CHAPTER IX

DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION
The present investigation is carried out to study the historical perspectives of H.S. education and to find out the causes of successes and failures of the prevailing system of H.S. education in Assam. The historical reforms on education entail more intensified tussle against the lacunae inherited from the past. It is well known that the British strengthened many retrograde forces of the old society and themselves generated many new ones in both rural and urban sectors. Obviously they were not interested in re-structuring and transformation of the old society for such a transformation would result in dismantling their power and privileges. Even in free India, no change was attempted till appointment of the Mudaliar Commission precisely because it was the old privileged group who had inherited power.

Historical Reforms and Perspectives:

(A) Structural Reform:

In the history of educational reforms the government of India ever since the attainment of independence have given considerable attention to the development of a national system of education. In this direction the
government of India so far set up several Commissions, Committees and held Seminars, Meetings to trace out a viable system of education. H.S. education received special importance in the process of structural reform. The Secondary Education Commission recommended a multilateral changes in the existing system of Secondary education with introduction of diversified courses linking education with productivity. But, the new pattern of education failed to achieve the needs and aspirations of a modern society. As a result of growing widespread dissatisfaction, the government of India appointed the sixth Commission (1964-66) in the history of education Commissions in India to review the education system and to advise government on a relevant national pattern of education. The recommendations of the Commission were accepted for implementation by the National Policy on Education (1968). In reference to the H.S. education, lot of changes in respect of its structure, curriculum, syllabi, examination system and in many other aspects have been suggested by successive Commissions, Conferences, Committees, Seminars and Meetings both at national as well as State level. Reference to the national level Conferences and Committees suggesting reforms may be made to the (1) All India Conference on Vocational Guidance and Testing (1971), (2) National Committee on 10+2+3
Educational Structure (1973), (3) Curriculum Committee on Higher Secondary Education and Its Vocationalization (1976) (4) National Review Committee on Higher Secondary Education (1978). The government of India has promulgated an another National Policy on Education in 1986, accepting the recommendations of national level forums with a view to introduce a National System of education based on a national curricular framework. The permanent establishments at national level like NCERT are functioning to advise the government of India and State government in implementing policies and major programmes in the field of education, particularly school education. India has the longest history of educational reform work. Yet the quality of education as a whole deteriorating particularly at the +2 stage. The reasons for this state of affairs can be gauged from the findings of investigations conducted by several workers on the problems of school education in reference to H.S. stage.

It may not be out of place to mention here that Assam is a backward State in all respects. Any change or innovation in education therefore was a matter of considerable significance. Though the principal problem was lack of funding to provide required facilities under the new system, the academic aspect which is not less important, did not receive importance which it should
have received. We have been switching from one setting to another after receiving recommendations of Commissions, Conferences, Committees and Seminars for reasons which were perfectly defensible, but in a manner which was more likely to confuse than to make for clarity. The most unsettling of them being the quick changing demands in professional requirements and facilities.

As viewed from the national angle, the +2 stage is accepted everywhere, but there is a certain degree of ambiguity in regard to the various other issues connected with it. The issues are not less staggering in Assam. What is its logical setting, the school or the college is still in dilemma. Though the Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) and Kethari Commission (1964-66) recommended the +2 stage of education to be retained only in schools, it has not followed in Assam and other States of India. The question of logical setting is to be considered from the point of view of maintaining its standard and quality by reviewing the recommendations of the Education Commissions under the prevailing situation in Assam and other alike States. Existing differences in the structure of leadership, administration and supervision, minimum level of performance required for teachers of schools and colleges and differences in facilities available for +2 stage of education in schools and colleges
are some of major issues to be accounted while deciding the logical setting. The issues will be liquidated if separate institutions exclusively for +2 stage of education in the name of Junior Colleges are created as recommended by the Sadler Commission (1917-19).

(B) Curricular Reforms:

As a part of educational reform, curriculum for the +2 stage has been re-constructed on the basis of recommendations of the Commissions, Seminars, Conferences and Committees with a view to building up a national system of education. No doubt curriculum re-construction is a revolution to meet the demands of rising expectations. But the attempts so far made in re-construction of the curriculum have failed to meet the objectives as per expectation. One of the important aspects of curriculum re-construction, recommended by the Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) and by all the subsequent Committees, Conferences and Commissions is vocationalisation of H.S. education. The Education Commission (1964-65) suggested that 50 percent of the students be brought under the fabric of the vocational stream. It has observed that, about half a century later hardly any significant progress has been made. The very fact is that, a change has been consistently recommended and not carried out. Without an extra-ordinary effort, we would not be able to bring the change.
The curriculum framed up for the +2 stage is rigid. An effective curriculum needs flexibility to fit in different situations. This finding has also been observed by some researchers.

