DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION
Library as information centre has an important role to play in the extension and improvement of education. A well-equipped and well-managed library is the foundation of modern educational infrastructure. As secondary education is considered to be an important stage of education the libraries have to play a vital role in the acquisition and dissemination of information. The libraries of today have truly become a gateway to knowledge.

The potentialities of the school library as an instrument of education in the field of secondary education has been recognized in all quarters. H.G.Wells has rightly stated that "A school without an easily accessible library is really scarcely a school at all-it is a dispensary without bottles or a kitchen without pantry." A well-equipped library is regarded next to the teacher. It is looked upon as something more than a mere collection of books housed in a room. It has become the “intellectual laboratory” of the school. The library and the school are treated as inseparable life forces.

The present study conducted is a modest attempt by the investigator to make an appraisal of the library facilities and their utilization in the secondary schools of Kamrup District of Assam.

From the review of related literature it was found that very few studies were done on this aspect, i.e. appraising secondary school libraries in our country and more particularly in the state of Assam.
Studies have also shown that library facilities are not at all satisfactory in
the secondary schools in India. (Vora M.K., 1975; Kulkarni, S. 1985; Kaul,
C.L. 1988; Lalringpuii, 1997.) Studies from various countries have also
confirmed this fact. (Sidney H. Ditzion, 1981; Arthur P. Young, 1985.)

This study was undertaken after extensive discussions with
experts and it was decided to conduct the study with the following five
objectives:

1) To study the existing library facilities available in the secondary
   schools of Kamrup District.

2) To make a comparative study of the library facilities available in
   the rural and urban schools of Kamrup District.

3) To make a systematic assessment of the utilisation of the library
   facilities in the secondary schools of Kamrup District.

4) To study the utilization of libraries for promoting proper reading
   habits among the secondary school students of Kamrup District.

5) To offer practical suggestions regarding adequate facilities to be
   provided in the secondary schools.

The following hypotheses were formulated to carry out the study
in the light of the above objectives:

1) The existing library facilities available in the secondary schools
   of Kamrup District are not satisfactory.

2) There is a significant difference between the rural schools and the
   urban schools with respect to library facilities available for
   secondary school students.
3) Proper utilization of the existing library facilities is found to be lacking in the secondary schools.

4) The school libraries have not been able to promote proper reading habits among the students.

The present research work which is designed to study and evaluate the library facilities and their utilization in the secondary schools of Kamrup District falls under the category of normative or descriptive method of research methodology.

Kamrup District of Assam was taken as the area of study in this research work. Both the urban and rural areas of the district were included in the sample. A total of 45 secondary schools from both urban and rural areas were selected for the study. The schools were selected by using both stratified random sampling and purposive sampling techniques. Since there are only 5 government secondary schools in the whole of Kamrup district, all of them were included in the study. The schools selected were from four different types of management i.e. provincialised schools, private schools, government schools and recognized schools. To find out the utilization of the available library facilities in the secondary schools, 400 students from class VIII, IX and X were randomly selected from the sample schools.

Questionnaire and interview techniques were applied for collection of data in this research work. The data collected were analyzed by means of percentages. Graphical representations were also made to highlight the data drawn from the study.

The following major findings were drawn after analyzing the data.
1) Most of the secondary schools surveyed in this study had a library. However, the investigator found that in majority of the schools the library existed in name only. Most of the school libraries functioned in small rooms similar to classrooms. Lack of separate library building or inadequate space hindered the overall development of the library. Some schools however stocked the books meant for the users in a separate room whereas others had their library in the principal’s room. It was observed from the study that some secondary schools even stocked their books in the teacher’s common room.

2) Except for a few private schools, none of the schools visited by the investigator had a professional librarian to take charge of the library. The teachers were assigned the additional duty to act as in-charges of the school libraries. Most of the teacher librarians interviewed, performed this duty on an honorary basis or for a meagre honorarium.

3) The number of books available in the school libraries were not sufficient. Moreover the books and journals were outdated. Lack of proper maintenance and improper cataloging were found in most of the libraries visited.

4) Facilities like computer, Xerox, and fax which should be a part and parcel of the library were not available in majority of the schools. Only a few private schools had these modern facilities for the users.

5) Shrinking book budget was a major problem in the secondary school libraries visited by the investigator. Lack of fund for acquiring the required reading materials affect the library functions and services. The important sources of book fund are generally the
government, donations received from philanthropists as and fees from students. It was observed that the fees collected from the students was very meagre and sometimes this money was also spent on non-library items.

6) The findings of the study indicated that in majority of the schools there was no regular library period allotted for library reading in the timetable. This is probably one of the reasons why students refrain from going to the library to read books. Though in some schools the library is kept open till 4pm it was found that only a few students visit the library after school hours. However the investigator found that in the private schools there was one or two periods in a week allotted to library reading.

