CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Retrospection of the development of primary education in India

Human life which is the best creation of God has got two aspects: the biological and the sociological or cultural. While the former is maintained and transmitted by food and reproduction, the latter is preserved and transmitted by education. Biological aspect is found in plant and animal life also. But the sociological or cultural aspect is the rare distinction of human life alone. John Dewey says, "What nutrition and reproduction are to the physiological life, education is to the social life." Through education, man tries to seek new ideas and new ways of life. It is again through education that he promotes his intelligence and adds his knowledge with which he can move the world for good or evil, according to his wishes. His life in the complex world is governed not only by the biological process, but also by a social process. While the functioning of the organism is the biological heredity, education is his social heredity. With biological heredity alone, he would be nothing better than an animal. But he has social heredity that makes him a man who is now capable of governing this world. Without education human race would be no better than animal race. Eating, drinking, sleeping and sex life are common to both animals and man. It is only knowledge and education where they differ. This world would have been enveloped in intellectual darkness, if it had not been illuminated by the lights of education. Education culturists the individual and helps him in his needs all over the world. Thus, he wants something more like civilization, culture and social norms to be called as man which are fulfilled only through education. Hence, education is treated as a basic need for human being in this changing world. Aristotle said, "Educated man as much superior to uneducated as living are to dead. Pestalozzi defined education as "the natural, harmonious and progressive development of man's innate powers." So to be a complete man, education is very important for each and every human being for fostering his innate powers and it is

only education, through which he or she can be made complete becomes possible. The development of human being is related to the development of a nation.

The progress and prosperity of a nation are intimately related to the maximum growth and development of its children of the age group of 6–14 years. During this period, emphasis has been given on the foundation of education of the child. Generally, primary education connotes education of 3 R's i.e. reading, writing and arithmetic. But this had a very narrow and traditional concept and it did not lead to much advantage. Real education is that which aims at bringing about desirable changes in the behaviour of the learner. It helps in the all round development of a child's personality and inculcation of healthy attitudes and values.

Primary education begins from class-I to IV or V. The system varies from state to state. With regard to its structure, Kothari Commission 1964-66 had suggested 1 to 3 years pre-primary education for children of the age group of 3-6 years. It is nursery and kindergarten stage prevailing in the cities. The Commission had divided the primary education's stage into two parts. The first part is called lower primary of 4 or 5 years for the age group of 6-11 years. The other is upper primary of 3 or 2 years for 11-14 years age group. In this way, it had recommended 7 or 8 years primary education for the children in the age group of 6-14 years age in the junior basic and senior basic respectively. J. P. Naik observed –"The progress of primary education is an index of the general, social and economic development of the country as a whole.''

It is mentioned that primary education is first and important stage of education for the children. It is the base of education of human life. The stage of 6-14 years age of the children is the main stage of primary education. The present entry age of primary education is five years. It is reiterated that due to lack of expansion of primary education in the country, illiteracy is caused for which development and democracy get handicapped. Because illiteracy is a curse for any nation and it is a liability to democracy. Illiteracy and democracy cannot proceed together. Democracy, as we know, fully depends on the literate citizens. The citizen of a democratic country must be educated and then it will be successful in a

true sense. Therefore, illiteracy must be removed from the country through the effective primary education policy to be followed in the country.

Universalization of elementary education had been one of the most important goals of educational development in India since independence. So, a New Constitution for independent India was adopted from 25th January, 1950, under the Directive Principle of State Policy for the purpose of universalization, the Article - 45 pertaining to primary education laid down that the state shall endeavour to provide with a period of ten years from the commencement of the constitution for the free and compulsory education to all children until they complete the age of 14 years. As per Indian Constitution, it is the responsibility of the state to provide elementary education to all children in the age group of 6-14 years.

Despite of the strong recommendations of the Indian Constitution for the free and compulsory education within the age of 14 years, primary education remained an unacceptable dream for a few section of the society. The category of the deprived is comprised of the girls, disabled children and the children of the weaker and labour classes. Through the Five Year Plans, Government of India had been implementing various educational policies like National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986, Programme of Action (POA), 1986, Operation Blackboard (OBB) 1986, District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), 1994 etc. Due to weak infrastructure facilities, lack of suitable funding, lack of a definite timeframe, inappropriate community based approached and monitoring system etc. these policies met a partial success in few places. Thus even after 63 years of Indian independence, the promise of the literacy remains a quotation written with invisible chalk on a non-existant blackboard. In this context, Dr. Surabhi Patel opined that until and unless universal provision of schooling facilities is accompanied by cent percent utilization, the ultimate objectives of educational opportunity remain unfulfilled.

According to the Fifth Educational Survey published by NCERT (1989), the following was the condition of primary schools in the entire India:

Among the primary schools, 71,495 (13.50%) primary schools were without buildings. They were run in the thatched huts, tents or in open space. Of

the rest, 3, 85,120 (72.75%) primary schools had pucca or partly pucca buildings. Others were in kachcha buildings. Among the upper primary schools, 1, 21,707 (86.79%) schools had pucca or partly pucca buildings and 11,280 (8.13%) schools had kachcha buildings.