The objective of the scheme of vocationalization of H.S. education is evidently reflected in the curriculum design recommended for vocational stream in various documents. Development of vocational skills in the students making them more gainfully employed either through self or wage employment in the vocation chosen by them is the basic objective of vocationalization. But, the NPE, 1988 noted that only about 2.5 percent of the student population was covered by the vocational stream against the recommended target of 10 percent of the students. Rigid and ineffective curriculum may be the reason for this shortfall. In order that we survive as a composite society in a highly competitive world, our education has to respond positively by transforming itself and the flexibility in curriculum must be taken into account for such achievement while reconstructing it. A certain amount of district level planning would have to be done more particularly in respect of schools in the vocational stream. Vacations which can be followed in a particular area are to be given greater attention than otherwise.
and so this division into various categories with flexibility would become an aid to planning. Expanding of vocational education over the years has created a gap between what needs to be done and is actually being done.

A similar view was expressed by Dr A. Singh, a former Vice-Chancellor of Punjab University in his article on "Education, Employment and Plus Two Stage" published in the 'Mainstream' (annual issue), 1989.

(C) Student Evaluation

Evaluation of students in the process of examination is a measure of learning and academic status. The examination reforms so far made in the history of education could not yield better results. Under the situation of multi-faced growth of pupils in the changing systems of education and environment, the present examination system tend to render assessment fractional and frequently unrepresentative. This leads to undesirable outcomes like irregular study habits, selective study confining to limited knowledge and selective teaching. The examination operations are replete with subjectivity and adversely affect the setting of question papers and examining script. The outcome of such phenomena is misclassification of pupils in respect of their calibre and merit. On the other hand, the adoption of arbitrary formulae for moderating
examination results make the situation still worse.

Demerits are consistent in both external and internal examination. Through external examinations in schools, memorization of information is overemphasized, coverage of pupil's growth is limited and rigidity of traditions rampant. The recent trend of examination reform is in favour of internal assessment by replacing the external examinations. But the standard and efficiency of assessment for proper classification of students depends above all on the quality and ability of the teacher. In this respect adequate training for the teachers in modern methods of evaluation should have been taken care of as the first and foremost step. This aspect has received little importance resulting elimination of true objectives. The reforms and changes made in the examination system at all stages including the + 2 stage is not sound and needs to be transformed. On the other hand professional preparations to motivate the teachers adequately and rightly towards effective evaluation of students are needed. Without professional preparation to equip the teachers with modern methods of evaluation, it is the old traditional type of teaching and testing, giving scope for subjectivity of the teacher to play its role in assessment.

Under the existing educational atmosphere, it appears that extensive implementation of the programme
of internal assessment may get vitiated by extra-academic considerations. So, it is necessary to devise ways and means to guard against extra-academic considerations influencing teachers in internal assessment. The most important factor influencing relevance in the context of evaluation is the coverage of the content and the mental process involved.

Though it is difficult to assess the progress of a qualitative achievement in quantitative terms in the tasks accomplished by the movement of examination reform, a downward trend in standards of education is clearly visible. On the one hand we ceaselessly express concern on the downward trend in standards of education at every level, on the other hand, the graphline of scores in the examinations each year is touching new heights. In view of maintaining a good standard of education at all levels, a concerted effort both at the central as well as State level to identify and implement a relevant system of examination is needed. Considering the merits and demerits of external and internal examination, both the system are to retain rejecting the implications of the portions of demerit in each system. The examination reform is also connected with administrative reform and reforms which are linked with technical aspects of examination. No system of examination can be effective in achieving the objectives unless it is implemented rightly.
and efficiently. Along with examination reform, reforms in the aspects which are administrative in nature like appointment of paper setters, invigilators, examiners etc. also needed. The policies so far framed needs improvement both at national as well as State level as to avoid redicles. Assignment of marks in the answer scripts differ from examiner to examiner depending upon their efficiency and personality. Like other States in India, sufficient reforms in examination system have done in Assam. The Regulation for conduct of H.S. examination, 1985 is now guiding the examiners, paper setters and controlling authorities to conduct H.S. examination in Assam. But, the system of examination and regulatory processes introduced have never gone above mediocrity. Similar views were also expressed by several researchers.

