self-reliance even in the matter of earning, their livelihood. It was mostly, 'job oriented', and the jobs were 'white-collared' jobs.

Chapter III of the present study has shown the aspirations of the secondary school students of Assam, and their preferences for post-secondary education as well as their vocational aspirations and expectations. After a close analysis of the subject, it has been found that the secondary education of the secondary
education that prevailed have not been geared to meet those aspirations and expectations fully. One thing that emerges from a close examination of vocational aspirations of the secondary school students is that their preference for different occupations in society including technical and commercial occupations is much more than that for 'white-collar' jobs.

In Chapter IV of the present study, the development in secondary education in the state has been examined. It has been observed that there has been a phenomenal growth at the secondary level corresponding to the universal desire for higher learning at the post-independence period. The increase in the number of various types of educational institutions has been noted. It has been shown in detail that on the whole there has been no determined effort on the part of the administrators to put secondary education on a sound footing. The number of changes and innovations proposed have not been fully implemented for reasons of dearth of proper personnel and adequate facilities.

It is found that emphasis on quality has not been consistent and uniform. For example, the policy of derecognition of secondary schools for poor pass percentage in the School Final Examination adopted by SEBA to keep a uniform standard of secondary schools throughout the state had to be abandoned for reasons other than academic. Side by side, SEBA has the practice of awarding grace marks to raise the pass percentage, a practice surely detrimental to the quality of education. Moreover, unplanned growth of secondary educational institutions was not
checked, it was rather encouraged, mainly for political reasons, by the Department of Education, Government of Assam, and this led to a situation of uneven standard of secondary education in the state.

The diversification and vocationalisation of the secondary school course have not been carried out in a meaningful way. The study has also shown the lacunae in the implementation of the 10 + 1 + 3 and the 10 + 2 + 3 systems as well as that of the 11-year Higher Secondary and Multipurpose school scheme which did not wholly succeed in Assam. The reasons for its failure have been listed. It has been shown with proper data that stagnation and wastage in the form of huge failures in the H.S.L.C. and H.S.S.L.C. examinations, and overcrowding in secondary education institutions, are still alarming.

It has also been shown that vocationalisation of secondary education has remained more a pious assumption than a fact. It has failed because of lack of earnestness to implement it on the part of the government. The whole approach to it has been half-hearted and lackadaisical. The vocationalisation of secondary school courses was actually a flop. There was practically no proper supervision of the working of the new system. As a result, the innovations were left entirely in the hands of the school personnel and the poor quality of competence was allowed to continue at the cost of quality. The authority also failed to guide and influence the changed process in the desired direction. Also, for lack of general awareness, the initiative on the part of a few enterprising teachers was not of much consequence. It has been already pointed out that not in all the H.S. Schools the vocational courses were properly organised. Only in a few they were organised properly, left uncared for. A few crafts were introduced in the high schools but were taught only indifferently. Classes were not held regularly, and in most schools the crafts were taught only up to Class VIII. Lack of instruction
and equipments was also one of the main handicaps for its proper implementation. Above all, the schemes of the vocational courses could not convince either the student or the public that they would prove sufficient as means of livelihood for the trainees in later life. Hence, the whole scheme failed to arouse enthusiasm and attract students. Many dismissed it as unrealistic.

In Chapter V it has been shown that emphasis on quality has not been consistent and uniform in the higher educational institutions of a general nature. It has also shown the defects and deficiencies in the process of implementation and organisation of the one-year Pre-University course and the 3-year degree course. The reasons have also been listed. It has been shown with proper data that wastage in the form of high percentage of failure at the different levels of higher education viz. Pre-University, and Degree level, overcrowding in institutions of general education, swelling unemployment etc. still continue. The question of the falling standard at the higher level in all its pros and cons has also been studied. After careful analysis, it has been pointed out that only a bold decision to make merit the exclusive criterion for admission to higher education, and nothing short of it, shall be able to stem the prevailing hot in the higher educational level.

It has also been pointed out that the success of any educational system largely depends on the devotion and professional qualification of teachers. In our state the devotion and qualification of teachers leaves much to be desired as the number
of trained teachers was few in relation to the number of untrained teachers. Moreover, both at the school level and college level, the teachers were mostly engaged in private tuition, which means lack of proper devotion to their scheduled work.

The above summary of the chapters then conclusively proves our main hypothesis that in spite of various changes introduced at the secondary level of education in the State regarding its structure, administration, teaching, curriculum and evaluation in the overall context of its new emphasis to improve the quality of higher education for the progress of the nation, the quality of higher education of a general nature is largely deteriorating. The numerical expansion of educational institutions has adversely affected the quality at all levels including the higher level.

The other minor hypotheses, too, are proved that overcrowding in higher educational institutions of a general nature is still alarming, jeopardising the educational atmosphere.

Similarly, the quality of secondary education is not improved as the reforms introduced could not be implemented fully and in the desired manner to promote the individual capacities and social efficiencies of the adolescents.

Similarly, the wastage at the level of higher education is still alarming. It has also been established that the changes were much needed and were well-intended. But for lack of will and means and, above all, the conscious effort on the part of all who were vitally concerned with the process, the schemes did not fully succeed.
One picture that emerges from the present study is that one reform has been replaced by another in the secondary education of the state just like conducting some experiment in the laboratory. Because it was found that without giving a scheme proper thrust and time to produce any desired result and without giving proper thought to the result of one scheme, it has been replaced by another within a very short period.

Suggestions

In course of our survey regarding the working of the new schemes introduced in the secondary school and their resultant influences on higher education, our respondents, while pointing out the drawbacks and the deficiencies in the manner of implementation of the schemes, also offered relevant and valuable suggestions which were already stated.

