Chapter IV

Changes in Secondary Education in Assam: 1964 to 1974

I. The Development of Secondary Education in Assam since Independence.

In this chapter the investigator proposes to deal with the educational changes that were introduced in Assam at the secondary level during the period 1964 to 1974. But before proceeding to the period, it is considered necessary to have a rapid survey of the system of secondary education in the state after independence till the period of study.

Article 45 of the Constitution of India directs that free and compulsory education be provided for every child until he attains the age of 14 years. Consequently, educational facilities were significantly increased in the state after independence. The number of educational institutions of different categories were multiplied, both in rural and urban areas. The two categories of schools providing secondary education — the 'Middle Schools' and the 'High Schools', grew in number. The Middle Schools, also known as higher primary schools, provided a course of general education which was a continuation of primary education.
education. This course was intended for all students who were required to undergo the course before leaving school at the age of 14, or, at class VIII as it now stands. The High School course was essentially a course of general education intended for students who continue in school beyond the school leaving age, that is, beyond class VIII. The number of secondary schools functioning in the state on the eve of the First Five Year Plan and in 1974 is stated below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of schools</th>
<th>1949-50</th>
<th>1969-70</th>
<th>1974-75</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Middle schools</td>
<td>840</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>3397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High schools</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>1116</td>
<td>1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Secondary schools</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Note: The fall in number is explained by the fact that Meghalaya and Manipur went out of the jurisdiction of SEBA in 1971 and 1973 respectively.]

The increase in the number of institutions during the period is evidently impressive.

The control and supervision of secondary education was under Gauhati University till 1962. Though the Department of Public Instruction was in overall charge of education in the state, the academic control of recognition and supervision vested with Gauhati University. The school final examination, known as
Matriculation Examination which was essentially a gateway to university education, was conducted by Gauhati University. The courses and syllabi for Matriculation Examination were prescribed by it. In 1961, The Assam Secondary Education Act was passed by the State Assembly. As a result, The Board of Secondary Education in Assam came into being with the purpose of regulating, supervising, and developing secondary education in the state. The Act provides that from the date in which it comes into force, Gauhati University or any other university or Board of Education ceases to exercise its jurisdiction over the institutions of secondary education recognised by the Government of Assam, provided that Gauhati University shall continue as hitherto to have jurisdiction over the High Schools till such time as the state government may decide. The Act also provides for admission of other states, territories or Administrations which may like to come under the purview of the Board subject to such conditions as the Board may like to impose, and for the appointment of the Directors of Education of the territories or Administrations concerned as ex-officio members of the Board.


Accordingly the Board of Secondary Education, Assam, was constituted. Nagaland, the North East Frontier Agency, and the
Manipur Administration were admitted to the privileges of this Board and their Directors of Education were included in the Board as Ex-officio members as per Govt. Notification No. ESS/61/89 dated 2nd November, 1962 and No. 159/61/52 dated 6.9.62. The Board also constituted the following committees for the purpose of carrying out its duties:

i) Examination Committee
ii) Recognition Committee
iii) Finance and Budget Committee
iv) Curriculum and Syllabus Committee
v) Administration Committee
vi) Physical Education Committee
vii) Girls' Education Committee

The Board assumed the responsibility of conducting the first Higher Secondary School Final Examination and exercising control and jurisdiction over the Higher Secondary and Multipurpose Schools, from 1962. In accordance with Government Notification No. Ess/123/62/8 dated 25.2.63 and No. Ess/123/62/12 dated 20.3.63, the Board assumed the responsibility of Matriculation Examination and re-christened it as High School Leaving Certificate Examination with effect from 1.4.63. [Compare Report on the Working of the Board (SEBA) 1962-63.] The Board of Secondary Education is to function in cooperation with the Department of Education, Government of Assam, for the promotion and development of the quality of secondary education in the state and to relate it, according to the needs and aspirations of the
adolescents so as to achieve the national goals of the country.

The pattern of schooling in the state was as follows:

The primary level consisted of 4 years of schooling. It was called 'Lower Primary', 'Lower Elementary' or 'Junior Basic'. The next level, consisting of 3 years, was known as 'Upper Primary', 'Middle School' or 'Senior Basic'. The third level, consisting of 3 years, was known as 'High School'. Thus, there was 10-year schooling for graduation from a secondary school.

The higher education level consisted of two stages — the Intermediate stage of 2 years and the Degree stage of 2 years. Before the Board was constituted, the High School final examination was known as the Matriculation Examination. The Courses of Studies were prescribed by Gauhati University.

The recommendation of the Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) were being implemented by the Government of Assam from 1957. A number of High Schools was converted into Higher Secondary and Multipurpose Schools. The Government of Assam also formulated the courses of studies for the Higher Secondary and Multipurpose Schools. It has been mentioned earlier that till 1962, the control and supervision of secondary schools was the responsibility of Gauhati University which also prescribed the courses of studies for the secondary schools of the state. From 1962, after the formation of the Board of Secondary Education, Assam, the Board was handed over the responsibility of secondary education to supervise and organise it in order to improve the quality. The first Higher Secondary School Final
Examination was held in 1962 conducted by the Board of Secondary Education, Assam, and twenty Higher Secondary Schools presented their candidates in different groups. For this purpose, the Board adopted the courses and syllabuses prepared by the Government of Assam for Higher Secondary and Multipurpose School.

II. Structure and Curriculum

The Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) suggested reforms at the secondary level so that secondary education might be a complete unit by itself and not simply a preparatory stage for higher education. It was stipulated that at the end of this period, the student should be in a position, if he so wishes, to enter into the responsibilities of life and take up some useful vocation. The Secondary Education Commission suggested to reorganise the secondary level of education by making the duration of secondary course 11 years so that it could provide a longer period of training which would be useful for those who want to pursue higher education, and also for those who finish their education at this stage and take up some occupation.

The Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) recommended the following educational pattern which was introduced in Assam from 1957:

1. Five years of Lower Primary or Junior Basic upto class III.
2. Four years of Upper Primary or Middle School, classes IV to VII.
3. Three years of secondary education, classes VIII to X.

4. Four years of Higher Secondary and Multipurpose education, classes VIII to XI.

5. One year Pre-University for the students completing a High School course of 10 years' duration.

6. Three years of the first degree course.

Initially, the Board adopted for the first two years, i.e., 1964 and 1965, the existing Matriculation syllabus of Gauhati University. It assumed the responsibility of reorganising the curriculum by introducing some changes in the courses of studies for H.S.S.L.C. and H.S.L.C. Examinations from 1964.

It is seen that in the year 1974 there were 65 Higher Secondary and Multipurpose schools, 1500 High schools and 3397 Middle Schools providing secondary education in the state (figures include also schools not recognised by S.E.B.A.).

The structural changes suggested by the Kothari Commission (1964-66) were issued by the National Policy Statement of Education in 1968 by the Government of India to be implemented throughout the states and union territories for establishing a uniform educational pattern of 10 + 2 + 3 with the following purposes:

1. A broadly uniform pattern all over the country to strengthen national integration.

2. To send more knowledgeable and mature students to the universities.

3. To reduce pressure on universities and other centres of higher education.
4. To provide an opportunity and a means to introduce appropriate vocationalisation at the higher secondary stage.

5. To provide an opportunity and a means to modernise school curricula and to restructure them on more scientific lines as well as to serve the social and economic needs of the adolescents in a better manner.

6. A broadly uniform pattern in all the states and union territories to facilitate implementation of educational programmes, production of books, reading materials and teaching aids, training of teachers, and their mobility, and reconstruction of syllabi and improvement in examination practices.

7. To remove the difficulties in the matter of education of children of the mobile population, which is increasing in the country.

8. To help solve educational problems of the minorities; at least the minority language books produced in one area can be easily used in all other concerned areas.

The Government of Assam have been discussing from time to time how the structural policy on education can be implemented in Assam. In a meeting held by the then Minister of Education with the Vice-Chancellors of Gauhati and Dibrugarh Universities and others on 31.10.68, it was agreed that 12 years of school education up to the higher secondary stage should be followed by the state by making internal adjustment in school courses so as to make it conform ultimately to the national pattern. Gauhati and Dibrugarh Universities decided to introduce the 2-year Pre-University course with effect from 1973 to be followed by a
2-year Degree course from 1974. The duration of the Degree course as decided by the universities is one year less than the pattern laid down in the National Policy on Education.

The pattern of educational structure was again discussed in a meeting of the officials and the non-officials on 9.5.69 at Shillong. It was decided in the meeting that the new pattern of educational structure in accordance with the national policy on education should be followed in the state from 1971. However, the new educational structure could not be implemented from 1971 due to certain difficulties.

On June, 1971 a conference was held at Shillong to discuss the educational problems of Assam where eminent educationists and officials and non-officials took part and recommended the following educational pattern along with other recommendations:

Elementary - Class I - IV and Class V - VII.
Secondary - 3-year High School, Class VIII - X, followed by 2-year Higher Secondary Course - Class XI - XII.
Degree - 3-year Course with increased facilities for appearing at post-graduate and research studies in advanced colleges.