(D) Teaching Aids:

Lot of changes and improvements in teaching methods have made in the changing education system. It is a fact that the learning process has considerably improved by using various means of teaching aids. Both theoretical as well as practical aspects of a subject are to be included in the method of teaching. Teaching without using any aid is completely confines on theoretical dissemination. Both visual and audio-visual aids are very much effective in the teaching-learning process.
Plan and Policies:

The government's seriousness in improving the educational status of the country is reflected in the plans, programmes and policies so far promulgated. But, the available data on educational expenditure incurred by various countries shows that India was spending as in 1985-86 much less than what is being spent by Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Algeria, Tanzania, Uganda etc. In the process of educational planning and policy formulations, lot of changes in various aspects of educational development have been implemented as per recommendations of various Commissions, Committees, Conferences and permanent bodies like NCERT. But the current development, particularly in respect of diversification of courses at +2 stage do not appear to be in favour of such a movement being generated.

There is one thing which may be looked at somewhat closely and which if organized suitably can lead to appropriate social changes. This refers to the linkage between industry and education. This linkage has been significantly weak and far from satisfactory. Surely, forging better linkage between unorganized industry and the vocational dimension of H.S. education is not beyond our capacity. In this direction, something needs to be done decisively both at national as well as State level. Education today suffers from the fallies due to lack of appropriate
Planning at the planning level. Once we clarify our ideals and work out a strategy of development, it would be time to devise an alternative set of policies. Planning and policy formulations on education alone cannot improve the situation. Success in planning also depends upon effective implementation of all the items of a programme. What leads to the failure of educational policy is that, many of its items were not implemented in all seriousness due to reasons of political expedience, administrative inefficiency, non-creativity and lack of fixing accountability for the failure of innovations. More than teachers, the educational administrators and more than planners, politicians have been responsible for the failures in educational achievements. The fast expanding and changing H.S. education today needs expert outlook in expanded form. On the contrary the educational administrators at all levels must be free from political interference with a view to raising the efficiency. The picture of educational administration in Assam is also unsatisfactory and needs immediate change to have efficient service of the administrative machinery. The need of improving administrative capabilities at all levels for the formation, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes was also emphasised by many researchers.
Educational plan forms a part and parcel of the general plan. Educational plan of a country must be aimed at changing the present system on the basis of local situation and needs. But the true social objectives of educational planning so far made and implemented have failed to incorporate the factors influencing development of educational system such as social demand, economic and political demand etc. The needed changes in the present system of education must emerge from an analysis of the local situation which in turn requires a comprehensive understanding of the political, economic and social forces in the society.

Planning on creation of infra-structural facilities in the educational institutions and their improvement from time to time with the changing policy and system of education is an important part of development programme. The Panel on Higher Secondary School Building (1960) and the Commission on Education recommended the structure, design and other requirements of H.S. school buildings and other facilities. But in practice the State governments have given little interest on the creation of such facilities in H.S. schools. The high schools have been upgraded to H.S. schools and new H.S. schools have been created without creation of basic facilities. The situation in Assam is more aggravated.
The current educational administration and supervision system is not effective in achieving the desired objectives of social and academic change. The fast expanding and changing secondary and H.S. education today needs expert outlook in expanded form. The present system of administration and control of secondary and H.S. education in respect of the pattern, organisation, power structure, the rules pertaining to checks and counterchecks and control are largely inherited from the British System. This legacy of the past needs to be re-examined and re-constructed for effective functioning in the expanded and changing system of secondary and H.S. education. In Assam, the present system of education demands quick and efficient service of the administrative machinery. In the same way supervision and inspection also need an overall change to gear up the process of re-organisation of educational administration.

The present system of administration and supervision consists of certain defects such as inadequate inspecting staff, the lack of specialised training on educational administration in case of inspecting officers, the lack of up to date knowledge of recent advances in teaching, administration, supervision and research on the
part of inspectors, short sighted and unstimulating approach and complete subordination of their functions of educational leadership to routine functions of checking accounts and minor administrative details of schools.

Professional Preparation:

Professional preparation and professional growth in the modern system of education to fulfill the requirement of human equipment for better and effective management of education in H.S. schools is most essential. The facilities for teacher education, though intensified by the government of India during last decade, the outcome of such training institutes could fulfill only a part of the requirement. Though the need of teacher education relevant to the present day situation i.e. task oriented, value-based and responsive to national needs has been given enough weightage by the national Commissions, Conferences and Committees on education, in practice suitable programmes were not taken by the State governments to train up the teachers of +2 level. Apart from the requirement of training of teachers of general and academic courses, the re-organisation of teacher education for vocational courses has been recommended by the National Review Committee on H.S. education with special reference to Vocationalization, 1978, the States did not organise
the in-service and pre-service teachers training of vocational courses introduced at the +2 stage. During the last decade the demand for trained teachers for all the courses at +2 stage has been increasing with the expansion of H.S. schools. At the same time the programme undertaken by the government both at the national as well as at the State level has been negligible causing a serious shortfall in the professional preparation for the +2 stage. This assessment is clear from the All India Educational Survey Reports published by the NCERT.

