CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study have been presented in the previous chapters structured to give a comprehensive picture of the organisation of preschool education in the State of Assam. No effort has been spared to portray, as objectively as possible, the organisation of preschool education in the State as has been found during the period under consideration. In this chapter I shall simply summarise the conclusions arrived at in the previous chapters.

For the convenience of study, the preschool institutions of the State of Assam have been classified into four categories on the basis of their organisation and management. However, these institutions may be divided roughly into two main types. The first is nothing but a downward extension of the primary school for teaching the very young ones the rudimentary skills of reading writing and counting by a conscious effort on the part of the organisation to establish an identity separate from a traditional primary school. The second type is a child care centre where some sort of care and facilities are provided to the young children outside their homes with
little or no academic curricula. A careful study of the working of these two types of institutions reveals that the goals of preschool education have not been realised or realised to a limited extent in some places. It is not impossible to do something good to the society if these institutions are properly organised, well paid, competent staff is recruited and the available resources are utilised under a carefully prepared programme. We suggest that all these institutions should be registered and they should be placed under the control of a competent educational officer of the state government.

At present there are various departments which control different categories of preschool institutions. But there is no co-ordination of their activities. As a consequence there is anarchy in the preschool educational administration. Thus, the end with which preschool educational institutions were established has not been realised.

Therefore, it is suggested that effective administrative machinery to control preschool education should be designed. It should prepare a blue print and implement it by stages. It should be under the Director of Elementary Education. It should
lay down guidelines, both for teachers and managements.

Supervision and Inspection are the two major planks for maintaining standards and efficiency in any organisation. It is more so in a developing system. But due to non-existence of a clear-cut policy and directives both at the centre and at the State, there is no such separate inspectorate for preschool institutions in the state at present to help realising the goals of preschool education.

The area of preschool education being highly delicate requiring the capability of discerning the complicated psychosomatic process at work, the services of competent, qualified and a very well trained educational administrator needs to be made available. Regular supervision and inspection of the preschool institutions by such personnel from the very beginning be of immense help to achieve the goals of preschool education.

Under the existing circumstances, the Sub-Inspectors and the Assistant Sub-Inspectors are required to supervise and inspect the pre-primary classes attached to a few selected primary schools. As
none of them are adequately trained to supervise pre-primary schools or classes, a reasonable number of such officers needs to be trained in pre-school education. These trained personnel may be exclusively be placed in charge of supervision and inspection of preschool establishments of all types within the jurisdictions of the state and under the direct control of the State Directorate of Elementary Education.

The activities organised in the preschool institutions provide children experiences to learn various things. But there should not be any formal teaching in these institutions, on principle. Children should be provided with enriched environment for learning. In the present circumstances, it is not possible to provide all such amenities which are provided in well organised institutions. Yet, enriching the environment with suitable amenities should be made possible with indigenous and low cost materials.

In conducting the preschool activities the teachers require greater freedom and understanding from the Head of the institutions as well as from parents. The teacher requires better knowledge about the child so as to guide his development
in the right direction. This capability, she cannot develop unless she is allowed to work with each and every child individually.

In this connection, it becomes necessary to illuminate the minds of the preschool administrators, organisers and the parents of the preschool children regarding the proper implication of preschool education and activities carried on in these institutions. This implies, again, that the teachers should not only be qualified and trained but competent and willing enough also to accept the challenge and free to modify the methods of the great educationalists to suit the existing circumstances.

The success of preschool programme depends primarily on environmental conditions. But there is a big gap between the ideal and reality. So far as environmental conditions are concerned. It is admitted that, it would be unrealistic to expect spacious buildings fitted with all sorts of modern amenities for such institutions. At the same time, we can not expect, the parents to provide all necessary facilities for proper development of their children, at home, as the conditions, in most homes, in our
country are not congenial to the intellectual development. Therefore, it is suggested that at least minimum physical facilities should be provided in such institutions. Human element which is mostly responsible for creating the congenial atmosphere, that goes for making the total environment of a preschool institution, is no less important. No stream rises higher than the source. No human organisation can be more efficient than the men and women that it employs.

Similarly, the question of teaching aids and other equipments should be considered not from the point of view of quantity alone but of quality, repairability and the variety of uses these can be put to and actually required to work with.

One of the purposes of preschool education is to provide proper care for the physical well-being of the young through the supply of nutritious food, regular health check-up and health care. But this is sadly lacking in most of the institutions of this state. The provision made for health care is nominal. The activities of the school health unit of the Department of Public Health and the Department of Education or Social Welfare are not co-ordinated. They
are functioning independent of each other. Healthy collaboration between these organisations is absolutely necessary.