On the basis of significant findings of this study, the following remedial measures have been stated below.

While it is necessary to change the content of the curriculum keeping in view the changing needs and aspirations of the students as well as society, it should be done through constant reviewing and examining of the performance of the students at the school final examination by one expert body in the Board of Secondary Education, Assam, to assess the performance of the students in different subjects regularly and offer suggestions
for improvement. The expert body should consist of eminent persons including teachers from schools, colleges and universities and other educationists. The expert body should include different sub-committees for different subjects. It should be remembered that our secondary school curriculum is already overloaded and there is little scope to enlarge it. Yet demands are there in different fields of social and economic activities to include a variety of topics or subjects in the school curriculum. As such, new topics or subjects like population education, environmental education, natural resources, development education, family education, etc. should be integrated with the subject matter of the existing areas of school curriculum. Provision should be made for training in subjects like salesmanship, catering management, beauty-parlour and other commercial and craft subjects as these are the emerging local needs of present-day society.

It is also necessary to remember that the curriculum should be regarded as 'an integrated whole' and new subjects introduced should be in adjustment with the existing ones as far as possible so that the curriculum does not become too heavy or unwieldy for the pupils. Piecemeal or adhoc approach to the curriculum should be avoided. It should be viewed in its totality, and as such should be organised in a way to exert influence upon students for the enhancement of their individual efficiency and social awareness and responsibility.

Educational planning should be so related to economic planning as to provide scope for training in various avocations at
the plus 2 stage, as well as to motivate, not only the students but also their guardians, properly with regard to their usefulness and feasibility as dependable means of livelihood. For this purpose, the guidance programme must be suitably re-organised so that they are freely available to all those who seek it. This is, we believe, necessary to ensure the success of the vocationalization of secondary education.

It would not be impertinent to suggest that general education for all should continue as at present, with appropriate changes in syllabus till the school leaving stage. After that, adequate provision should be made for enrolment in junior technical and agricultural colleges for the majority of the students who pass the school final examinations. Provision of admission to institutes of engineering and advanced technology should be made from among those who pass out of the junior colleges, strictly on the basis of merit. This would then mean no denial of opportunity to any one.

It was, however, felt that the system of a 10-year school course followed by a 2-year intermediate course and then a 3-year degree course had certain distinct advantages, as the 2-year intermediate course gave ample scope for proper teaching of the syllabus and make it a preparatory stage for the university course to follow. But in Assam the first degree course continued as a 2-year course since 1974, and was made a 3-year one from 1984. The 3-year degree course, if properly planned and implemented, is expected to make positive improvement of higher education of a general nature. It needs to be emphasized that while introducing the new structure, due consideration should be given in framing the curriculum, keeping in view the local needs, and the interest of the pupil. A concerted effort by all concerned should be made to make it a success.
As regards courses in general science and 'humanities' and 'social studies', admission to the colleges should be made strictly on merit on the basis of an admission test so that only those with an aptitude for scholastic pursuit or administrative service can get in. It may be observed that higher education is increasingly used by individuals as an alternative to being unemployed. At the same time, it is assumed to help the individual gain a competitive edge in matter of employment, especially in the context of educational inflation. Therefore, it can be suggested that further expansion of traditional pattern of colleges and universities should be stopped and new colleges and universities should offer only work-oriented or socially relevant courses like 'agriculture', 'home science' 'forestry', 'fishery', 'post-harvest', 'technology', 'processing' and 'marketing', 'urban planning', etc. This would, besides facilitating employment of the undergraduates and graduates, would significantly contribute to the urban and rural development of the region.

It is also necessary that methods of teaching should be modernised to the best advantage of students with regard to the nature of new curriculum introduced. Therefore with the improvement of curricula there should be intensive programme of in-service training for teachers organised by colleges of teacher training, State Institute of Education, and similar other bodies.

For the successful implementation of any education policy the basic necessity is a devoted and contended teacher. It has been increasingly observed that our teachers, because of poor
emoluments, have taken to private coaching to the detriment of teaching in the classroom. This private practice by teachers must be stopped, if necessary by legislation, and the government must offer the teachers, at all levels, adequate pay and other facilities to get the best out of them. Unless this is done, it will be only a pious wish to achieve any improvement in education with disgruntled teachers.

Properly qualified teachers for different subjects in the curriculum including vocational subjects, crafts and extracurricular subjects, should be trained through a number of pedagogical and vocational pedagogical institutions.

Lastly, it is to be emphasised that regular supervision by the appropriate authorities should be done and they should offer suggestions and help, including financial assistance, for successful working of the educational institutions of the state.

**Scope for Further Studies**

The studies so far conducted on the changes in secondary education and their influence on higher education of general nature in Assam give only a fragmented picture of it. There is ample scope for a close study in several other aspects of secondary education in Assam. So the investigator would like to suggest some further studies on the subject:

1. Studies on various syllabi in different subjects introduced by the Board of Secondary Education, Assam, with regard to their
content, applicability and utility and methods of teaching may be taken up, for such a study is most likely to reveal certain deficiencies and offer scope for improvement.

2. It also appears to us that a comparative study of performances of two select groups of students drawn from different socio-cultural levels - rural and urban, at the school leaving stage and at a later stage i.e. degree or post-degree level, is likely to bring into focus several revealing details relating to socio-cultural structure.

3. A comparative study of the functioning of the secondary schools of two states may be taken up.

4. A study like the above can be conducted at a micro-level also, say at the district level.

5. The functioning of the +2 stages at the Higher Secondary School and at the Colleges may be studied.

6. The co-curricular subjects as introduced in the secondary school of Assam may be studied.