The matter was again discussed in a meeting of educationists on 1.6.72 under the chairmanship of the Minister of Education, Government of Assam. The meeting recommended adoption of the 10-year school course to be followed by a 2-year course of Higher Secondary Education and a 3-year Degree Course. It was also agreed
that the Pre-University course, then attached to the colleges, should gradually, and in phases, be transferred to schools. This meeting further recommended that the revised pattern of 10 + 2 years school course should be started with effect from the school session of 1973. As regards the question of converting the proposed 2-year Degree Course in line with the national policy, it was agreed that the 2-year Degree Course proposed to be introduced by the two universities may be continued until the Pre-University stage was taken over by the schools. The change-over was to be effected at four points, viz. Class I, Class V, Class VIII and Class XI simultaneously. Although the Education Commission recommended that the Pre-University course should be extended to a 2-year course and should be merged with the schools and be named Higher Secondary Course, the government of Assam allowed the P.U. in the colleges and the Higher Secondary course in the schools to run concurrently with identical syllabuses.

The implementation of the 12-year schooling pattern thus fell on three agencies, viz. the universities (Dibrugarh and Gauhati), the Board of Secondary Education, Assam, and the State Board of Elementary Education. Since the Secondary stage is linked with the Primary stage also, the changed pattern is implemented at the Primary level as well. The following pattern emerged:

Primary stage — 4 years' duration (I - IV), Higher Primary or Lower Secondary stage — 3 years' duration (V - VII), Secondary stage — 3 years' duration (VIII - X) and Higher Secondary stage — 2 years' duration (XI - XII).
The change over was started at the first class of each stage. According to this plan, a new entrant to a lower primary school was to join the new class I. A pupil from the last class of Lower Primary school is to join the 1st class of a Middle school. Hence, a pupil promoted from old class III is to be admitted to new class V. Similarly, a pupil promoted from old class VI is to be admitted to new class VIII. After passing the H.S.L.C. examination (old class X) a pupil is to join the first year of the Higher Secondary course.

This is how the 12-year schooling system has been put into practice. The change-over to the new pattern was intended to raise the standard of education. It was tried to achieve this goal by introducing changes in the content of education and curricular reform, the adoption of new methods of teaching and evaluation, books and other reading materials.

While implementing the new 12-year (10 + 2) school pattern, it has been found that the State Government did not pay due attention to the Pre-Primary stage which it is necessary to do in order to build the foundation of the education of the children. The Kothari Commission not only recommended the retention of "infant classes" as they existed in Assam, but desired that such institutions should be introduced in other states. The Commission remarked, "We believe that these Pre-Primary classes are an advantage which these stages (Assam and Nagaland) possess. We recommend that they should retain it as such." But it is surprising to find that the Pre-Primary courses, instead of being properly organised, were badly neglected. In the
symposium on "New Structure of Education" in 1973 at Gauhati University, the following recommendations were made for the success of the new schooling pattern $10+2+3$:

1. The Pre-Primary classes should be retained and modernised in the light of the recommendations of the Education Commission (1964-66).

2. While agreeing in principle to the national pattern of 15 years' education ($10+2+3$), the symposium was of the considered opinion that the new structure was introduced in Assam without adequate preparation. So it recommended that the change-over be effected in a phased manner. Adequate care was recommended to be taken for intensive coaching of the new entrants to class VIII. Further, it recommended that old Class VIII be maintained along with the new Class VIII as was done in the case of Class V.

**Curriculum**

Along with the change in the pattern, the curriculum of the secondary schools was subjected to change, because mere change in the school pattern would be futile without changes in the content and syllabus to produce qualitative effect on education. If we survey the history of the development of curriculum in Indian secondary schools we find that it was drafted on the pattern of the English grammar schools catering to the needs of the prospective entrants to the universities. Such a curriculum could only serve the needs of a limited few. Pupils with
special abilities, (e.g. aesthetic, artistic etc) had little chance of coping successfully with such a curriculum. Moreover, it did not give importance to the individual differences of boys and girls. It is true that there were some modifications of such narrow and one track curriculum even before independence. For example, the introduction of physical education, art, hand-work, science and technical subjects were some additions to the school curriculum, but they could not change the basic nature of the curriculum. Even after independence, the curriculum was not markedly changed till 1957. A copy of the syllabus that was continued in the High Schools of Assam till 1964 has been appended here (Appendix II).

The Secondary Education Commission of 1952-53 found the prevailing curriculum to be narrowly conceived, bookish, and theoretical, failing to provide for practical subjects not catering to the various needs and abilities of the adolescents, dominated by examinations, and lacking technical and vocational emphasis. The Commission recommended that "Curriculum" should include the totality of experiences that pupils receive through manifold activities that go in school, in class room, library, laboratory, workshop, playground and in numerous contacts between teachers and pupils. In this sense the whole life of the school becomes the curriculum which can touch the life of the students at all points and help in the evolution of a balanced personality. The Secondary Education Commission laid down principles for framing curriculum both for junior and higher secondary schools.
The Commission also recommended that there should be variety and elasticity in the curriculum to allow for individual differences and to accommodate the needs and interests of the pupil. It emphasised that the curriculum must be vitally and organically related to community life, interpreting for the pupil its salient and significant features and allowing him to come into contact with some of its important activities.

The Commission stressed the need for designing the curriculum in such a way as to provide recreational activities in order to arouse in the pupil an interest in different hobbies so that he learns the proper use of leisure.

The modern development of educational psychology has brought a new outlook to the field of curriculum construction. The need to psychologise the curriculum has been increasingly felt. The implication is that the subject-matter of a curriculum for a particular class should be so designed as to suit the stage of mental growth and development reached by the pupils reading in that class. Further, it is insisted that the pupils should have spontaneous motivation in pursuing a particular course of study. Such ideas imply that there should be a co-relation among different subjects in the curriculum and the content of different subjects should be related to the needs of the pupils. The Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) recommended that the curriculum should not stultify its educational value by being split up into a number of isolated, unco-ordinated, watertight subjects; subjects should be inter-related and, within each
subject, the contents should, as far as possible, be envisaged as "broad field or units which can be co-related better with life rather than narrow items of information." The functions of the Middle School curriculum is to introduce the pupil in a general way to the significant areas of human knowledge and activity. Students are not expected to achieve knowledge in depth but to gain a general understanding and appreciation of the significant elements of human culture. The Commission also regarded it as of utmost necessity to include art and music and craft in the Middle School curriculum for proper development of an individual's emotional life, and thereby to foster proper growth of the different aspects of personality — intellectual, aesthetic and spiritual. The Commission suggested a model curriculum each for the Middle Schools, the High Schools and the Higher Secondary Schools. For the High and Higher Secondary Schools, the Commission suggested that the educational programme should give some vocational training to the student—not to be narrowly vocational, but to have a definite vocational bias so that they can successfully enter in a life of work after leaving school if they so desire. It also recommended that the courses of High Schools and Higher Secondary Schools should follow the same pattern by having core subjects and certain optional subjects common to both. The difference in the period of education (three years in High Schools and four years in Higher Secondary Schools) made it necessary to have two levels of integration of the subject-matter with the core subjects as well as the optional subjects. The High School course would be lighter than the Higher
Secondary School course. The All India Council of Secondary Education prepared a draft syllabus for consideration of the states. A special committee on each state examined the draft syllabus and framed the syllabus for its own state.

The Department of Education, Government of Assam, formed the syllabus in the light of the above and it was implemented in the schools of Assam from 1957. The same was adopted with little modification by the Board of Secondary Education, Assam, when it took over the responsibility of re-organising and supervising secondary education in the state in 1962. A revised curriculum for the high schools was adopted from 1964.

The following courses of studies were offered for the H.S.S.L.C. course:

Subjects for Examination

Section A: Languages.

I. First Language:

Any one of the following Modern Indian Languages recognised by the Board of Secondary Education, Assam.


II. Second Language:

English.
III. Third Language

(i) Elementary Assamese — For those who take up Hindi as
or
Elementary Bengali — the First language.

(ii) Elementary Hindi — for others.

Section B: Core Subjects:

(i) General Science.

(ii) General Mathematics

(iii) Social Studies.

Section C: Elective Subjects:

Any three subjects to be taken from a group

Group (a) Humanities Group:

(1) Classical subjects: (i) Sanskrit, (ii) Arabic
(iii) Persian.

(2) History.

(3) Geography

(4) Civics, Economics

(5) Logic, Psychology,

(6) Mathematics.

(7) Elements of Home Science.

(8) Music Vocal or Music Instrumental or
Drawing 1, Painting or Dancing.

Group (b) Commerce Group:

(1) Elements of Commerce.
(2) Commercial Geography including Civics and Economics.
(3) Book-Keeping or Short Hand and Typewriting.

Group (c) Fine Arts.
(1) Appreciation of Art (Compulsory)
(2) Music, Vocal
(3) Music Instrumental
(4) Modelling and Sculpture
(5) Dance
(6) Drawing and painting.
(7) Elements of Home Science.

Group (d) Home Science
(1) Food, Nutrition and Cookery.
(2) Textile, Clothing, and Laundry
(3) Household Management, Hygiene, Child development, Mother Craft and Human Relationship.

