PREFACE

Of late, several monographs have been written on the political and military transaction in Assam or the North-East Frontier. But the number of similar works or even original papers on the life and culture of the people in the nineteenth century is extremely limited. With the exception of Dr. H.K. Barpujari's *A short History of Higher Education in Assam*, 1826-1900, published in Golden Jubilee Volume, Cotton College, Gauhati, 1952, no attempt has so far been made to trace the history of education.

The present thesis aims at describing the nature and progress of education in Assam from the commencement of East India Company's rule in 1826 to the grant of Provincial autonomy in 1919. The Introductory Chapter provides the background wherein salient features of the indigenous system of education as prevailed under the former Government is indicated. Chapter I describes how on the ruins of the old the new system or the English education began in Assam with a 'Political-cum-Administrative' objective to conciliate the ex-official aristocracy by providing employment under the Government. Administrative and local needs soon demanded a switch over to a system of education at lower levels through the medium of Vernacular. The rapid progress of Vernacular or primary education and the experiments in Secondary and Higher education through the medium of English find place in Chapter II. Reorientation and progress of education at all stages — Primary, Secondary, Collegiate and Vocational-
are discussed in Chapter III. After a survey of education adequate attention has been paid in next five Chapters on special aspects of education in Assam, viz., Curriculum and Medium of Instruction, Training of the Teachers, Management and Control, Educational Finance and Education of the Backward Communities. The closing Chapter provides an assessment — achievements and failures in education during the period under review.

The thesis is based mainly on official documents, both published and unpublished, preserved at the West Bengal State Archives, Record Room, Assam Secretariat, Shillong, National Library, Calcutta and Serampore Missionary Library, Hoogly. Materials derived from indigenous sources and semi-contemporary works, journals and periodicals have also been utilised. It has been my sincere endeavour to present facts as they are and to arrive at the conclusion as objectively and impartially as possible; it is however for the reader to judge whether I have succeeded.

In conclusion I can not but express my deep debt of gratitude to my Supervisor Dr. H.K.Barpujari, Professor and Head of the Department of History, Gauhati University, whose unfailing guidance made it possible for me to complete the present thesis.

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