Further among the primary schools, 40,732 (7.69%), 2, 00, 077 (37.79%) and 1, 34, 551 (25.42%) primary schools had zero instructional room, one instructional room and two instructional rooms respectively. In case of upper primary schools, 3192 schools had no instructional room and 24,909 had one or two instructional rooms.73.70% of the upper primary schools were either run by the Government or by local bodies. However, more than 50% upper primary schools in the states of Kerela (65.77%), Meghalaya (85.56%), Mizoram (72.14%), Orissa (90.13%) etc. were private aided schools. Percentage of primary schools with one teacher, two teachers, three teachers, four teachers and five or more teachers was 34.75%, 27.27%, 15.10%, 8.16%, and 14.10% respectively.

Das (1979) explored in his study that the area of administration of education at the elementary level was full of problems. The Directorate of elementary education was to be fully strengthened. In comparison with tremendous expansion of elementary education, the expansion of machinery relating to administration, inspection, supervision and management was inadequate. Recommendations indicated the suggested additional machinery needed for achieving universalization.

Sarkar (1980) observed in his study that universalization of primary education depended more on enrolment drive among the backward population represented by the scheduled caste Hindus and Muslims. Muslims in general had primary schools but the scheduled caste Hindus did not have adequate primary school facilities. For universalization of primary education, certain aspects of primary education like numbers of schools, strength of learners, enrolment of students and financial assistance etc. were necessary.

The concept of universalization of primary education is to be considered in three different contexts. They are as follows:

(i) **Universality of provision**: This means that the school facilities should be provided to all children between the age group of 6-14 years in the country and the school should be easily accessible within the working distance of the child. The universality of provision has something to do with providing the facility of school within an easy reach of every child. The distance from home to school should be a walking one. It is the duty of the state to arrange and for this would require of primary education in a balanced way. The population may also be a good basis for establishing primary schools in the country.

(ii) **Universality of enrolment**: This aspect deals with the homogeneity of enrolment in a particular age group. This requires enrolling every child of 6-7 years age group to class- I. This will restrict admission of a child of higher age group to class-I, which is very necessary. It would require pre-planning. The provision will save the child from the demoralizing effect of stagnation.

(iii) **Universality of retention**: Universality of retention pertains to the retaining of every child admitted to the last, i.e. the full stage of primary education. It will check the acute problem of wastage prevailing in the field of primary education and pave the way towards the permanent literacy.

Universalization of education would help to eradicate the gruelling problem of wastage and stagnation from the field of primary education. There will be no problem of premature withdrawal and relapse into illiteracy. So, there is an urgent need to pay due attention to the Constitutional directives for the development and improvement of primary education on healthy lines. It will be useful to launch a nationwide movement in this direction. This requires for eliciting maximum local co-operation. Some people are of the firm view that Government should not hesitate to take drastic steps in the matter. It is the duty of everybody to extend full co-operation in achieving the target of free and compulsory primary education in the country. This would help to make ideal citizens and thus strengthen the base of democracy and socialism. The Policy has pointed out that active attention should be paid to the education of girls of backward communities like the SC, ST, and

OBC. The schools were to be provided with free textbooks, school uniforms, midday meals and other necessary equipments.

The primary schools should be made community centres so that the attention of the entire community is directed to the school education. Further the policy recommended for the provision of part-time school and non-formal education to the children who belong to poor labour class and who are generally engaged in money earning.

The Ministry of Human Resource Development of Indian Government had taken initiative to make elementary education universal in the country to spread meaningful education. Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) is such an effort to universalize elementary education by community ownerhip of the school system. The various programmes under SSA are meant to provide useful and relevant elementary education for all children in the age group of 6-14 years by 2010. There is however another goal to bridge social, regional and gender gaps, with the active participation of the community in the management of the schools. It is an opportunity for promoting social justice and to express the political will of universalizing the elementary education across the country.

Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) which is an integrated educational project combined the previous educational policies and by adding new orientation, it has acquired few advantages. While Operation Blackboard aimed to improve physical infrastructure of education, where school space was expanded and more teachers provided, SSA tries to access funds for classrooms from rural and urban employment schemes without earmarking. SSA also continues the National programme of Nutritional support for primary education with suitable modifications. Policy like Mohila Samakha is also getting support for the planning and implementation under SSA. Similarly, through the democratized planning and the process of involving the community in the school management continues, SSA has given it a new direction. SSA focusses on vertical expansion of DPEP upto upper primary and on consolidation of the primary schooling efforts. Unlike other policies like DPEP and OBB, SSA involves more grass root level community based organizations. Like DPEP, it does not seek to provide education in terms of quality. It looks for providing elementary education both in terms of quality and

quantity. Moreover, it is an effort to involve effectively the Panchayati Raj institutions, School management committees, Village and urban slum level education committees, Parent–teachers' association, Mother teachers' association, Tribal autonomous councils and other grass root level structure in the management of elementary school.

Universalization of the primary education has been the motto of our country since the time of independence. Despite the strong recommendations made by various Education Commissions, ambition and expensive layout in the successive Twelve Five Year Plans and host of strategies applied and put in action to achieve universal literacy in the country, the target never reached. It is a fault not only of the short sighted planners. The chief cause of failure is the no consideration of the grass root level.