No nutrition programme has been framed for the Primary and Pre-Primary children in this state. We suggest that a beginning may be made in this direction. The state Department of Education should take initiative in carrying out the programme of school nutrition successfully. It must however be remembered that it involves large expenditure. The state Government may not be in a position to finance the scheme, but financial and technical help may be sought from various national and International Organisations to achieve this aim.

A realistic approach based on a broader vision of the development of the total child, an effective low cost solution must be searched out to suit the special needs and problems of our country. Only then, the environmental conditions of Pre-schools could be improved. In a country like ours, numerous problems arising out of Poverty and negligence of children could be solved with properly organised pre-school arrangements.
Of all educational institutions, the preschools are the most important, for here, the foundations of growth and development of young ones are laid down in the right direction. The responsibility of accomplishing this end is in the teacher. Adequate training enables a teacher to make instruction effective. Training also helps the teachers to gain an insight and capacity to understand and overcome the difficulties on way to realisation of preset goals. For this, the trainees must be willing to learn and have the capacity to put necessary efforts with sincerity of purpose.

The existing facilities for the training of personnel in preschool education in the state are not only inadequate in respect of requirements and quality but also lack in developing proper attitude and requisite insight into the working of a preschool institution.

An all out effort needs to be made without delay to expand the training facilities both for short term and long term courses to meet the requirements. The quality of the contents of such training with more realistic and practical bias needs to be organised. The training institutions must make arrangements for follow up and extension services.
Research centres also need to be established at the University and Collegiate levels and at teachers training institutions on various aspects of pre-school education. Due considerations should be given in such research institutions to the rapidly changing socio-economic and political life of the people. Innovation of suitable methods and equipments and for preparation of teachers should be made with the background of the advances made in the fields of Science and Technology.

The status of pre-school teachers must be improved not only with proper economic benefits but also with proper gestures on the part of the organisers - both governmental and private. The organisers should realise what a tremendous responsibility the preschool teachers are to bear today. The employment and promotion policies should be made more liberal so that justice is gendered to the preschool teachers in the state in all government Departments involved.

Whatever has been done and is still being done are of little practical value under the existing conditions in consideration of the immensity of the problems and the vast dimensions involved.
Nothing can change the situation unless the entire community is involved with a determination to face it squarely. The teacher alone cannot get on the entire community so involved even if she is free and willing to do so. All available mass media must be geared into focussing attention of the people to the urgent need of tackling the problem on a war footing and all channels of communication must be used to mobilise both human and material resources for a solution.

We have pledged our selves to establish a sovereign, democratic, secular, socialist republic. But inspite of this pledge, we have failed in a large measure either to be secular, socialist, democratic or a republic; we have not provided equal opportunity to all individuals 'irrespective of caste, creed, religion and sex: If we are determined to establish an egalitarian society, we must begin with preschool education. Nothing is impossible if we have the will and determination and also the firmness to implement without flinching in a well thought out and planned manner. It is not only desirable but possible also if we exert fully with a solemn resolve to fight to finish.
The idea of developing the whole child as conceived in the Integrated Child Development Services Scheme may be implemented throughout the country with necessary modification in its organisational setup and mode of working. It should be placed under the Ministry of Education with an exclusive unit of Administration of Pre-school Education organised in the line of the Defence Services of the Country. It should not only be completely self-contained but also to be manned by an army of carefully selected and rigorously trained academicians in different discipline. They should be capable of maintaining sustained effort. The person in supreme command should be the Prime Minister. Board of Directors should be constituted of devoted educationists of some standing in the field. Regional Boards should be constituted in each State and Union territory. The Vice-President of India should be the Chairman of this Board with Minister of Education and the Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Education as the working Chairman and the ex-officio Secretary of this Board respectively. The nominated members who will be mainly academicians should not have any political background or affiliation.

The basic objectives of the Integrated Child Development Services Scheme (I.C.D.S.) should be further spelled out carefully in its different aspects.
This would help in calculating the minimum requirements of men and materials at different levels of working and of different categories with specifications in concrete terms.

A new strategy of total community involvement should be worked out to procure maximum help and advice in this field. An atmosphere of mutual trust and cooperation should be developed between the community and the preschool personnel. This relationship should never interfere with the actual working of the institutions.

Prevention is better than cure - goes the old maxim. To stop the colossal wastage due to stagnation and dropout at the school level, to prevent further lowering of productivity due to ill health and malnutrition and suffering leading to degeneration and degradation of the entire nation, an all-out effort at prevention at any cost is the wisest and best course. Convinced that there is no better investment a society can make than to build up its younger generations to accept the challenge of the future and also that no solid defence against the possible internal dissolution and ultimate degeneration and decay - to develop preschool education in its widest sense to cover all
children of the age group 0-6 of the whole country stands out as an imperative. This is the nearest possible approach for realising the idea of equal opportunity to all individual in a democratic society worked out under a disciplined supervision and control to be implemented with dedication and sincerity of purpose in a well thought and preplanned manner.