Practical Examinations

Practical Examination was prescribed for each of the following subjects:
(1) Short Hand and Type writing,
(2) Drawing and Painting,
(3) Modelling and Sculpture
(4) Elements of Home science
(5) Music Vocal
(6) Music Instrumental
(7) Subjects in the Home science group

(8) Dancing

Group (d): Science

(1) Chemistry
(2) Physics
(3) Biology
(4) Mathematics
(5) Elements of Home science (for girls only)
(6) Geography

Group (e): Agriculture

(1) Agriculture, Biology and Chemistry
(2) General Agriculture including soil management and Crop Culture.
(3) Farm Management including Animal Husbandry and Dairy.

Group (f): Technology

(1) Applied Mathematics and Science
(2) Geometrical and Mechanical Drawing
(3) One of the following subjects:
   (a) Elements of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering.
   (b) Elements of Building Construction
   (c) Elements of Radio Engineering.

Practical examination was prescribed for all the science, agriculture and technology subjects.
The candidates for the Humanities and the Science groups are allowed to offer an additional (fourth) subject from among the Elective Subjects of the same group. The excess marks obtained over the pass marks of the subject are to be added and counted towards division and position of the candidates in the pass list.

The Higher Secondary School course for the Final Examination was of four years after the Class VII Examination. The Examination was held in two parts, Part I — Internal Assessment and Part II — Higher Secondary School Leaving Certificate Examination. The Part I examination was held at the end of the third year (i.e. at the end of Class X) and the Part II was held at the fourth year (i.e. at the end of Class XI).

In Part I Examination, the following subjects were examined:
- Section A: The Third Language

The question papers for Part I Examination were set by the Board of Secondary Education Assam, and the assessment was done by the schools although the Board satisfied itself as regards the standard of assessment through inspection and other methods.

The Part II Examinations were held at the end of Class XI in the following subjects:
- Section A (1) First Language (as stated earlier)
  (ii) Second Language (English)
- Section C (i) Any three Elective Subjects of group (A) Humanities or Group (D) Science (ii) A fourth subject from the same group (Additional subject)
The number of classes for practical work and demonstrations, the equipments, the courses of studies etc. were prescribed by the Board. The curriculum for the High School course included the following:

(i) A Major Vernacular language viz. Assamese, Bengali, Urdu or Hindi : 2 papers

(ii) English : 2 papers

(iii) Geography : I paper

(iv) History of India/History of England : I paper

(v) Mathematics : I paper

(vi) A Classical Language, viz., Sanskrit, Pali, Arabic, Persian, Greek, Latin, Classical American, Hebrew, Syriac or Classical Tibetan.

Or

An Indian Vernacular recognised by the Board other than the vernacular of the candidate already taken up as a compulsory subject

Or

A Modern European Languages other than English viz., French, German, Italian or Portuguese — I paper.

(vii) Elementary Scientific Knowledge : I paper

Provided that Elementary Scientific Knowledge shall not be regarded as a compulsory subject until further notice. During the period of transition, Elementary Scientific Knowledge shall be included in the list of optional subjects stated below:
The following are the optional subjects:

(a) Elementary Scientific Knowledge subject to the above provision.
(b) Elements of physics and chemistry
(c) Minsuration and Surveying
(d) Elementary Mechanics
(e) Elementary Hygiene
(f) Elements of Biology
(g) Additional Mathematics
(h) Business Method Correspondence.
(i) Commercial Geography
(j) Elements of Public Administration in India.
(k) Drawing and painting including an appreciation of Fine Arts.

For girls, provision was there for opting Arithmetic and Domestic Science including Domestic Hygiene in lieu of Mathematics — I paper.

It seems that the new syllabus for the 11-year Higher Secondary Course was a real departure from the traditional High School Course, and it was expected to bring the desired effect in the development of the adolescent. However, its success was dependent on the actual working of the schools.

It was found that the new scheme of the 11-year Higher Secondary and Multipurpose School could cover only a small section of the secondary schools. In the year 1974, only 65 schools were
being converted into Higher Secondary \& Multipurpose Schools, the remaining 837 schools, recognised by the Board of Secondary Education, Assam, continued to be 10-year High Schools where a revised curriculum was followed. It means that the new 11-year Higher Secondary School course could effect only a small group of secondary school students. It was, however, found that the curriculum of High Schools was revised by way of introducing a number of vocational subjects and by making provision for option to offer one or two or three vocational subject(s) and any three, two, or one subject(s) in lieu of other 5 subjects - Geography, History, Mathematics, Classical language, Elementary Scientific Knowledge of the general course. The general course, though similar to the course that prevailed till 1963, was, however, revised in their contents. Moreover, for girls, Mathematics was made an optional subject, for they could take Arithmetic and Domestic Science in place of Mathematics till 1968. History and Geography were made optional.

The following subjects were recognised by the Board of Secondary Education, Assam, as Vocational Subjects:
11. Sericulture.

In the revised curricula for the High Schools, the subject 'English' was modified with regard to the total marks by curtailing it from 300 to 200 for 2 papers in place of earlier 3 papers.
Here it may be mentioned that the total marks for English were 200 for 2 papers in the Higher Secondary School course also. The object of the study of languages was stated in the syllabus. It was to impart the skill of communication. The students were to be taught to speak and write clearly and effectively. The number of classes allotted to the subjects per week was also prescribed by the Board.

For science subjects in the Higher Secondary Schools the classes per week were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Theoretical period</th>
<th>Practical sitting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1(one sitting practice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 class means 2 consequive periods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2 periods.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The minimum number of teaching days per year was fixed at 150, and each student was to attend 75% of the classes held. The precise course and the manner to be worked out for other subjects also was prescribed by the Board.

The new curriculum started from 1973 for the 10-year High School course, consisted of the following courses of studies:

A. **Core Subjects**

1. **First Language**: any one of the following major languages: Assamese, Bengali, Hindi, Urdu, Manipuri, Khasi, Garo, Mizo, Napali and Bodo
or

For pupils whose First Language is not one of the above Major Languages, any two of the following languages:
Ao, Angami, Santhali, Elementary Hindi, Assamese, Bengali, English.

2. **Second Language**: English.


4. General Mathematics

5. Social Studies


B. **Elective Subjects**: Any two of the following:

(i) Assamese / Bengali / Hindi / Sanskrit / Arabic / Persian.

(ii) History

(iii) Geography / Commercial Geography

(iv) Elements of Civics and Economics / Advanced Science / Craft (Wood craft, Metal craft, Cane and Bamboo work, Needle work and Tailoring, Building Construction, Applied Electricity, Farm Mechanics).


(vi) Dance

(vii) Music

(viii) Fine Arts / Sericulture.

C. **Additional Subjects**: Any one of the subjects mentioned at 'B' above which has not been taken as Elective subject.
D. Co-curricular Activities.

III. Administration and Staff

Successful working of any institution largely depends on the manner in which it is organised and administered. It is already mentioned that in Assam, Gauhati University was controlling secondary education in the state by supervising and organising courses of studies and holding the Matriculation Examination till 1961. It was felt that the universities should be relieved of such responsibilities regarding secondary education as the purposes of university education and secondary education are different. So, after the Board of Secondary Education of Assam was formed in 1961, the responsibility of organising and supervising secondary education in the state was handed over to it.

The administrative set up of the Education Department of the Government of Assam is as follows: The Minister of Education is at the top. Next in rank is the Minister of State for Education. The permanent government machinery is headed by a Secretary for education who is an I.A.S. officer. He is in charge of the functioning of the Education Department at the Secretariat level. The main functions assigned to Assam Education Department at the Secretariat level are policy matters and day to day administration which includes creation of posts, transfer and posting of officers, and the sanction of grants and other expenditure. The Director of Public Instruction is in overall charge of all matters relating to education of the state. He is assisted
by a set of officers of subordinate ranks in the Directorate.

At present there are 3 categories of schools providing secondary education in the state. I. The Government schools, II. The Government Aided schools, III. The Private schools. Obviously, the academic standard of all these school may not be the same. The Board of Secondary Education, Assam, since its inception has been trying to raise the academic standard. A review of the activities of the Board of Secondary Education, Assam, proves the point.

As already stated, the first thing the Board did was to redesignate the Matriculation Examination, till then prevailing, as High School Leaving Certificate Examination (H.S.L.C.). This was done with a view to make it agree with Higher Secondary School Leaving Certificate Examination (H.S.S.L.C.).

Secondly, for the sake of uniformity of standard, the Board of Secondary Education, Assam, has laid down the conditions of recognition of secondary schools of the state, and on the recommendation of the D.P.I. (Director of Public Instruction) grants recognition and affiliation, stage by stage, to schools on prior fulfilment of the required conditions laid by the Board.

