CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION
Primary education constitutes a very important part of the entire structure of education. It is at this stage that the child starts going to a formal institution. The education which the child receives from the formal institution, provides the foundation of his physical, mental, emotional, intellectual and social development. Sound elementary education gives a fillip to sound secondary and higher education. In a developing country like India, elementary education is regarded as the stepping or corner-stone of national educational superstructure. So, in the context of the establishment of democratic traditions and values, it is necessary to give opportunity for literacy to all the children of school going age. The Directive Principles of the Indian Constitution had laid down the provision for making available the opportunities for free and compulsory elementary education within ten years of the adoption of the Constitution for all children between the age group of 6-14 years. After independence, the successive Five-Year Plans of the Government of India have brought about a
phenomenal quantitative growth in the field of education. In the Seventh Five Year Plans of India, education has been recognised as a human resource development.

Apart from being a Constitutional obligation, the provision for universal elementary education is crucial for spreading mass literacy, which is a basic requirement for economic development, modernisation of the social structure and the effective functioning of democratic institutions. It also represents an indispensable first step towards the provision of equality of opportunity to all its citizens.1

Elementary education deserves the highest priority not only on grounds of social justice and democracy, but also for raising the competence of the average worker and for increasing national productivity.2

**TOPIC OF RESEARCH**

The topic of the selected project is "A Study of the Development of Primary Education in Goalpara District During Post-Independence Period and its Impact on Society". The period of study has been restricted since independence up to the year 1982 because the district

1. Draft Fifth Five Year Plan, P. 194.
2. S.K.Kochhar, Pivotal Issues in Indian Education, P. 542
is supposed to have educational advancement since independence and on the other hand, the whole Goalpara district was divided into three major districts, viz.- (a) Goalpara, (b) Dhubri and (c) Kokrajhar after 1982.

(a) Goalpara district having two sub-divisions (i) Goalpara and North Salmara.

(b) Dhubri district consisting of - (i) Dhubri and (ii) Hatsingimari (Manikachar) sub-divisions.

(c) Kokrajhar district with - (i) Kokrajhar and (ii) Gossaigaon sub-divisions.

So, the area of study is restricted to undivided Goalpara district only, considering that such a study of an undivided district which includes a major portion of the State of Assam (consisted of Goalpara, Dhubri and Kokrajhar sub-divisions), will have positive bearing on the educational development of primary level of the plains areas of Assam as a whole.

The desire for such a study is nurtured by the investigator as it is observed that with the attainment of independence and the pursuance of the Direction Principles of the State Policy to extend education
facilities at different levels of people, a new era in the field of educational development has begun in our country. The district Goalpara, which is one of the plains districts of the State of Assam, is supposed to have educational advancement since independence. During the last four decades, a good number of students have carried out research and investigation on different aspects of the problem, at personal as well as institutional levels in different States of India. But in Goalpara district of Assam, which is historically important, there has never been a study of the development of primary education at all. It is because of this long felt need that the present investigation was taken up.

The researcher has pin-pointed her area of study to primary stage considering the vital role it has to play in fulfilling the nation's expectations by preparing children both for secondary and higher education in future. The problem under this district which had not been investigated by any researcher, has been taken up with a view to flash a positive bearing on the educational development at the stage of primary level after the attainment of independence.
The Assam Primary Education Act of 1947, repealing the Assam Primary Education Act of 1926 provided for compulsory primary education in some selected rural and urban areas for children of the age group of 6-11 years. In the district of Goalpara, compulsory primary education was introduced in some selected areas in 1948.1

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the present study is

(i) to assess the development of primary education in the district since independence.