The best of the policies never filtered down to them for whom actually these are implemented. Such problems are more prominent in village and rural areas without whose solution on education policy can never taste success.

1.2 Constitutional provisions and concept of primary / elementary education:

(a) Constitutional provisions:

The Constitution of India makes the following provisions under the Article - 45 that State shall endeavour to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of the Constitution for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years. The expression "State" which occurs in this Article is defined in the Article -12 to include "the Government and Parliament of India and the Government and the Legislature of each of the states and local or other authorities within the territory of India or under the control of the Government of India.

It may be mentioned here that the Constitution provides only "Free and Compulsory education" and there is no mention of the type of education i.e. Basic or non-basic. Moreover, it gives only the upper age limit of compulsory school period, but there is no mention when it should start.

(b) Concept of primary / elementary education:

The Dictionary of Education, compiled by Carter V. Good defines the concept of primary education as that division of the elementary schools including grades 1 to 3, devoted primarily to instruction in fundamental skills and the development of social attitudes necessary for democratic living. In the same

Dictionary - the definition of elementary education is given as the period of formal education beginning in childhood, usually at the age of 5 to 7 years, and approximately with the adolescence. From the above definition, it may be conceived that the meaning of elementary education is to some extent wider than that of primary education.

India, the independent country, is striving to provide universal schooling to all children in the age group of 6-14 years. This education is conducted in elementary schools in different regions of the country. Elementary schooling generally covers the two stages, viz. lower primary and upper primary. But there is at present a bewildering variety nomenclature used in the states and union territories at the elementary stage. The following Table reflected the structure of primary / elementary education in India:

Table 1.2.1

Structure of primary / elementary education in India

Lower primary Classes I - IV or V Age group 6-11 years	**Upper primary** Classes V - VII or VI – VII Age group 11 - 14 years
(a) Primary in some states	(a) Middle or middle vernacular schools in some states
(b) Lower primary in some states (Gujarat)	(b) Junior High Schools (U.P.)
(c) Junior Basic (Prevalent in all states)	(c) Senior Basic (almost all states)
(d) Lower Elementary schools (Madras)	(e) Higher Elementary schools (Madras)

Source: Mukherjee, S.N., Education in India today and tomorrow, 6th Edition, Boroda, 1969.

It is evident from the above Table 1.2.1 that the stage of education covering from 6 years of age to the age of 14 years is called the elementary education, this class or standard is below the eight class.

The Secondary Education Commission, 1952 states that the elementary stage of education covers four or five years of primary or junior basic education followed by a three years duration of middle or senior basic or junior secondary education.

According to Kothari Commission, 1964-66, the elementary education covers four or five years of lower primary education, classes I-IV for the age group of 6-11 years and three to two years of higher primary education, classes V-VII for the age group of 11-14 years.

According to the Ishwarbhai Patel Review Committee, 1977- Primary education includes the classes from: I-VII/VIII, which is divided into two parts: Classes from I- IV/V and Classes from V/VI - VII/VIII. The Committee also used the terms of lower primary stage and upper primary stage.

According to the International Encyclopedia of Education Research and Studies (1985), "Primary schooling starts at 6 years of age in Europe and the United States, at 5 years in the United Kingdom (currently at 4+ in some cases) and at 8 years, after very efficient Kindergarten in the Soviet Union.

Elementary education had been described in Encyclopedia Americana (1988) as Elementary education, the period of formal schooling extending from admission to school in Kindergarten or 1^{st} grade to completion of the 6^{th}, 7^{th} or 8^{th} grade. Also known as primary education in many countries, it designates the range of schooling for children from about 6 to 12, 13 or 14 years of age.

Generally, the meaning of both primary and elementary education is same and they indicate the education of the early years of the children. But in some cases, some writers wanted to differentiate the two and without giving any logic, they misused it. It is also seen that in different paragraphs of the same chapter, both the words – primary and elementary are used simultaneously.

1.2.1 Objectives of primary education:

Primary education, generally, has some objectives. Formerly the main objectives of primary education were to give training in 3 R's (reading, writing and arithmetic) only. Presently, the objectives of primary education have been enlarged and formulated on the basis of the philosophy of Basic Education, 1937 to give the training of citizenships, developing the sense of socialistic pattern of society and training in national consciousness to the students. So, in India, education at the primary stage is basically imparted with the idea and objectives of the Basic Education Scheme of 1937, which are in the following:

- Pupils learn the language, mother tongue to communicate their feelings, ideas and thoughts.
- Pupils learn the four fundamental numerical operations develop the ability to apply in solving various problems.
- Pupils develop the power enquiry in Science and begin to appreciate Science and Technology.
- Pupils develop patriotism by respecting national symbols, linking national flag and national anthem, disliking narrow casteism, untouchability and communalism.
- Cultivation of habits of personal cleanliness and healthful living, proper understanding of sanitation and hygiene of neighbourhood.
- Development of the appreciation for good and beautiful objects and taking proper care for their preservation.
- Development of the attitude for co-operative living, co-operative work and appreciation of the usefulness of working together.
- All round development of personality of the child is the objective of primary education. The primary education should give facilities to the children for complete development of their personalities.
- Another objective of primary education is the enhancing power of doing activities through simple works and experiences.
- Preparation of the children for the next secondary education is the objective of primary education is necessary to make them ready and energetic for the secondary stage of education.