The Board has stipulated a minimum standard for recognition in respect of certain basic amenities like teachers, building, library, playground etc. and minimum performance in the final examination. As a follow-up of this, in the year 1967, the Board adopted the policy of de-recognition based on examination results.
The following high schools were derecognised as their percentage of pass was below 20 p.c.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U.A.C. Jorhat</th>
<th>P.C. of pass</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Dhitaiupkhuri High School</td>
<td>19.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Karatipara High School</td>
<td>19.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Nahatia High School</td>
<td>19.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Furkating High School</td>
<td>19.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Teok Girls' High School</td>
<td>19.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Mahura High School</td>
<td>17.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| C.A.C.                              |             |
| 7. Puranigudam Girls High School    | 18.3        |
| 8. Bechamari High School            | 18.4        |

| N.A.C.                              |             |
| 9. North Jamuguri High School       | 18.8        |
| 10. Dalanghat High School           | 16.2        |

| L.A.C.                              |             |
| 11. Chaksari High School            | 18.0        |
| 12. Gohalkona High School           | 19.2        |
| 13. Rangmahal High School           | 19.6        |
| 14. Chandkuchi High School          | 19.1        |

| S.A.C.                              |             |
| 15. Ramdila High School             | 17.7        |

The following schools were also de-recognised by the Board as their pass percentage was below 20 p.c.
1. Rangajan High School 17.6 U.A.C.
2. Dharmtul High School 16.2 C.A.C.
3. Mayong High School 15.4 C.A.C.
4. Dorakohora High School 11.9 L.A.C.
5. Gashlari High School 14.3 L.A.C.
6. Pakasariha High School 13.2 L.A.C.
7. North Baitamari High School 14.6 W.A.C.
8. Republic (Mizo) High School 15.6 S.A.C.

[Abbreviations:
U.A.C. = Upper Assam Circle
C.A.C. = Central Assam Circle
N.A.C. = Northern Assam Circle
L.A.C. = Lower Assam Circle
S.A.C. = Southern Assam Circle.]

In 1971, 97 high schools were de-recognised by the Board. However, the policy of de-recognition based on examination results was later withdrawn as it was criticised to be an unrealistic policy.

Administration is meaningful and successful when it is supplemented by proper guidance relating to the working of the schools. Therefore, with a view to bringing about academic improvement in the schools by providing supervision and guidance by academic officers in a number of subjects like English, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics and Biology, the Board appointed some academic officers who visited schools and provided guidance to the teachers in the teaching of different subjects.
The Board also organised seminars in English and Mathematics in different circles keeping in view the difficulties in the subjects faced by the teachers in the context of changes introduced in the curricula. The Board organised a number of workshops in different districts of Assam in order to provide the secondary schools with modern methods of teaching, and initiated the programme of examination reform. In collaboration with N.C.E.R.T., the Board organised training workshops for teachers. In the year 1974-75 the Board organised the following workshops:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>No. of workshop</th>
<th>Teachers trained</th>
<th>Amount spent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1974-75</td>
<td>Kamrup</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>463</td>
<td>Rs. 60,240.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Goalpara</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>29,070.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nowgong</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>29,801.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sibsagar</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>41,035.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lakhimpur</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>10,852.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dibrugarh</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>21,700.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Darrang</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>16,223.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cachar</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>22,243.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Karbi Anglong</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>4,738.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total:** 23 workshops, 2,278 teachers trained, Amount spent Rs. 235,911.11


The administration of secondary schools is done by the Directorate of Public Instruction of the state through inspection by the school inspectors. The allocation of grants and the
recognition of schools under the deficit scheme of grant-in-aid of the Government of Assam are dependent on the recommendation of the school inspectors. However, the recognition of High Schools is given by the Board of Secondary Education, Assam, on the fulfilment of certain conditions fixed by the Board. The Board of Secondary Education, Assam, thus controls, organises, and supervises secondary schools in the state. Thus, the external administration of the secondary schools of Assam is a joint venture of the Department of Public Instruction, Assam, and the Board of Secondary Education, Assam. However, the State Ministry of Education, along with the government machinery at the secretariat level, is the final authority regarding policy matters and other day-to-day administration of education in the state.

So far as internal administration is concerned, the Head Master or the Principal is in overall charge of a government school, and in the case of the government-aided schools, the Headmaster and the Managing Committee are responsible. It is the responsibility of the school administration to see that the best available persons are recruited to the teaching staff and the teachers get adequate facilities for work. The administration is successful if the teachers work as a team dedicated to the welfare of the institution and the public co-operate in the implementation of the academic programme. The Managing Committee is to look after the maintenance of the school building, furniture, equipments, and enrolment.
The quality of instruction imparted in a school depends as much on the quality of the teachers as on the quality of administration. The success of education at any stage largely depends on the quality of the teachers and their sincerity and devotion to their profession. Due consideration, then, must be given to the various problems connected with the improvement of the status and working conditions of the teachers. The Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) recorded that the social status, salaries and general service conditions of teachers were far from satisfactory. The Commission's general impression was that on the whole it was "even worse than what it was in the past". They recommended, as a general principle, that those with similar qualifications and similar responsibilities should be treated at par in the matter of salary, irrespective of the type of institution to which they belong, and thus a uniform pay scale for teachers working in government schools and schools conducted by local bodies and private agencies was recommended.

The position of secondary school teachers has improved considerably of late as a result of the efforts made by the government to improve their salaries and service conditions. The Government of Assam has been able to remove the differences in remuneration between the Government and Aided school teachers by introducing the deficit system of grants and by making it conditional that the school will adopt the government scale of pay and allowances approved for teachers. But even this increased
salary is far from adequate against the cost of living. The Kothari Commission (1964-66) reviewed the situation and suggested a national pay scale for teachers. Such relief becomes inadequate in view of the rising cost of living. Today it is a common practice in the country for a teacher to spend more time and energy in private coaching than in school teaching. By this means he earns several times as much as his salary.

The academic and professional qualifications of the teachers of the High Schools and Higher Secondary Schools have been prescribed by the Board of Secondary Education, Assam, and they insisted that the schools should appoint teachers accordingly. It was prescribed by the Board that for the Higher Secondary stage the teacher should possess a Master's degree in the subject. For the lower level, the teacher should be a trained graduate. To provide the required number of properly qualified teachers in the secondary schools of Assam, the following measures were adopted:

(i) Deputation of teachers to Cotton College for further training in some science subjects.

(ii) Deputation of teachers to Gauhati University for a condensed course in some science subjects.

(iii) Deputation of teachers for M.A./M.Sc./M.Com. courses.

(iv) Award of post-graduate development scholarships to graduate teachers of secondary schools to attain an M.A./M.Sc. degree with the stipulation that they would serve their schools for 3 years after completing the post-graduate course.
Table I below shows the number of trained teachers in the secondary schools of Assam during the period under study.

It can be seen that the number of trained teachers was alarmingly small in proportion to the total number of teachers.

Table I

Showing the number of trained teachers and untrained teachers in different High Schools and Higher Secondary Schools in the state during the period of study (1964-1974).

Teachers in High/Higher Secondary Schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Trained</th>
<th>Untrained</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1964-65</td>
<td>2200</td>
<td>11,349</td>
<td>13,558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965-66</td>
<td>2424</td>
<td>11,930</td>
<td>14,354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966-67</td>
<td>2743</td>
<td>12,173</td>
<td>14,916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967-68</td>
<td>2900</td>
<td>13,183</td>
<td>16,083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968-69</td>
<td>3055</td>
<td>13,424</td>
<td>16,479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969-70</td>
<td>3264</td>
<td>13,859</td>
<td>17,123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>3464</td>
<td>13,802</td>
<td>17,266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-72</td>
<td>3475</td>
<td>13,564</td>
<td>17,039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972-73</td>
<td>3591</td>
<td>14,003</td>
<td>17,594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973-74</td>
<td>3972</td>
<td>14,815</td>
<td>18,787</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Source: Directorate of Education, Assam]
IV. Evaluation and Guidance

Teaching and evaluation are integral parts of education. The efficiency of teaching, the achievement of pupils, and the success of an educational system can be tested with the help of examinations. It is necessary for parents and teachers to know from time to time how the pupils are progressing and what their attainments are at any particular stage. A kind of check up of the school work is essential in the interest of all concerned—pupils, teachers, parents, and the public. Examinations are the usual means for such a checkup.

The Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) found the system of examination defective for it used to lay exclusive emphasis on the intellectual attainments of the pupils, and his progress in intellectual pursuits. The scope of education has enlarged. The school to day concerns itself not only with intellectual pursuits of the pupils but also with their emotional and social development, his physical and mental health and his social adjustment. Hence the need to revise the system of examination is an important one to make examinations an effective tool for measuring a student's progress. The Commission suggested that the subjective element in the essay type examination should be reduced as far as possible and objective test should be widely introduced. The nature and type of tests should be changed in a way to discourage cramming and to encourage intelligent understanding. The final assessment of the pupil should not be based entirely on the results of the external examination; other things,
such as internal tests and the school records maintained by teachers, should be taken into consideration, and due credit should be given to them. The Commission also recommended that the "Promotion of a child should depend not only on the results of the annual final examination but also on the results of periodic tests and progress shown in school record." In order to find out the pupil's all round progress and to determine his future, a proper system of school records should be maintained for every pupil indicating the work done by him/her from time to time and his/her attainments in different spheres.

The Commission also recommended symbolic marking rather than numerical marking for evaluating and grading the work of the pupil in external and internal examinations. They suggested that on the completion of the secondary school course, there should be a public examination and the certificate awarded should contain the results of the public examination, the results of the school tests in different subjects as well as the gist of the school records.

The Board of Secondary Education, Assam, in its meeting on 16.5.66 decided to accept the suggestions of the 7th conference of the chairman and secretaries of the Boards of Secondary Education in India on Examination Reform with an aim at switching over from the essay type questions to objective type questions. (Compare, The Report on the Working of the Board 1966-67, p. 38).