Institutional Status:

The H.S. schools of the country, though expanded rapidly and the system of education has been changing in short duration, the needed facilities are not provided. The required facilities are available in a limited number of schools. The status of H.S. schools of Assam in respect of infra-structural and other basic facilities is very much discouraging. School building sites are not attractive to have good natural environment. Existing building accommodation for students of H.S. courses as well as for office rooms, store room etc. are not sufficient and convenient. Laboratory building for science stream is either not available or not constructed as per specifications for different subjects. Building space for Assembly
hall, museum, library, co-curricular activities are either not available or very much limited. Library facilities to help instructional programmes and to create an atmosphere conducive to the growth of teaching habits are available with limited stock of books. Poor library facilities deteriorate academic functioning at the +2 stage of education. Hostel facilities required for students coming from a long distance and for those lacking congenial atmosphere at their home are not available.

The status of the +2 stage of education in an institution can be measured from the academic functioning and achievements. An effective academic functioning is associated with the efficacy of administration, quality of teachers, syllabus, curriculum, examination system, teaching methods, guidance services, quality students, discipline in the classroom and co-curricular activities. Apart from educational administration in general, school administration in particular directly responsible for academic achievement of a stage of education. On the contrary, the best of the curriculum and the most perfect syllabi remain dead unless quickened into life by right methods of teaching. The existing methods of teaching at the +2 stage in the H.S. schools of Assam are not so effective to the students of variable merit. The teaching methods followed by the teachers at the +2 stage provides
knowledge for memorization by the students. The three main objectives of educational methods vis. (1) broadening of the interest of the pupils (2) to develop in the pupils the capacity for clear thinking and (3) to develop in the pupils love for work are not fulfilled in the methods followed. An effective teaching method can be evaluated by understanding of the process by which that subject matter is learnt. Teacher lecturing or giving oral lessons to a class may be quite ineffective when the final product is evaluated against specified standards.

As per aims and objectives of +2 stage of education envisaged in policy formulations as per recommendations of the Commissions on education, the whole thrust of school education would undergo a fundamental change. But in this process of changing, new problems have been arising which have not been always identified and quite often not taken care of. The rapid rate of urbanisation has created all kinds of problems, including the concentration of large masses of people living in deteriorating conditions in overcrowded cities and towns. Along with this situation, the growth of the industry and increased urbanisation lessen the importance of agriculture. In this way, the desired change in the school education through vocationalisation needs re-organisation of different sectors, which is not an easy task. As such the
diversification programme of +2 stage of education suffers from various problems. The trend and status of vocational education at +2 stage have studied by many workers and indicate identical findings.

Acquired Status of Higher Secondary Education:

It is evident from the findings of researchers, All India Educational Survey reports and analysis made by educationists and important personalities that, the historical reforms and changes so far made in the education system in reference to the +2 stage of education have failed to achieve the desired status. The values thrusted in the curriculum of our educational system rooted in the historic past. Our values are populist and relative. But, in the content and nature of curriculum, an ambiguity has developed due to lack of a serious consideration in the relevant aspects. This ambiguity has a direct bearing on the promotion and patronage to educational institutions.

Under the present education system a large number of unemployable young men and women have been produced. A sizeable number of these young people are fast losing confidence in the efficacy and objectivity of the examination system maintained by our Universities, educational
Council and Education Board. Efforts made in the past for examination reform could not make much improvement because of the resistance given by teachers and students particularly against internal evaluation system in the one hand and lack of quality teachers and environment to maintain a standard evaluation on the other hand. A reliable and effective examination system is to be developed for quality achievement at +2 stage of education.

The teaching methods seems not so effective under the changing environment of day to day development in science, technology, economic mechanism, social revolution and political activities. Apart from the requirement of individual capacity and personality of teachers, use of modern sophisticated teaching aids become an important factor for improving teaching methods. The present status of H.S. schools of Assam is deplorable due to lack of essential facilities of building, teaching aids and trained teachers particularly for vocational stream.