Gauhati is a fast growing town. The population of Gauhati is increasing rapidly. It was 11,492 (1872) and the same amounted to 12,481 in between 1872 and 1911, 21,797 between 1911 and 1931, 43,615 between 1931 and 1951 and 1,00,702 between 1951 and 1961. This sharp rise in population is necessarily exerting a great pressure on the meagre amenities that the civic body can provide. The tremendous and unusual growth of population in small city like Gauhati has led to the problem of limited space. Beginning from the river-bank in the north, the town has gradually been advancing southward, eastward and westward in a semi-circular fashion. Since its eastern and western expansion has already been checked by the hill ranges, only prospect of its further expansion remains on the southern and south-eastern sides. During our discussion of the physical set-up of the town, we have already pointed out to this fact of available living-space. True to this fact, we find here the actual crying problem on the part of Municipality. It is here that we find a number of small marshes, water-pools, and shall depressions. To make them available as living space for the town dweller, these are to be filled up by raising the height of the reclaimed level from two to six feet in average.

Water-Supply :- Besides this, the problems which were non-existent when the settlement was much smaller, have become increasingly pressing. Of these the supply of adequate quantity of good drinking water is one. Till about the end of the third decade of this century the water supply was in charge of the government when it was sub-
sequently transferred to the Municipality. At present the Water-works are situated at a height of about 278 feet on the top of a hill at the north-eastern extremity of the town. Water is pumped from the river Brahmaputra up to the water-works station. The level of water in the river varies from 135 to 145 feet, above M.S.L. That is why the water is pumped up to a height of 133-163 feet. The water that reaches the station is mixed with alum \((K_2SO_4 \cdot Al_2(SO_4)_3 \cdot 24H_2O)\) and passed on to the settling tanks where the impurities settle down. From here it passes on to sand filters and mechanical filters and then finally chlorinated. The purified water now flows down a couple of pipes from a height of 264 feet and is distributed to the various streets and houses.

It is paradoxical to note that while the Brahmaputra flows by the side of a town, yet the town suffers from great scarcity of water. Though there is enough supply of waters, there are not sufficient means to distribute this water to the general public. The present supply of water is about 7,00,000 gallons per day for an estimated total population of at least 80,000. The Municipality is unable to supply water to the outlying parts like Santipur, Ulubari, Silpukhuri, Chandmari etc. and even to the remaining parts, the water is supplied only 1-2 hours for 2 times in the day.

A new scheme for supplying 10 million gallons of water to greater Gauhati is under construction at the Jubilee Garden site near Sukreswar. The new plant is so designed as to be capable of being expanded into a supply of 15 million gallons of water per day if and when necessary. As water supply has been a perennial problem to the residents of Gauhati, the new water supply project for Greater Gauhati is expected to go a long way in catering the demand of the ever increasing population.
Drainage :- Another problem of the town is the lack of proper drainage system. Drains are open, smaller in number and often fluid. Because of the lack of proper repair and reclamation the existing drains are choked with filth and garbage and have become breeding grounds for mosquitoes and vermin. So Malaria is common. It is probably because of this that Gauhati had once been described as the most unhealthy station in Assam. These dirty and insanitary conditions led to breaking-out of 'Flague', a virulent disease in 1957 and more than 6 persons died in this disease. Cholera, T.B. and horde of other disease also often appear and take a heavy toll of human lives.

Therefore it is evident that the present open-drainage system is not good for the town of Gauhati. But it is also difficult to suggest means of better drainage as the topography of Gauhati will not allow to construct all kinds of drainages. The following two kinds of drainage may be suggested to remove the insanitary activities of Gauhati.

(1) The existing open drains that are found nearness to the granitic topography may be widen to sanitary covered drainage.

(2) In lowlying areas i.e. the southern part of the town underground drainage may be constructed.

A sewage canal may also be constructed from near Railway Station through Rehabari to Bharalu river i.e. through the once 'Brahmaputra channel'. All the drains of the town may be inter-linked to this canal so that all the filths and rain water that fall seasonally in the town can pass through the same canal and thereby the canal can easily be repaired and reclaimed in minimum cost.
Unplanned Growth:— Another problem of the town is its lop-sided and unplanned growth settlement and functional units. Gauhati has been in existence since a long time back and the present chaotic conditions are not the result of a few days or months, but of many years of unbalanced and haphazard growth. A city should have streets, transportation facilities, parks, recreational facilities, schools and colleges, public buildings, industrial and commercial areas all arranged in such a way that it would function most efficiently and economically and enhance the beauty of the city at the same time. But in the present Gauhati there are no clearly well defined and compact functional units.