Accordingly, as a first step in this direction, the Board introduced short answer type questions in examinations from 1967 to the
extent of 25 percent of marks in a question paper in order to cover a substantial portion of the prescribed syllabus.

As a second step, the Board decided to abolish overall options in the question papers gradually, and introduced internal options from 1967. Thus, the programme of examination reform was started. The Evaluation officers of the Board were deputed for training under N.C.E.R.T. on examination reform. A bold step in the improvement of education through examination taken by the Board was to circulate to all the schools the specific deficiencies found in the answer scripts of the candidates in English and Mathematics in the H.S.S.L.C. and H.S.L.C. Examinations, so that those defects could be removed in future examinations.

The programme of Examination Reform, was, however, taken up by the Board in a large measure from 1974. The teacher-orientation programme for orienting teachers to the new concept of evaluation and the new method of testing according to the objectives and covering different question patterns was carried by the Board with the help on N.C.E.R.T. from 1974 in 23 workshops where a total of 2278 teachers were trained; 4 teachers from every recognised High School in 4 subjects were trained. The Academic officers of the Board also attended the gatherings organised by teachers' organisations for discussion on implementation of the new curriculum and also for the discussion of evaluation programme under the Examination Reform Unit. (Compare, the Annual Report of S.E.B.A., 1966-67)
Guidance of students for optimum adjustment with courses offered in conformity with their growth is considered to be an important function of a modern school. The new scheme of secondary education with the provision of diversified courses of instruction imposes on teachers and school administrators the additional responsibility of giving guidance to pupils in their choice of courses and careers according to their capacities, needs, and interests. Until and unless systematic efforts are made to develop the latent abilities of the pupils and to scientifically appraise their interest and abilities, and to provide them proper help, the scheme of diversified courses would bear no result. The Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) recommended that guidance should be provided in an appropriate form at all stages of education, through the co-operative endeavour of understanding parents, headmasters, principals and guidance officers.

Following the Commission's recommendations, Government of India established the Central Bureau of Vocational Guidance at Delhi in 1954. It offered assistance to the state governments to establish their state bureaux to provide guidance service to the states. In Assam, the state government established the Vocational Guidance Bureau in 1956 in the Directorate of Public Instruction, Assam, for organising Guidance Services in the High schools and Higher Secondary schools.
V. Effects of the Changes at the Secondary Level

It is now obvious from the foregoing paragraphs that substantial changes in Secondary Education in Assam in the post-independence period have taken place only after the implementation of the Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) recommendations. As stated earlier, the implementation of the recommendations was started in Assam from 1957. Accordingly, many 10-year High Schools were converted into 11-year Higher Secondary and Multipurpose Schools. From 1957 to 1973, there were a total of 65 Higher Secondary Schools functioning in the state. Although it was hoped at the beginning that all the secondary schools would be converted into the 11-year Higher Secondary pattern in the long run, it was found later that the hope was only partly realised, as there were only 65 Higher Secondary Schools out of a total of 1565 Secondary schools.

In 1973 the new school pattern of 12-year (10 + 2) secondary school course was introduced. Along with the change of the pattern of the school organisation, the curriculum, the methods of teaching, the methods of evaluation were also changed. Thus, within a very short period from 1957 to 1973, the secondary school system was undergoing several changes. It was felt by many teachers, educationists, and parents that the changes were brought rather hurriedly and haphazardly without giving sufficient time and thought to their proper implementation. Therefore, the changes which were much needed in the education system to keep pace with
the changing and developing situations in a society could not produce the desired effect. For the purpose of determining the effects of the manifold changes at the secondary level, the investigator prepared a comprehensive questionnaire covering all important aspects of the High Schools and Higher Secondary and Multipurpose Schools and circulated it among eighty (80) senior and experienced teachers of different High Schools and Higher Secondary and Multipurpose Schools spread over the different parts of the state. The teachers worked in their respective schools even before the introduction of the 11-year Higher Secondary School course and also had the experience of working in those schools at least for a minimum of five years. The questionnaire, comprising forty questions, covered the following areas:


A copy of the questionnaire is appended (Appendix III A).

Out of the 80 teachers 40 teachers were from Higher Secondary and Multipurpose schools, and 40 from the High Schools. The investigator felt that the views expressed by those teachers presented a fair sample of the views of the whole group. From the analysis and synthesis of the independent views of the teachers of High Schools, and Higher Secondary Schools, it was quite possible to draw a fair conclusion.
An overall impression created by their answers and opinions was that out of the total 65 Higher Secondary Schools the functioning of 12 Higher Secondary Schools was quite satisfactory. They are:

2. Oil India H.S. School, Duliajan.
5. Nazira Multipurpose School, Nazira.
7. Lala Multipurpose School, Cachar.
8. Girls' Multipurpose School, Silchar.
10. Shakti Ashram H.S.M.P.School, Kokrajhar.

Apart from the above mentioned Higher Secondary and Multi-purpose Schools, the others of the kind did not function very satisfactorily mainly because of dearth of resources, both human and physical. It is revealed from the response of the teachers and administrators that out of the seven streams of courses of studies, the Higher Secondary Schools of Assam offered only six streams. Those were 1. Humanities, 2. Science, 3. Commerce, 4. Agriculture, 5. Fine Arts, 6. Home Science.

The following table shows the number of H.S.Schools and their pass percentage till 1973:
Table II.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. H. S. School</th>
<th>Number appeared</th>
<th>Number passed</th>
<th>% of pass</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>976</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>55.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1548</td>
<td>784</td>
<td>50.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1915</td>
<td>909</td>
<td>57.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>2566</td>
<td>1038</td>
<td>40.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>3205</td>
<td>1488</td>
<td>46.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>4067</td>
<td>1394</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>5534</td>
<td>2565</td>
<td>46.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>5909</td>
<td>2296</td>
<td>38.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>5895</td>
<td>3256</td>
<td>47.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>6932</td>
<td>2894</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>7614</td>
<td>3330</td>
<td>43.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>9745 + 4210</td>
<td>4358 + 2024</td>
<td>45.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of Higher Secondary schools include the Higher Secondary of other areas also i.e. Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya, and Mizoram, as those areas were included in S.E.B.A. in 1973. The last two batches of 11-year H.S.S. students were combined.

[Source : Directorate of Public Instruction, Assam]
The following table shows the number of H.S. Schools in different districts till 1974.

### Table III

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Districts</th>
<th>No. of institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Kamrup</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Goalpara</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Garo Hills</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Khasi and Jayantia Hills</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Darrang</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Cachar</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Nowgong</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Mizo Hills</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Lakhimpur</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Sibsagar</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other States:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Eastern Frontier State (now Arunachal)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>92</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As already stated, because of the separation of Meghalaya in 1971 and Manipur in 1973 from under the jurisdiction of the Secondary Education Board, Assam, the number of Higher Secondary Schools in the State in 1973-1974 was reduced to 65 only.

The number of Higher Secondary schools could not be adequately raised to enrol a major section of secondary school pupils.
However, the enormous increase in the enrolment of secondary schools as a whole can be seen from the following table.

The table shows that the Higher Secondary Schools moved only a small section of the entire secondary school population.

Table showing enrolment in different High Schools and Higher Secondary Schools in Assam from 1963-64 to 1977-78.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>High Schools</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Enrolment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1963-64</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964-65</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>1965-66</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1966-67</td>
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<td>1967-68</td>
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<td>1968-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>1969-70</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
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<td>1971-72</td>
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<td>1972-73</td>
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<tr>
<td>1973-74</td>
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<tr>
<td>1974-75</td>
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<tr>
<td>1975-76</td>
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<tr>
<td>1976-77</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977-78</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It was stipulated that at the end of the primary stage a portion of students would step off from the school system and take up some occupations. Again, some would enter into different vocational courses. So, not a very large number of students will continue further in the stream of general education. The Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) remarked that Secondary Education should be vocationalised in a large measure and that the enrolment in vocational courses raised to 20 percent of the total enrolment at the Lower Secondary stage and 50 per cent of total enrolment at the Higher Secondary stage by 1968. The idea behind it was to increase productive technical and vocational efficiency of our students and to create a new attitude to work—an attitude that implies an appreciation of the dignity of labour. But the very small number of secondary schools converted into Higher Secondary and Multipurpose Schools shows that the goal of secondary education has not been even partially attained.

The aim of re-organisation of the structure of secondary schools was, as envisaged by the Secondary Education Commission, to make secondary education a terminal or life-entrance one for a majority of students, and a preparatory stage for higher education of a general or professional nature for a smaller number of secondary school students. As the present study shows, such an aim was never attained; rather, it affected adversely the quality education. The reasons for this are explained by 40 teachers as follows:

1. The Vocational Courses as provided in the Multipurpose Schools were so weak that they could not help students for a
vocation.
2. Some of the vocational courses like Agriculture could not attract students.
3. Both parents and students preferred general education only (Science and Arts and even Commerce courses.)
4. The students could not be properly motivated to pursue the vocational courses.
5. Many High Schools were converted into Higher Secondary Schools which could have functioned better had they been allowed to remain High Schools. Thus the Higher Secondary and Multipurpose Schools, like the High Schools in the state, acted merely as a gateway to higher educational institutions of a general nature.