- Imparting moral and spiritual education to the children in this stage of education.

1.2.2 Importance of primary education:

Primary education constitutes a very important part of the entire structure of education. It is at this stage that the child starts to go to a formal educational institution. The education which he receives there provides the foundation of his physical, mental, moral, emotional, intellectual and social development. Sound primary education gives a thrust to sound secondary and higher education. Primary 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. Apart from being a constitutional obligation, the provision of universal primary education is crucial for spreading mass literacy, which is a basic requirement for economic development, modification of the social structure and the effective functioning of democratic institutions. It also represents an indispensable first steps towards the provisions of equality of opportunity to all citizens. However, primary education, in fact is very much needed for the physical, social, moral, intellectual, psychological and emotional health of children which is given as under-

- **Preparation of future life**: Primary education is the training or preparation for future life, whereby the children get benefitted physically, intellectually, socially, morally and psychologically. Physically, he benefits immensely from co-curricular activities like games and sports and balanced diet. He is trained in hygienic habits and his muscles and limbs are given free, expressive play through pleasurable activity, folk dancing and free movement.
- **Social health**: Numerous dynamic social changes are taking place today. Socially and morally, they get benefit for they are weaned from an excessive dependence and is trained in co-operative living and in give and take of social life.
- **Intellectual health**: Primary education is necessary to help the child to explore and know his world to discover himself and to become acquainted with many sources from which he can learn. In it, he gets interaction with

other children and adults, the skillful guidance of a teacher who makes use of his activities, his curiosity and discovery in planning for his future growth and development. The child gets benefit by stimulating environment and from education that puts emphasis on harmonious creative growth.

- **Psychological health**: Primary school satisfies psychological needs also. It provides opportunity to the child for self-assertion and independence. He makes companions and satisfies his social urge. By manipulating objects he satisfies his creative and destructive urges. He gets opportunity for play, make believe and fantasy, so natural is at this stage. This environment helps him to make personal adjustment.
- **Preparation for secondary education**: Primary education gives preliminary training to the child in some aspects of education e.g. secondary education or higher education which is begun in primary school. Primary education is of great significance to the physical, social, intellectual development of children, especially those with unsatisfactory home background.

1.2.3 Problems of primary education:

It is an admitted fact that education plays a very vital role in national reconstruction. Success of democracy to a great extent depends on the diffusion of light of knowledge among the masses. In case of India, however, the progress of primary education is very much discouraging. Through up-to-date figures indicate some progress in case of literacy of the sexes. Yet this progress is far from satisfactory. This has caused certain problems and handicaps. The main problems of primary education are in the following:

- **Wastage**: The most common problem which primary education in India suffers is wastage. Wastage occurs due to discontinuation of education before the completion of primary school stage. There are various causes for this wastage in primary education such as illiteracy of parents, absence of schools in the locality, existence of single teacher schools, where teaching is most inefficient, poor condition of the parents etc.
- **Stagnation**: Stagnation is another problem of primary education. It means retention of a child in a lower class for more than one year. The children

remain in a class for more than one year and then leave school for ever. Thus stagnation results in tremendous waste of money, time and effort.

- **Lack of qualified teachers**: A large majority of our primary school teachers lack of education and training. Therefore, they are not intellectually alive and keen on their duty. Besides, majority of primary school teachers have been drawn to it not by a sense of vocation but by sheer economic necessity. Consequently, they lead a life poorly paid and discontented. Most of them live in distress, bitterness and poor economic status.
- **Unsuitable curriculum**: The present curriculum of our primary schools is unsatisfactory for many standpoints. It is disassociated from life and it is decidedly heavier than in the former days. Moreover, as this curriculum is one-sided and unrealistic, it has very little attraction for the common people.
- **Lack of building and accommodation**: Most the Indian primary school buildings are unhygienic and unsuitable for young children. In rural areas, particularly children feel no attraction for these ill-ventilated and ill-lighted schools. Therefore, tendered aged boys and girls can hardly be blamed if there are premature withdrawals from the rotten atmosphere of such schools.
- **Economic hardship**: Primary education also suffers due to the economic backwardness of the population. Poverty stands at the progress of literacy in India as well as in Assam. Until and unless, the masses are freed from the shackles of poverty, primary education will not give satisfactory results.
- **Lack of proper distribution of schools**: One great contributing factor leading to wastage in primary education is the lack of proper distribution of primary schools. Absence of a school in the locality creates apathy and indifference in the mind of the parents for the education of their children.
- **Single-teacher school:** Existence of a large number of single-teacher schools is another problem of primary education. As the teacher has to take 4 or 5 classes alone and at a time, we cannot expect quality teaching for him.
- **Ineffective supervision**: Supervision of primary schools is generally scanty and loose. In the traditional system, nobody bothers about the interests of

the institution. The administration does not realize the problems faced by the institutions. Inspection work is of a very formal, casual and routine nature with no hope of any improvement. This needs immediate attention. Supervision should be regular, fling, strict and effective.