(ii) to analyse the different problems of primary education for suggesting remedial measures and

(iii) to study the impact of this progress on the socio-cultural life of the district.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology that has been followed in this research work for the collection of data, is based on field work and on the primary and secondary sources available in "Assam Records" - the proceedings of the Government of Assam in Home and Education Department preserved in the Record Room of the Assam Civil Secretariat; from the Office of the Inspector of Schools, Dhubri, Assam; and from the Office of the D.P.I., Assam; Director of Elementary Education, Assam; Proceedings of the meetings of State Primary/Elementary Education Board, Government publication such as Statistical Hand Book, Five Year Plans etc. Various data have also been collected from the secondary sources such as Census Reports, Gazetteers, Report of the Commissions, Committees and various other personal sources.

A limited field investigation has been carried out as a part of the project and also to study the problems and condition of primary schools in the district. As mentioned earlier, the area of research work is consisted of the undivided Goalpara District of the State. So, the investigation was carried out in each of the three sub-divisions of undivided Goalpara district,
i.e. Goalpara, Dhubri and Kokrajhar by selecting some schools in both urban and rural areas considering the schools as the representative of the remaining other primary schools of the district.

In the field work, in order to investigate the extent of development of primary education, condition of school buildings, material conditions of teaching, techniques of teaching, extent of attendance of children in school, reasons for wastage and stagnation etc. have been thoroughly studied and for this purpose, the questionnaire method, interview method and case history methods were used. Along with these, the historical method and survey method have also been applied during the period of investigation.

A comprehensive questionnaire was prepared to collect information and data regarding educational development of primary education, its related problems and other relevant aspects of Primary education in the district. The prepared questionnaire had been distributed among the head of the institutions and the teachers as well as other distinguished persons for obtaining necessary information about certain conditions and practices and to enquire into opinions and attitudes.
of an individual or group. The information and data thus collected, have been properly tabulated.

A limited old-aged and experienced persons of the district were interviewed in order to collect relevant information and data about the effect of the development of primary education on social life of the people in the district. The school teachers were also interviewed to know whether they are satisfied with their profession or not, whether they find any improvement or development of education since independence and so on. The whole process of interview aimed at discovering the facts about any matter being interviewed.

Since the area of research is quite large, the survey method was applied in field investigation for collecting information on Primary education, its impact on social life of the people and other aspects of education etc. Its main purpose was to collect some important aspects on a representative sample of areas. In fact, when data have to be collected from a larger area, survey is the most suitable method for investigation which involves collection of objective information.

Historical Method was also used in this research work in order to know and understand educational achievement.
ments and trends of the past in order to gain perspective on present and future directions. In fact, Historical Method has great value in the field of educational research because its main purpose is to arrive at an accurate account of the past and to gain a clearer perspective of the present.

Whenever any research project is conducted, it is done with a view to collect certain data and interpret them for generalization and arrive at conclusions. Mere collection of data is not enough, as it depends upon their arrangement, analysis and interpretation. All these processes fall under the jurisdiction of Statistics. Besides, for the systematic presentation of investigation, it becomes necessary to take the help of tables and graphs. Statistical methods are also employed for comparison and scrutiny. It is, therefore, important that in any educational investigation, statistics is indispensable. At present, the Statistical techniques have contributed greatly in gathering, organising, analysing and interpreting numerical data.

After the data had been collected and criticized, these were needed to be interpreted in the light of the problem. A brief discussion was made at this stage.
with special application to the historical data.

CHAPTERIZATION

The entire thesis is divided into several chapters. The first chapter is an introductory one presenting the significance, objectives, methodology and area of research. The second chapter gives a historical background of the district and the various aspects of geography and the socio-cultural life of the people of this area. The third chapter is devoted to study the historical background of primary education along with the contribution of the Missionaries towards education during pre-independence period. The fourth chapter deals with the development of primary education during the post-independence period along with implementation of the successive Five Year Plans of the Government of India. The next chapter pin-points various problems of primary education of the district. The sixth chapter deals with analysis of the data of investigation and summary of the findings. The next chapter contains observations with some remedial measures for the improvement of primary education in the district. The last
chapter is devoted to the study of the impact of the development of primary education on the social life of the district.