According to the opinion of the whole group (80 respondents) the following obstacles hindered the realisation of the goal of new secondary education:

1. An unconducive and non-co-operative social environment.
2. Lack of occupational facilities for school leavers.
3. Lack of integration between schools and colleges and lack of further educational and training facilities for students who would not go to a college.
4. Poor family background of many students.
5. The prevailing unrest among students due to socio-economic conditions and malnutrition.
6. Inadequate and unsuitable staff.
7. Poor teacher-pupil ratio and lack of an ideal relationship between the staff and the pupils.
8. Premature and arbitrary specialisation for the student due to mal-functioning or non-functioning of guidance service.
9. Lack of laboratory facilities, reading materials, teaching aids etc. for effective teaching.

The following are the conditions on which, according to the teachers, the authorities should have focussed their attention in deciding to upgrade the High Schools:

(a) The schools should have been provided the adequate number of class rooms, adequate furniture, and other equipments.
(b) The schools should have had enough space for their immediate needs and future expansion.
(c) The authorities should have given due consideration to the local needs of the people while converting the High Schools into Higher Secondary Schools.
(d) For the implementation of diversified courses, the schools should have been provided with requisite number of career masters for proper guidance of the pupils.
(e) Continuous assessment and scientific evaluation along with modern methods of teaching in schools should have been arranged in a way to guide students and develop their latent abilities, and interest.

As the above analysis shows, the structural changes of the 11-year Higher Secondary school courses introduced from 1957 in the secondary schools of Assam could not yield the desired effect upon the secondary school children. Yet another structural change of 12-year (10 + 2) course recommended by the Kothari Commission was introduced from 1973 at the secondary level.
According to the new 10 + 2 school pattern, as already mentioned, a new entrant to a Lower Primary School was to join new class I. A student from the last class of the Lower Primary School was to join the first class of a Middle School. Hence the pupil promoted from class III was to be admitted to new class V. Similarly, a pupil promoted from old class VI was to be admitted to new class VIII. After passing High School Leaving Certificate course (H.S.L.C.) i.e. old class X, a pupil was to join the first year of a Higher Secondary School. In class V and VIII there were two sections of pupils, one directly promoted from the lower class, and the other who jumped one class. Provision was made for an accelerated programme of instruction for the new entrants in class V and class VIII who jumped one class. It was found that except for the introduction of the new courses of studies, for the new entrants in class V and class VIII, no other accelerated programme was taken.

While giving their opinions regarding the new 10 + 2 school pattern, it was remarked by all the 80 teachers that mere change of pattern would not accelerate the quality of education at the secondary level. For them, sincere and total implementation of the pattern was the first requisite for its success. They were of the opinion that the earlier pattern of 11-year Higher Secondary course was a failure more for the incomplete nature of implementation and dearth of resources, both physical and human, than for any inherent weakness of the structure. The following suggestions were given by them for implementing the scheme:
1. Utmost care should be taken to provide in the schools all the amenities including different courses of studies, staff, library, laboratory and other extra-curricular facilities.

2. It should be made compulsory for all students to pursue the Higher Secondary course in the same school from where they passed the Higher School Leaving Certificate course.

3. Due care should be taken before introducing the plus 2 stage at a High School so that it can have sufficient enrolment.

4. The plus 2 course, (now) taught at the colleges in the form of the Pre-University course, should be gradually and systematically shifted to the High Schools by turning them into Higher Secondary Schools. Proper facilities should be provided in such schools so that a student would like to continue in his school for the plus 2 course instead of joining a college.

5. To make the 10+2 school pattern a success, it is very important to give emphasis on proper education from the grass root level in order to build the foundation of the pupils. Therefore, the pre-primary course should be properly organised and then the primary course should be made effective in educating the children.

Regarding the curriculum presented for the 11-year Higher Secondary and Multipurpose Schools, it was found that the new curriculum was not able to produce the desired effect upon the student. From the opinion of the teachers, the following picture emerges:

Regarding the study of three languages at the secondary schools, it was remarked by a total of sixty (60) teachers (75%)
that the study of 3 languages at the school was really a burden, for, as they maintained,

(a) There was often little affinity between the languages to be studied and the mother tongue.

(b) Suitably qualified teachers to teach the languages (as foreign languages) were not available.

Twenty teachers (20) (25%) remarked that the study of languages would help children to have an easy access to people and places within and outside the state.

Pointing out one of the defects in the language syllabus it has been remarked by the entire group of teachers that by lowering the marks in the language subjects like English and Assamese from 300 spreading over 3 papers to 200 spreading over 2 papers, the proper emphasis in teaching languages was curtailed and that caused much harm to the learners. As a result, they believed,

(a) The pupils could not properly express their thought.

(b) The pupils generally failed to acquire the ability for enjoying creative writing.

The following suggestions were offered by them for the successful teaching of language:

1. Due emphasis should be given to the teaching of languages by improving the content of the language syllabus, and by raising the marks from 200 to 300, specially in Assamese (or the mother tongue) and English.

2. Knowledge of Sanskrit was indispensable for acquiring proper proficiency in Assamese, for Sanskrit is the mother language.
of all other the Indian languages. Hence Sanskrit should be included as part of the study of Assamese language.

3. For supplementing class room instruction regular arrangement should be made for drama, recitation, debate, talks etc.

Regarding the core subjects, the entire group of 80 teachers felt that the core subjects could not serve the basic purpose for which they were introduced, According to them,

1. The core subjects, far from being life-centered and need-based, were only bookish, and made heavy by a number of isolated subjects.

2. There was no provision for practical classes for the core subjects, and that was a serious drawback of the syllabus.

3. Although in the contents of the core curriculum various new elements were introduced, there was little correlation between any two subjects. As a result, different subjects remained isolated.

As far as the elective groups in the curriculum are concerned, it was observed by all the forty teachers that not all the courses were suited to the needs and capacities of the students. They explained the reasons as follows:

1. Different groups of subjects were not of different levels to facilitate training for different groups of students of different levels of capacities.

2. The elective courses were introduced in keeping with the scope and facilities available, but not in keeping with the needs and aspirations of the adolescent.
However, they remarked that the elective subjects provided in the school courses widened the scope of studies and facilitated the pursuit of courses according to the interest and capacities of the student.

As regards Social Studies as a subject, all the teachers of the group (40) replied that it was (1) too heavy (2) not sufficiently integrated and (3) superfluous for the humanities group. A similar opinion was received from 18 teachers (45%) about 'General Science' and 'Elementary Mathematics' which they considered to be "too heavy" and "superfluous" for the Science group.

Regarding the diversified courses, all the Higher Secondary teachers (40) observed that the content of the different courses was such as to prepare children for the next higher course in the college but not for any vocation.

The curriculum for the 11-year Higher Secondary course, according to the opinion of the entire group of teachers, was not academically and psychologically sound. The reasons they stated are:

1. Some knowledge of certain subjects like Sanskrit, Geography, and History is essential for all students at least until class X without which their very foundation of knowledge becomes weak.

2. Specialisation at an early stage (class VII) is psychologically unsound because the interest and aptitude do not properly develop at this stage. The fearful possibility of a wrong choice
is always there and it ultimately results in maladjustment of the student.

Regarding the curriculum of the 10-year school course, while expressing their opinion on the relevant questions in the questionnaire, the entire group (40 teachers) observed to the effect that the revised curriculum prescribed by the Board of Secondary Education, Assam, was improved only to the extent that some modifications in the courses and the contents of the syllabus were added but the nature of the syllabus remained as it was till 1964, and perpetuated education only of a general and bookish nature without any real emphasis on other aspects of a student's life namely, physical, emotional, vocational and cultural.

30 teachers, (75% ) observed that the vocational subjects introduced in the different schools of Assam were largely neglected. According to them,

1. The required amount of physical, human and institutional facilities were not provided in the schools, specially in the rural areas.
2. The students showed little enthusiasm for vocational courses.
3. The authorities could not motivate the students for pursuing vocational subjects.

10 (25% ) teachers, however, opined that they had been provided the necessary facilities for vocational courses by the authorities and that they had regular students for such courses also.
30 teachers, (75% ) remarked that the 'crafts' introduced in different schools was taught in a half-hearted manner. According to them,

1. 'Craft teachers' with requisite qualification were not available and hence underqualified persons were appointed to teach the crafts.

2. The school authorities did not care for regular teaching of the subjects. The 'Craft' subjects in particular were badly neglected.

3. In most of the schools it was taught till class VIII only, and therefore little importance was attached to it.

Regarding the facilities for co-curricular activities in the schools, the following picture emerges, from the responses of the teachers.

20 High School teachers (50% ) and 35 Higher Secondary Schools teachers (87.5% ) remarked that such facilities were provided in their schools. The majority of students could get benefits of such co-curricular activities.

20 (50% ) High School teachers and 5 (12.5% ) Higher Secondary School teachers remarked that they had only the minimum of co-curricular facilities, for they had neither a play-ground nor a seminar room nor other facilities for co-curricular activities.

Expressing their views on the provision for physical education in schools, a very depressing picture was presented. From
the opinion of 30 (75 %) High School teachers, it was revealed that there was no training for physical education in the real sense in the schools as the classes for physical education were not done regularly.