- **Wide spread poverty of parents**: Most of the people in India as well as in Assam are suffering due to extreme poverty. The economic hardship has compelled many parents to keep their children away from schools so that they may be employed for economic gain.
- **Lack of proper means of communication**: More than eighty percent of the Indian population live in the villages. But unfortunately roads and other means of communications are mostly underdeveloped in rural areas. On the other hand, the villages do not have sufficient number of schools. Many children attend the schools which are situated in the neighbouring villages. In the rainy season, especially parents find it difficult to send their children to a distant area for schooling.
- **Lack of facilities for adult education**: Another problem of primary school education is lack of facility for adult education and existence of high percentage of illiteracy among the masses.
- **Insufficient financial assistance**: Primary education in India as well as in Assam receives an inadequate fund. It received insufficient share of the total educational expenditure during the British rule. Even after independence, the position is in way an improved one. The slow progress of literacy to a great extent is due to the meager fund alloted to it.
- **Social cause**: Besides wastage, stagnation and poor finance, the other social causes like the conservative nature of the Indian people provides another obstacle in the progress of primary education. Even now, a section of the population is against the woman's education and does not like to send their daughters to the schools. Conservative nature of Indian people, therefore, is chiefly responsible for the low percentage of the literacy of girls.

Besides the above mentioned problems, few other problems related to primary school education are given below-

- Faulty administration of primary education

- Lack of facilities for professional training of teachers
- Lack of innovative programme
- Unsuitable school hours in rural areas
- Unattractive surroundings
- Problem of language
- Problem of small and scattered habitations
- Political difficulties
- Geographical barriers
- Lack of co-operation
- Lack of equalization of educational opportunities etc.

1.3 Rationale of the study:

We know that in the context of globalization, primary education plays an important role in eradication of illiteracy, enhancement of productivity, maintenance of health and environment, more specifically in changing the attitude and behaviour of the people towards the processes of development. Educational upliftment of disadvantaged community is the basic goal of universalization of elementary education. Universalization of elementary education rests upon universal access, universal retention and universal quality learning. OBB and DPEP in this regard, there are the major thrust programmes in the education sector since ever in India, launched by the Government to achieve this goal as envisaged in the Article 45 of Indian Constitution. The Constitutional, Legal and National Policies and statements have time and again upheld the cause of universalizing elementary education. According to the Constitutional mandate 1950,- The state shall endeavour to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution for free and compulsory education to all children until they complete the age of 14 years. The National Policy of Education, 1986 and 1992 had given top priority to the achievement of goals of Universal elementary education. Education of children of 6-14 years age group had been made fundamental right by the 86th Constitutional Amendment Act. In this direction, many Projects and programmes had been undertaken at micro and macro levels in past; which had resulted in considerable progress in providing access to elementary education, increase in enrolment and retention, improvement in school attendance and generation of strong demand for education.

Consequent to several efforts, India had made enormous progress in terms of increase in institutions, teachers and students in elementary education. The number of schools in the country increased four folds from 2,31,000 in 1950-51 to 9,30,000 in 1989-99, while enrolment in primary cycle jumped by about six times from 19.2 million to 110 million. At the upper primary stage, the increase of enrolment during the period was 13 times, while enrolment of girls recorded a huge rise of 32 times. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at the primary stage had exceeded 100 percent. Access to schools was no longer a major problem. At the primary stage, 94 percent of the country's rural population had schooling facilities within one kilometre and the upper primary stage, it was 84 percent.

The country had made impressive achievement in the elementary education sector. But the flipside was that out of the 200 million children in the age group of 6-14 years, 59 million children were not attending schools. Of this 35 million were girls and 24 million were boys. There were problems relating to drop out rate, low levels of learning achievement and low participation of girls, Schedule Caste, Schedule Tribes and other disadvantaged groups. There were still at least one lakh habitations in the country without schooling facilities within one kilometre. Coupled with it were various systematic issues like inadequate school infrastructure, poorly functioning schools, high teacher absenteeism, large number of teacher vacancies, poor quality of education, and inadequate funds. In short, the country was yet to achieve the elusive goal of Universal elementary education (UEE), which meant 100 percent enrolment and retention of children with schooling facilities in all habitations. It was to fill up this gap that the Govt. of India had launched the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) in the year of 2000.

Sarva Siksha Abhiyan seeks to provide quality elementary education including life skills. It has a special focus on girls' education, children of Schedule Caste, Schedule Tribes, Other Backward Classes and Children with special needs. It also seeks to provide Computer education to bridge the digital divide.