7) In almost all the schools visited by the investigator, it was found that there was no provision for publicity and display of books to attract the readers. The school authorities failed to take motivating programmes for inculcating library reading habits among students.

8) The school authority is not at all interested to improve the library conditions or to introduce new services in the library. The information about new arrivals are also not properly communicated to the users.

9) The students are not generally well versed with the functioning of the school library. Lack of user orientation and counseling service in library make the user’s problem more acute.

10) Majority of the students have complained that the teacher in charge of the library try to avoid their presence in the library. This may be due to the fact that the teachers are already over burdened with
their classroom teaching and consider library duty as a punishment rather than a service.

11) The necessary items like book cabinet, tables and chairs, lights and fittings, shelves etc, are found to be inadequate in majority of the secondary school libraries.

12) In most of the schools there is no library committee to plan and execute library policies. The Headmaster/Principal himself takes decisions on matters connected with school libraries.

13) Proper book selection methods are not followed in the schools. In connection with the purchase of books, periodicals, journals, references etc. it was found in this study that majority of the schools do not take into account the needs, interests and tastes of the students.

14) The study revealed that most of the books and study materials meant for the school library are kept inside closed almirahs. This practice does not permit the users to select the required reading materials freely thereby affecting their reading habits.

15) Most of the secondary school libraries are kept open according to the convenience of the teacher librarian, that is, only when he is free from his teaching work. Thus, the school library functions for only one or two hours a day. During this time students are not able to make use of the library since they are in the classroom. This is one of the factors, which hampers the regular practice of using the library by students and teachers.

The findings of the present study tend to uphold the first hypothesis that the existing library facilities available in the secondary schools
of Kamrup District are far from satisfactory. The evidence collected in this investigation along with the statistical analysis tends to uphold the second hypothesis of the study that so far as library facilities are concerned the urban schools are better off than the rural schools. The existing facilities available in the secondary schools have also not been properly utilized. The findings of the study have also shown that the secondary school libraries have not been able to develop the acquisition of the skills and promote proper reading habits among the students.

Suggestions:

1) All the secondary schools must have a library. Having a library in the school should be a pre-requisite condition for the recognition of the school.

2) A regular full time professionally qualified librarian should be appointed in the schools and he/she should be given the scale and status of a secondary schools teacher. The librarian should play a proactive role in encouraging the use of the school library and inculcate reading habits among the students and teachers.

3) Adequate finance should be provided for the organisation of the secondary school libraries. This finance should be recurring and budgetary provision should be made for the library in the school budget.

4) The school inspectors should make observations on the use of the school libraries. A senior librarian should be appointed as a member of the school inspection committee.

5) The library should be housed in a separate building as far as possible. If this is not possible it must be housed in a spacious hall.
in the school premises, or sufficient number of rooms should be used for the library purposes. The library building should be well ventilated and made user friendly.

6) The library fee collected from the students should be exclusively used for the school library. The school authority can also approach philanthropists to contribute generously to the school library.

7) Teacher should take the students to the library and explain the services available for them. The students should be motivated to use the library.

8) Various extension programmes like exhibitions, library week, lectures etc. should be conducted to attract more students to the library.

9) The secondary school libraries should subscribe at least one National daily. Purchase of books and other reading materials should be based on student's needs, tastes and interests.

10) A state level organisation like Directorate of School Libraries should be constituted to monitor, coordinate and promote the allround development of school libraries in Assam. If this is not feasible at present, at least a new post of Deputy Director for school libraries be created who may be entrusted with responsibilities for the promotion and control of library services in the schools of Assam. A professionally competent person should hold this post.

11) Education provided in the school should be library centred. Self learning should be encouraged among the students.

12) Teachers should insist that the students prepare the notes
themselves.

13) Library rules should be made simple and easy to follow. Strict rules are to be relaxed to avoid unnecessary problems to students.

14) There should be a regular library period in the class time table. Atleast three or four library hours should be assigned for each class to enable the students to use the library fruitfully.

15) The closed system of access should be selected as a last resort. Books should be placed on open shelves as far as practicable.

16) Modern facilities like computer, internet, fax, Xerox etc. should be available in the school libraries.

17) Special training courses should be organised for school librarian in order to discuss and solve the common problems and update their information.

Suggestions for further research:

1) The present study was a humble endeavour to make an appraisal of library facilities and their utilisation in the secondary schools. Further research may be done in this area at different levels of education i.e. at the higher secondary level, college level and university level.

2) Studies may also be made covering other districts of Assam.

3) The present study was conducted covering the secondary schools under Secondary Education Board of Assam(SEBA) only. There is enough scope to study the library facilities and their utilisation in the secondary schools under CBSE and ICSE also.
4) Indepth study can also be made to know about the mobile libraries which have become very popular today in the Western countries and are slowly being accepted by some states of our country.