However 10 teachers, (25 %) replied that they had regular classes for physical education in their schools although with little effect upon students.

The Kothari Commission (1964-66) suggested that the secondary school curriculum should contain the necessary educational elements for the cultivation of the habits, attitudes and qualities of a balanced personality. The needs of the adolescents are related not only to the acquisition of knowledge and the promotion of intellectual ability but also to the fuller development of the physical, emotional, aesthetic and moral aspects of their personality. Provision has, therefore, to be made in the curriculum on a more systematic scale than before for the programme of physical education and subjects like art, craft, music, dancing, and education in moral and spiritual value. The criterion behind such a curriculum is that it is to a great extent based on experience. It should be so motivated as to arouse the learner's interest in it as being purposeful and relevant to his present needs, and suited to his normal growth, both mental and physical. The courses in the syllabi are to be integrated, analysed, or intellectualised as an aid to possible redirection of the learner's purposes. A variety of co-curricular activities should be organised to provide the students an opportunity for self-expression. This "experience curriculum" should cover productive activities, co-relation of
productive activities and environment, and provide for adjustment with local community to make education related to the life and aspiration of the people in general. The new curriculum as introduced from 1973 is an attempt, with its changed contents and improved method, to keep pace with the speed of modernisation. Regarding the new curriculum that was introduced from 1973 in the secondary schools of Assam it was revealed from the responses of the teachers that the curriculum was far from achieving its desired goal — to provide a wide spectrum of knowledge relevant to life and develop different aspects of personality and thereby to improve the quality of education.

The entire group of teachers considered the syllabus for the 10-year school as heavy and burdensome on the one hand and deficient on the other. They stated as follows:

1. The number of courses and the contents in the syllabus was increased to a large extent without allotting sufficient time for it.

2. Very little time was left for extra-curricular activities.

3. Subjects like Sanskrit, fine arts, drawing have been neglected which were necessary for young learners.

Unless adequate method of teaching for such a course is not applied and adequate educational facilities being not provided, the teachers stated that such a situation would lead to further deterioration of the quality of education.
As regards 'work experience' as a compulsory subject in the new curriculum for the high schools since 1973 it was the opinion of the entire group of teachers interviewed that although it was welcome, its implementation was rather perfunctory. There were several reasons for this.

First, there was no proper orientation of teachers for this work. As a result, they could not impart proper instruction in the related field of the 'work' chosen for them to teach.

Secondly, there was no supervision to check the work done. Naturally, the execution of the scheme was bound to be casual and perfunctory. For instance, in 'works' like cane work or bamboo work, the students were not instructed in the craft; they were asked to do certain items themselves and submit them to the teacher-in-charge for evaluation. Many students found it convenient to buy the items in the market or get them done by others and submitted them to their teachers. Thus the whole idea of integrating education with work to combine advantages of formal and informal system of education and to relate education with life and productivity by participating in productive work, in the school, in the home, in workshops in farm etc, as envisaged by the commission, miscarried.

Thirdly, the work selected for the students was not always interesting enough to engage the attention of the students. The scheme was not properly organised. As a result the parents had little say in the matter.
Fourthly, the equipments and the necessary facilities were also not provided in the schools. Apart from these, the allotted time comprising a period of forty minutes' duration in a week was not enough for continuous practice which is necessary for acquiring a proper skill. On the whole, the scheme was not given a fair trial as it deserved and, naturally, there was a strong public reaction against taking it into consideration for declaring a grade. No wonder, then, that very recently SEBA has decided not to count 'work experience' for the final gradings.

An effective administration by regular supervision, inspection and guidance in secondary schools is necessary for proper functioning of the secondary schools. It is revealed from the answers of 50 teachers out of a total of 80 (62.5%) that regular inspection was not done in the schools. They attribute this lapse to the absence of an adequate number of inspecting personnel.

30 teachers (37.5%) remarked that inspection was done in a casual and haphazard manner because, as they stated,

1. There was no close examination of the actual working of the schools,
2. The inspection was a mere formality.

So far as the internal administration is concerned, in many Higher Secondary Schools, it is revealed from the answers of 20 teachers out of 40 Higher Secondary teachers, (50%) that the Principal or the Headmaster could not run the administration smoothly. According to them,

1. The Headmaster or the Principal in most of the Higher Secondary Schools was a 'Bachelor degree' holder while the subject teachers of Higher Secondary Schools were 'Master degree' holders.
As such, a feeling of inferiority stood in the way of their asserting themselves over the administration.

2. In the absence of the required facilities, both physical and human, it was not possible to run the administration smoothly by the head of the institution in most of the schools.

Thus it was found that though many changes were introduced regarding the administration of secondary schools, for example, by creating a separate body, i.e. the Board of Secondary Education, Assam, to organise and supervise secondary schools in the state, and by creating a number of posts to supervise and provide guidance in the schools, the situation did not improve.

The success of any educational institution primarily depends on the quality and the devotion of its teachers. The Board of Secondary Education, Assam, prescribed the academic and professional qualification of teachers in secondary schools and a number of measures, as mentioned earlier, were adopted to provide the secondary schools with properly qualified teachers. In our questionnaire, a good deal of emphasis was laid on matters relating to teachers to find out whether the right type of teachers was available in adequate number and whether the schools provided the facilities to get their best service. On the basis of answers to specific questions relating to the teachers, it has been seen that the number of teachers for the Middle School classes was adequate. Teachers for languages were easily available but their standard, particularly in English, was generally poor. In the case of the Higher Secondary Schools, there was always a dearth
of teachers, specially in the science subjects, and mathematics. In the case of commerce and fine arts also only a few teachers were available. The dearth of teachers caused much inconvenience to all the High Schools and Higher Secondary Schools. Moreover, for the Higher Secondary Course, only one teacher was provided for one subject which was not at all sufficient for the smooth running of a school. Furthermore, in many Higher Secondary Schools, particularly in rural areas, the Bachelor Degree holders were engaged to take Higher Secondary classes in the absence of Master Degree holders. As a result, the standard of teaching fell.

In a memorandum to the M.N. Goswami Commission (1968) by the science teachers who were participating in a summer institute in physics at Gauhati University in 1968, it was pointed out that 90% of Aided High Schools had barely one science teacher each. It is also revealed from the answers of 20 (25%) teachers that due to the dearth of teachers many equipments and teaching materials of the science subjects remained unused for years, and then became unserviceable.

As regards the methods of teaching in High Schools and Higher Secondary Schools, it is revealed from the responses of all the teachers that the usual methods were chalk and talk, dictation of notes, and demonstration of practical work in science subjects and use of maps and charts. Group discussion and other modern methods of teaching using modern teaching-aids were not adopted. Many teachers, who were trained in modern methods of teaching, could not apply those techniques. The reasons they
stated were as follows:

1. The work-load of the syllabus and courses meant for each class was heavy in relation to the allotted time, and the number of actual working days in the school. In a period of 35 minutes or 40 minutes, it was difficult to apply any teaching method. The number of working days, they felt, was insufficient, because the number of actual working days was even less than 90 owing to various breaks in the working schedule caused by a large number of cancellation of classes, and holidays.

2. Due to large enrolment in the class, it was always difficult to use modern methods of teaching.

3. Dearth of subject teachers and teachers in elective subjects.

4. Insufficient teaching aids for use in the schools.

5. The teachers were overworked.

This was also the view of the Academic Council, Goalpara District, expressed at the Annual meet of the Principals and Headmasters at Gauripur on 17.2.79 on (a) Methods of Teaching (b) Work Experience, that the methods learnt through the institutional training could not be implemented in the schools. To do away with the problem they offered the following suggestions:

1. Extensive teacher-training facilities.

2. Maintenance of optimum teacher-pupil ratio and the lowest possible enrolment in a class.

4. Supply of sufficient number of teaching aids and laboratory facilities.
5. Allotment of a minimum number of subjects for teaching to a teacher.
6. Holding of demonstration classes and seminars.

Thus it was found that effective teaching with appropriate method, though badly needed for the success of the new school curriculum, was neglected. For supplementing and amplifying class-room instruction in the new curricula, it was also necessary that proper arrangements were made regularly for talks, debates, recitations, drama, seminar etc. It was seen from the responses of 16 Higher Secondary teachers (40%) that such facilities were not at all available in their schools, 24 (60%) Higher Secondary teachers replied that they had only the minimum facilities provided to them, and they were not at all sufficient.

As regards examination and evaluation, it is revealed from the responses of all the teachers that though the nature of examinations was changed from the essay type to the objective type, the purpose for examination — to test the efficiency of teaching and the assimilation of pupils, remained elusive. This is because,
1. it could not discourage cramming and encourage intelligent understanding,
2. it enlarged the scope for malpractices like copying in the examination hall,
3. it reduced the scope for the student to analyse and synthesise his thoughts.

The respondent teachers recommended that the following points should be emphasised for a proper evaluation of the students:

1. External examination should be carried along with internal examination,
2. Proper care should be taken for regular evaluation of a student's class work.
3. Records of a student's performance in his class, in different examinations like weekly tests, half-yearly examinations, tutorials etc. should be properly recorded for promotion to the next higher class. This would ensure that promotion is strictly on merit and unworthy students will not be sent up to a higher class.