Most states had developed multiple designs for school buildings, additional classrooms and had allocated uniform building cost throughout the state. According to the Analytical Report of SSA- 2005-06, the distribution of schools without building revealed that as many as 46,364 schools (all categories) did not

have building in 2005-06 which was 4.12 percent (compared to 4.37 percent in 2004-05) of the total of 11,24,033 schools from which District Information System of Education (DISE) 2005-06 data was collected. The number of schools without building in 2003-04 was 35, 449 (3.81 percent) compared to 62,996 schools in 2002-03 (7.38 percent). The majority of building less schools in 2005-06 located in rural areas were 42,815 schools (92.35 percent) as only 7.65 percent of such schools were located in urban areas. Further it was observed that of the total buildingless schools as many as 44,943 schools were being run by the Government management (96.94 percent). The percentage of such schools was as high as 16.36 in Chhatisgarh (7,605 schools), 22.05 in Jharkhand (7,839 schools) 12.65 in Madhya Pradesh (13,167 schools), 7.22 in Rajasthan (5,433 schools), 5.01 in Andhra Pradesh (3,827 schools) and 4.01 in Bihar (2,134 schools).

` **Sarma, Dutta and Sarma** (1991) revealed in their study that lack of physical facilities at schools was the major problems of primary schools in India. 46 percent of the schools did not have school buildings, 42 percent schools lack of adequate seating arrangement for pupils, health and hygienic facilities, 61 percent schools lack of facility for proper drinking water, 73 percent schools lack of facility for lavatories and 54 percent schools lack of proper urinals and 54 percent schools lack of playground and 85 percent schools lack of games and sports materials for pupils in Assam.

For bringing the "out of school children" to schools, various bridge courses had been designed and more short term bridge courses had been opened in the country. Village Education Committee, Tea Garden Education Committee and Gaon Panchayat Education committee had been formed. School Management Committee had also been formed. Through enrolment drive, huge number of unenrolled children had been enrolled in the schools. Before Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, the infrastructure facilities of primary schools such as school buildings, additional classrooms, toilet, drinking water facility, teaching-learning materials (TLMs), financial assistance, innovative teaching methods, evaluation system, monitoring system, academic environment etc. were not given due importance and identified on the national level. But before opening any bridge courses, emphasis should be given on the fulfillment on the infrastructure facilities in the schools. Having adequate number of instructional rooms was an essential requirement for

every school. In this context, the Govt. of India initiated the "Operation of Blackboard Scheme" in 1987.

The schools covered under the scheme were to be provided each with two classrooms and a verandah. The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) launched in 1994-95 also provided additional classrooms to a number of schools but confined only to primary schools /sections. The Programme that was initiated in 42 districts across 7 states was later extended to about 272 districts across 18 states. In 2001, the remaining districts were covered under SSA and a number of new schools and additional classrooms were opened.

It might be observed that primary schools had an average of 2.7 instructional rooms (Government 2.4 and private schools 5.1). Except Assam, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh, primary schools in all other states and union territories had average of more than two instructional rooms. Assam and Jharkhand had only 1.6 classrooms per school compared to 1.9 in Madhya Pradesh, Chandigarh (6.8 classrooms), Delhi (8.1 Classrooms), Kerala (5.6 classrooms), Lakshadeep (8.8 classrooms), Nagaland (5.1 classrooms), Mizoram 4.0 classrooms), Puducherry (5.1 classrooms), Punjab (3.3), Himachal Pradesh (3.1), had average number of classrooms well above the national of 2.7 classrooms. Bihar also had an average of 2 classrooms per primary schools (As per Analytical Report of SSA: 2005-06).

Drinking water facility is the most essential one among the other infrastructure facilities to be available in the schools that every school should have. The District Information System of Education (DISE) data revealed that more schools in 2005-06 had drinking water facility than 2004-05. The distribution of schools on this parameter, however, further showed that the basic facility not yet available in all schools. Only 83.7 percent schools (all categories) were having drinking water facility available as in 2005-06 compared to 80.60 percent in the previous year. As compared to 81.46 percent schools under Government managements, more than 93 percent schools under private managements had drinking water facilities in the schools. However, drinking water facility was not available.

Like drinking water facility, toilet facility in the schools had also improved impressively since the inception of SSA. Data revealed that providing facilities to schools went further momentum in 2006-07. Percentage of schools with common toilets and separate toilets for girls increased in 2006-07 over 2005-06 and about 58 percent schools (all categories) across 609 districts had common toilets in schools, while 42.58 percent schools had separate toilets for girls in 2006-07. There were more schools with common toilets in the urban areas (68.89 percent against 66.05 percent in 2005-06) than in the rural areas (56.66 percent against 50.72 percent in 2005-06).

More than 52 percent schools (all categories) had playground in the schools. The percentage of such schools in rural areas 51 compared to 63 in urban areas. Distribution of schools having playground in 2006-07 further revealed that 45.89 percent primary schools had playground in the schools. While 84 percent schools (all categories) in Delhi and 90 percent schools in Chandigarh had playground in schools, 20 percent schools in Orissa, 37 percent in Bihar, 24 percent in Jharkhand, 77 percent in Tamilnadu, 77 percent in Haryana. In North-Eastern States, the percentage of such primary schools varied from 9.44 percent in Mizoram to 52.70 percent in Tripura.