The existing commercial, industrial and shopping centres are found to be scattered all over the town in the midst of residential and educational areas. The mushroom growth of the rice and flour and oil mills and godowns of Fancy Bazar and Athgaon area and the scattered industries such as saw mills, soap-factory, plywood factories, iron foundries etc. are a menace to the respective localities in particular and to the city in general. The disadvantages of such haphazard commercial and industrial development are many and varied. These are generally responsible for the creation of dirty and unhealthy surroundings of the town. These unhygienic and haphazard growth of the town cannot be altered over night, and so these should be removed by adopting and carefully following a well-organised plan.

Transportation Difficulties:— The transportation facilities and its present problem has already been discussed in the Chapter No. VII. A curious point is likely to be noted is that the railway line runs right through the town necessitating frequent railway
crossings of roads. It is very likely that when the railway line was originally laid down, it would have formed the southern boundary of the town and subsequently the town has expanded southward, beyond the railway line.

The railway line has criss-crossed the present town and most of its length the line passes through a very business area of the city offering many serious handicaps in the business area in particular and the town in general. It creates several railway crossings of roads and these are always risky for both to the pedestrian and to the vehicles in passing. It also spent money unwisely in making railway level crossing gates, overbridges etc.

Some stagnant lowlands, water pools etc. which are found on the both sides of the railway line are also results of its construction. Therefore the present railway line should be shifted to further south of the town immediately as proposed by the authority.

For the movement of people from one place to another there are at present three means of traffics. That is one can go to any place of the town from any transport focus, by City Bus or by Taxi Car or by Cycle Rickshaws.

City Buses operate over main thoroughfares of the town. One route from Noonmati through Uzanbazar, Panbazar, Fancy Bazar, Kamakhya, Maligaon to Pandu; another one from Noonmati through Ambari, Lakh tokia, Fancy Bazar, Kamakhya, Maligaon to Jhalukbari and the other from Khanapara through Uluberi, Paltanbazar, Bharalumukh, Kamakhya, Maligaon to Jhalukbari. Daily 42 buses are plying over the former route since it is the oldest and busiest city bus-route. City Bus services in the other two routes are recently started and both of them comprises only 16 City Buses. But these are not sufficient in number in comparison to the needs of the city's population.
loading City Buses are seen to ply over during the office hours.
The City Bus fare is also high i.e. 9 paise per mile.

There are very few number of taxis in Gauhati and their rates are very high—generally Re.1/- per mile and generally common people avoid them and they preferred either to Cycle Rickshaws or to City Bus. There are at present about 3498 Registered Cycle Rickshaws excluding 4 Auto Rickshaws. Though there are sufficient number of Cycle Rickshaws, they are slow moving, hence they should be replaced by fast moving automobiles. In order to cater the present demand of the city, it is necessary to increase the number of City Bus routes and City Buses and also to increase the number of taxis.

Food Supply:— Supply of good-staff specially vegetables, fruits etc. is another problem of the city. In the western cities market-gardening is generally found in the peripheries or close to the cities. But here in Gauhati we do not find any definite market-gardening zone in or close to the city of Gauhati. Only extensive market-gardening farms are found in Dolibari-Pacharia area along the north bank of the Brahmaputra river. This area is lying 8 miles north-west of Gauhati in Hajo Thana and it is here the farmers generally produce brinjal, potatoes, onion, saffron, garlic, beans, chillies etc. and send directly to Gauhati either by trucks or by boats. Other market-gardening activities are to be found to carry on in the Kitchen garden of the neighbouring villages and 'Chaboris' of the Brahmaputra river off Gauhati. These tiny gardens and the products supplied from the Dolibari-Pacharia area are not adequate to provide the town dwellers with necessary vegetables. So the people of Gauhati depend mostly on the imported vegetables which generally come from Shillong, Dhupdara and Palasbari etc. But
there is no cold-storage system which is the most serious handicap to the perishable imported vegetables and hence the town dwellers often have to buy dry and half rotten vegetables at comparatively higher prices. As Gauhati is a populous town, the demand of vegetables is always great and supply of the same as noted above is less. This results in increase of prices of almost all the vegetables. The Fig. No. 21 shows the upward trend of prices of the most important vegetables in the local market of Gauhati.