A well-planned programme for educational and vocational guidance in secondary schools was much needed to help parents and pupils in selecting the most suitable educational course and the most satisfying vocation to pursue.

It is, however, revealed from the responses of all the teachers that in Assam the vocational guidance programmes was not properly organised. The reason for this failure they stated thus:

1. The career masters, who were also teachers, were usually overburdened with a heavy work. They were to provide guidance in addition to teaching.
2. The career-masters were very few in number, usually one teacher in a school. As a result, guidance service was not properly provided.

3. The State Guidance Bureau did not have effective administrative control over the district counsellors, school counsellors, and guidance teachers. As such, the Guidance Service programme was irregular.

4. The parents did not show much enthusiasm for the guidance programme. As it is the general practice for parents to choose the academic course for their children, their lack of interest was a great hindrance in implementing the diversified courses in the Higher Secondary and Multipurpose Schools.

5. Lack of co-ordination among agencies like the Employment Exchange, Guidance Bureau etc. made the vocational guidance programme in schools ineffective.

The Kothari Commission (1964-66) suggested to gear vocational guidance programmes to manpower-planning. This would include analysis of trends in the labour market in different employment fields, both private and public, and collection of up-to-date information in occupation, and organising career conferences that would help the student and their parents in their choice of a career.

It is seen from the present study that although changes at the secondary level were introduced in every sphere, viz.
structure, and curriculum, organisation and administration, teaching, and evaluation, they were only partial and haphazard. Therefore, the result was disastrous. The quality of secondary education was gradually falling. The high rate of failure in the High School Leaving Certificate and the Higher Secondary School Leaving Certificate examinations year after year is an indicator of the quality of secondary education prevailing in the state.

It was also observed that the absence of vocational courses to draw the academically deficient student from the main stream of general secondary education at the end of the compulsory period, was one of the main causes of the fall of educational standard at the secondary level. The following table (Table V) shows that enrolment in different schools for vocational and professional training is significantly small in number.
Table V
Enrolment in different institutions for vocational and professional training

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<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Polytechnic</td>
<td>941</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>2128</td>
<td>2157</td>
<td>2179</td>
<td>2347</td>
<td>2484</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Industrial Training Institute</td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>2148</td>
<td>2220</td>
<td>2344</td>
<td>2660</td>
<td>2434</td>
<td>2367</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Gram Sevak training</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>61</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(d) Sericulture</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Land Survey</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Music and Dance</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>1336</td>
<td>1568</td>
<td>2095</td>
<td>2111</td>
<td>2059</td>
<td>2187</td>
<td>2347</td>
<td>2461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) Nursing and Midwifery</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(h) Arts and crafts</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>1824</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) Junior Technical School</td>
<td>919</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>446w</td>
<td>443w</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>189</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(j) Pharmacy</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(k) Veterinary</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* includes unrecognised institutions, N.A. = not available.

[Source: 1. Directorate of Public Instruction, Assam.
2. Directorate of Technical Education, Assam.
3. Directorate of Employment and Craftsmen Training, Assam]
The M.N. Goswami Commission which was appointed by the Government of Assam in 1968 to report on the problem of secondary education due to rapid expansion of educational institutions in the state, found that secondary schools in Assam were not 'properly planned.' New High Schools sprang up in close proximity with the old well-established schools and affected them by attracting students away to the new. The process of multiplication of High Schools was described in a memorandum to the Commission by the Aided School Teachers' Association, Assam, as "mushroom growth," It observed: "the establishment of Aided Schools is posing a grave problem to education and as such irrational growth of schools besides lowering the standard of education at all levels has greatly affected the already established big or old school."^8

The Goswami Commission found that the Middle Schools in Assam, after getting recognition up to Class VI, have a tendency to go in for opening classes up to Class VIII and the Education Department, either on local or often on political pressure, gives recognition up to Class VIII for that is within the jurisdiction of the education department of the Government of Assam. As soon as classes are opened, or recognised up to Class VIII, the schools go on opening Class IX and X privately and present candidates for H.S.L.C. examination as private candidates for a few years and then approach the Board of Secondary Education, Assam, for recognition for presenting candidates to H.S.L.C. Examination as regular candidates. Thus, gradually, the number of private candidates is increasing for H.S.L.C. Examination. The increasing number of private candidates has lowered the pass percentage in
the H.S.L.C. examination which affected the standard of education at
the secondary level as a whole.

It was remarked by the Aided School Teachers' Association that
"unless the gradually increasing number of private candidates for
H.S.L.C. examination is controlled effectively the standard of this
public examination will further deteriorate, resulting in colossal
wastage of money, time and energy of the country." The following table
shows the number of regular and private candidates in the H.S.L.C.
examination and the percentage of pass in that examination.

Table VI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Examination</th>
<th>No. appeared</th>
<th>No. passed</th>
<th>Expelled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Regular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>22,436</td>
<td>15,252</td>
<td>9082(40.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>24,008</td>
<td>19,115</td>
<td>10350(43.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>24,258</td>
<td>24,189</td>
<td>11852(48.85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>24,410</td>
<td>32,016</td>
<td>10410(42.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>20,920</td>
<td>43,263</td>
<td>8370(41.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>18,931</td>
<td>51,580</td>
<td>9992(52.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>21,068</td>
<td>56,790</td>
<td>10410(49.43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>22,733</td>
<td>55,274</td>
<td>13240(58.25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>24,995</td>
<td>58,578</td>
<td>15650(62.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>28,663</td>
<td>53,560</td>
<td>17200(60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>29,180</td>
<td>58,254</td>
<td>18580(63.6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Source: Office of the Board of Secondary Education] From the above
table it is revealed that the number of private candidates increased
significantly whereas their pass percentage was deplorably low.
After independence, for the progressive implementation of the Constitutional Directive relating to free and compulsory education, the expenditure incurred by the State Government at all levels has rapidly increased. From Rs. 76 lakhs in 1947, the education budget of the Government of Assam has gone up to Rs. 21 crores in 1969-70 and has gone up to Rs. 74.48 crores in 1979-80. Under the present circumstances, it was found that even such mounting expenditure in education could not bring the desired result. The huge wastage in the form of failure in the High School Leaving Certificate and Higher Secondary School Leaving Certificate Examinations prove the deficiencies of the system. They may be summarily classified as follows:

1. Unplanned growth of secondary educational institutions.
2. Lack of sincerity, devotion, and co-operation on the part of the administration, teachers, and the public.

The Committee of Secondary Education, Assam (M.N. Goswami Commission) (1968) suggested that the District Educational Planning Boards should be more careful in granting permission to start new schools and for selecting schools for the deficit system of grant. The Committee also suggested that the Board should be constituted in a manner that would inspire confidence in the people. It should include the District Inspector of Schools, a representative of the Board of Secondary Education, two educationists, one M.L.A. to be elected by the State Legislature, and the Deputy Commissioner of the District.  

The Board should refuse to recommend a school for the deficit system of grant when it is satisfied that the existence
of the school in the area has hampered the growth of an already established school enjoying government grant under the deficit system. The Commission felt that there was great need for proper distribution of secondary schools to improve the standard of secondary education.

The effect of several changes in secondary education detailed in the foregoing chapters cannot be said to be spectacular. The wastage in the form of high percentage of failure is as great as ever. The diversification of courses has not yielded any perceptible change. On the contrary, there is a rapid decline of standard. Slackness in teaching and evaluation is rather the rule than the exception. In earlier decades, it was seen that a boy (or a girl) who fared well in his School Leaving Examination continued to show bright results in his later career also. But now a days many first divisioners of the Board fail to make the grade even in the first college examination. This is a problem not investigated here systematically and in detail. But it is a common experience and leaves much scope for detailed analysis.

The changes as such were surely well-planned, but the rot was in the failure to implement them in right earnest. It is the administration that is at fault. It has not shown the firmness of resolution that is absolutely necessary for implementing the changes. On the contrary, it has often yielded to various unacademic pressures. One single instance to prove this point is the continuation of the ridiculous practice of awarding
'grace marks' which, in practice, means that even the unsuccessful must be declared to have 'passed' for extra-academic considerations, thus reducing the entire process of evaluation to a mockery. The courage to take hard decisions for improving quality has not been evident yet. The overall impact of secondary education in Assam so far, notwithstanding its avowed aim of giving it a much needed vocational thrust, has been minimal. Lack of proper planning for meaningful vocational education and a scheme to motivate the students for it are the main reasons for the failure. The unplanned growth of many venture High Schools which promote unworthy students to the next higher class only to maintain its rolls and send up undeserving students for the school final examination have aggravated the situation by increasing the number of students at the secondary level. The Board of Secondary Education, Assam, cannot be said to have checked the rot. The ultimate result is decline of standard.

A very important thing here is that among the vast number of students there are a few bright ones. In the prevailing situation, they do not get proper attention. That is indeed a pity for it means the neglect of merit. Also, the large number of dropouts at the terminal stage means a huge wastage of resources: that creates frustration among the secondary school students. This is surely harmful for society for the obvious reasons. No orientation of secondary education therefore must overlook this point. All its planning must take this into proper account.