In the quality front, introduction of quarterly evaluation of children's learning achievement, progress card for each child and increase of the number of working days in the year by reducing the school holidays were considered topmost priorities. To achieve quality education all the essential inputs such as activity–based textbooks, teachers' training, systematic support and monitoring system had been introduced.

Intervention of Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) was a major concern for universal enrolment. To achieve this objective, more EGS centres were opened in those areas where there was no formal school within 1.5 Km radius for the children in the age group of 6-10 years in the country.

In case of Assam, DPEP was launched in several districts and it had already identified some areas of Assam as educationally backward on the basis of low literacy rate. But all the programmes had failed to achieve the target, as the drop-out rate was very alarming where about 71 percent students failed to complete the

class VII. So, the Government of India again had launched another new Education Programme, known as Sarva Siksha Abhiyan Programme (SSA), in November, 2000 in the country, which was an effort of universalize elementary education for all children in the age group of 6-14 years in a mission mode in the country.

So, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA), Assam also had been trying at its best to create a positive scenario and environment of education to make elementary education available to all children whether they were migrated, deprived, labour, backward children in the state by establishing new schools in the schoolless habitations and to fulfill the infrastructure facilities in the primary schools.

Emphasis had been given on adequate teaching-learning materials, free textbooks supply, nutrients, uniforms, play materials etc. for the school children. The effective and innovative methods of teaching, periodical evaluation of students' knowledge and performance and creating of congenial family environment of primary school children had been given stress to be more effective. Moreover, for qualitative development it arranged training programmes and workshops for the enhancement of teaching competencies for the teachers.

Das (2005-06) found in the study that most of the Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) Centres of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) in the interior area of Goalpara district (Assam) were functioning in the small classrooms, which were insufficient. The learners did not attend the schools regularly due to the lack of awareness of the illiterate parents. Free textbooks were not provided to the pupils in the beginning of the session.The infrastructure facilities of the most of the EGS centres were found in poor condition, lack of seating facilities, lack of hygienic condition and lack of proper drinking water facility etc.

Therefore, at present, there is a need for assessment of SSA programme in the state to explore the progress how much it has achieved in the mission and what other problems remains to be solved in the state. Because, most of the educational policies before implementation of SSA were unsuccessful or partially successful due to remaining a lot of problems which were not identified and solved in the state. Basically, most of the educational policies or programmes never reached the rural areas, where the largest part of Assam is rural areas, which gives potential

resistance in achieving universal literacy. With the findings of such study, it would be helpful in the development of primary education in the state.

In this study, an attempt has been made to carry out a comparative study on the effects of SSA on primary education in Kamrup and Barpeta district, Assam. Kamrup district is the advanced district of Assam where the state capital is situated in it. Here each and every scheme has been emphasized more for the proper implementation in right time for universalization of primary education for the welfare of the children.

Kamrup district is a district where there are more facilities and proper implementation of the programme for universalization of primary education in the state. Further, in Kamrup district, there is no more backward areas like slum areas, char-areas (river bank habited areas), brick-kiln areas (bricks manufacturing areas), stone quarry areas (stone crushed areas), forest land areas etc. where such backward areas need more attention, more facilities and proper implementation of the programme for universalization of primary education. It is also observed that guardians, in this district, are sincere, attentive and responsible for their children's education. So, the rate of school drop-out children is low in this district for which the programme becomes successful due to the proper implementation. The literacy rate of Kamrup district is 72.81 (As on Census 2011) percent which indicated the success regarding its development in the district.

But Barpeta is educationally backward district having low literacy rate in the state (65.03 percent, as on Census-2011). This district is educationally backward due to the existence of several burning problems e.g. backwardness in more Brahmaputra river basin areas, largely Schedule Caste & Schedule Tribes habited areas, brick-kiln areas (bricks manufacturing areas), stone quarry areas (stone crushed areas), forest land areas, flood affected areas etc. and further this district gets more deprived from having facilities provided by Sarva Siksha Abhiyan for universalization of primary education due to lack of giving due importance on needbased in the area, i.e. hard to reach centre, deprived urban children centre, religious minority education centre, worksite sanjyogi siksha kendra, school managing committee etc. are not adequate according to the seriousness of the problem in the district due to the lack of proper knowledge of

the areas of district, whereas a keen observation of the problems existing in the district and review of the policy to solve the problems are further needed to achieve cent percent universalization of primary education.

In such areas, the rate of drop-out children is more due to existing of some other major problems like school-less habitations, single teacher schools, loose administration on primary schools and road and communication problems in the remote areas, deprivation from infrastructure facilities provided by Sarva Siksha Abhiyan particularly by the venture schools etc. and there is no proper implementation of the programme in right time. It is a fact that maximum guardians of Barpeta district are agriculturists (above 80%), economically weak and illiterate. Some of the guardians wish their children to help in their domestic works and helping their parents by earning money as a worker in others' households. They are not sincere, aware, attentive and responsible for their children's education and their future life. So also, they are not co-operative with the teachers as well as the workers of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan Programme due to lack of adequate mobilization among the public about it. Even, they seem to feel rarely the value of education for their children and for them half a loaf is better than education. So, there are more chances of leaving some discrepancies on it in spite of available educational facilities and failure of proper and due time implementation of the programme in this district. Furthermore, the rate of drop-out children is alarming due to above cited causes. The literacy rate of Barpeta district according to the Census - 2011 is 65.03 percent, which reflects how far it has achieved its success.