As in other parts of the state the people of Gauhati have to purchase the imported food products such as Sugar, Daal, Flour, Ghee etc. at a higher price. Rice, Mustard Oil are locally available here as the several rice and oil mills are located in and around Gauhati.

Important fruits such as orange, pineapple, banana, lemon and other citrus fruits mostly come from distant places like, Shillong, Sonapur, Dhupdhara, Palasbari, Nowgong etc. Mango mostly comes from Bihar, Banana comes from Dhupdhara and pineapple generally comes from Shillong. So the town dwellers of Gauhati generally do not get fresh fruits and they have to purchase these at a pretty high price.

There is no distinct dairy-farm in Gauhati except one which is a government farm and is located at Khanapara. Generally Nepali graziers supply milk in the town. The milk supply of Gauhati is meagre and is much worse in quality. Because of this limited supply and consequent high prices of milk, most people generally cannot afford to purchase it. Milk is generally sold at 12 annas to one rupee per seer and so the average daily milk consumption is far low then any other towns of outside Assam.
A-Class House - Assam Type, with wooden frame and C.I. Sheet roof

B-Class House - Assam Type, with wooden frame and thatched roof

C-Class House - Assam Type, with bamboo frame, reed-wall and thatched roof
A modern reinforced concrete building - D.C.'s Court

The Assam High Court

Temporary hutment of the slums
Figure - 21
As in cases of dairy and vegetable farms, poultry and fish farms are also not adequate. Sheep and goats are both scarce. The value of eggs is very high and so also is that of poultry supply from North Kamrup at exhorbitant price. Though there are small number of fisheries which are recently started, yet they are quite inadequate to provide town dwellers with fishes at a reasonable rate. All these eggs, goats, fowls, fishes etc. are imported to Guwahati from distant places and thereby the town dwellers buy it at higher prices.

Thus it is clear that the scarcity of food-supply is the most serious problem of the town. So it is needless to say that government as well as other authorities of the town should devote considerable attention for the supply of food materials for the town dwellers.

Following measures, if adopted are expected to go a long way in solving the food problem -

1. Government should pay special attention for the improvement of market-gardening activities by establishing more market-gardens and fruit orchards in and around the town wherever ample of cultivable land is found to be available.

2. The present producers of food materials should be encouraged by giving them some facilities such as agricultural loan for purchasing implements, fertilisers etc. so that they can produce more.

3. Everywhere in Assam plants are generally attacked by diseases, insects, fungi, bacteria, wild pigs, rats and monkeys. So necessary steps should be taken to protect plants from them.

4. Elsewhere the peasants are often at the mercy of unscrupulous traders and there are many brokers and middlemen. That is why the peasants do not often get their proper prices of the commodities.
Therefore the government should keep a watch eye to those unscrupulous traders so that the peasants can get the proper share of their products.

(5) There is only one government Poultry and dairy farm at Khanspara. Such kind of planned farms should be increased in number by setting up new, scientific and well managed farms at suitable places near Guwahati. The existing fisheries such as Dighali tank, Jor-Pukhuri, Biswa State Farm, Silpukhuri, Chalabil etc. should be improved by increasing the number of fishes and also new fish farm should be opened.

Unemployment Problem:-- In every town we find convergence of rural population i.e. migration from rural to urban areas, and also from a small town to a larger one. These migrated people are mostly literate and all are not employed. These facts also common in Guwahati town. Generally educated men are found to seek employment in Guwahati. Apart from these local unemployed men there are displaced persons which renders the problem much more serious. After partition (1947) there is a sudden influx of displaced persons. Simultaneously with independence Guwahati had to provide large number of refugees. There is an enormous increase in government staffs, new industrial and business concerns are setting up their offices and at the same time Guwahati has been developing as the distributing centre for the whole of Assam. No city can bear to have such a load piled on to it almost over night; it has almost reached the limiting point in regard to food and water supply, housing, transportation, power supply and conservancy for the everincreasing population. Since 1947 new colonies have been built up but since there was pressing urgency, there was not time for planning and co-ordination prior to
construction of these sites. Land was acquired, divided into plots and houses were built up. Roads, shops, water and power supply etc. followed one after another often languishly and thus new parts of the town grew up. Under the stress of the moment, attempts have been made to incorporate these new colonies into the town by extending civic amenities to these new parts of the cities. Refugee colonies are found near Silpukhuri and Rehabari areas and most of them are often nothing but agglomeration of unhygienic, ill-ventilated hutments.