The following Table reflected the facilities of education in Kamrup and Barpeta districts under Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) of Assam:

Table-1.3.1

Centres of SSA Programme in Kamrup and Barpeta districts of Assam

Kamrup district			Barpeta district		
	Centres	**Nos.**		**Centres**	**Nos.**
1	School Managing Committee	2989	1	1.School Managing Committee	240
2	Village Education Committee	1189	2	2.Village Education Committee	1031
3	Tea Garden Education Committee	11	3	3.Tea GardenEducation Committee	01
4	Ward Education Committee	84	4	4.Ward Education Committee	48
5	Gaon Panchayat Education Committee	176	5	5.GaonPanchayatEducation Committee	149
6	Education Guarantee Scheme	158	6	Education Guarantee Scheme	157
7	Sanjyogi Siksha Kendra	426	7	Sanjyogi Siksha Kendra	595
8	Worksite Sanjyogi Siksha .Kendra	60	8	Worksite Sanjyogi Siksha Kendra	---
9	Hard To Reach(HTR) Centres	240	9	Hard To Reach(HTR) Centres	42
10	Deprived Urban Children Centre (Jyoti kendras)	235	10	Deprived Urban Children Centres	12
11	Residential Bridge Course Centres	02	11	Residential Bridge Course Centres	02
12	Community Coaching Programme Centres	38	12	Community Coaching Programme Centres	133
13	Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya	02	13	Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya	01
14	Mother Groups	3101	14	Mother Groups	2408
15	Religious Minority Education Centres	23	15	Religious Minority Education Centres	---

Source: Annual Progress Report, 2003-04; SSA Mission, Kamrup district, Assam.

Annual Progress Report, 2007-08, SSA Mission, Barpeta district, Assam.

Reddy (2001) found in his comparative study that about 77% and 89% schools had their own buildings in Churachandpur and Imphal districts of Manipur respectively. Drinking water facility was not available in 80% of the schools in Imphal and 52% schools in Churachandpur. School buildings and spaces were not adequate. Construction of additional room, posting of additional teachers and provision of physical amenities was also recommended to improve the learning environment.

Singh, Joshi and Garia (2003) also found in their comparative study that within the same area, the infrastructure facilities in the Private schools were better condition compared to Parishad schools in Lucknow (UP) with respect to availability of playground, teaching and play materials, toilet facilities, school buildings and educational environment, which helped in enrolment and quality of education.

Therefore, the researcher was interested to find out the discrepancies of the available educational facilities of an educationally advanced district and backward district of the same state. With this purpose, the researcher wished to make a comparative study between Kamrup as an educationally advanced district and Barpeta as an educationally backward district. This approach might help to evaluate the success and failure of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan Programme on primary education system, other remaining problems and causes and its facilities in relation to its uniform coverage in the state. Thus from the above, it was revealed that any study had been carried out on the effect of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan on primary education system, family environment, quality of education etc., it pursued the researcher to raise the following questions:

1.4 Research questions

- Is Sarva Siksha Abhiyan able to fulfill the infrastructure facilities in the schools of Kamrup and Barpeta districts?
- Is Sarva Siksha Abhiyan able to provide the Teaching – Learning Materials in the schools of Kamrup and Barpeta districts?
- Is Sarva Siksha Abhiyan able to use effective teaching methods in the schools of Kamrup and Barpeta districts?
- Is the Family environment influence on the result of primary school children of two districts?
- Is Sarva Siksha Abhiyan able to perform qualitative and quantitative improvement in primary schools of two districts?

1.5 Statement of the problem:

On the basis of the previous studies and rationality mentioned above, it may be mentioned that the implementation of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) in both the districts is changing the direction of primary education towards the development. It tries to reach education to all children through its various activities, programmes and schemes. There was no research study that had been done in regard to implementation of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan especially on the infrastructure facilities, teaching-learning materials, teaching methods and family environment of the learners etc. for the progress of primary education in the districts of Kamrup (High literacy) and Barpeta (Low literacy), Assam. It was the significant research gap in the said field. Hence, the investigator felt to carry out a research on the effects of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan on the progress of primary education in the two districts. So, the study is entitled as:

EFFECTS OF SARVA SIKSHA ABHIYAN ON PRIMARY EDUCATION SYSTEM IN KAMRUP AND BARPETA DISTRICTS, ASSAM: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

1.6 Objectives of the study:

The objectives of the study are as follows:

(i) To compare the infrastructure facilities in primary schools due to Sarva Siksha Abhiyan in Kamrup and Barpeta districts.

(ii) To compare the teaching –learning materials added to the schools during the Programme in Kamrup and Barpeta districts

(iii) To compare the effectiveness of teaching methods applied in primary schools during the programme in Kamrup and Barpetat districts

(iv) To compare the family environment of primary school children during the programme in Kamrup and Barpeta districts

(v) To compare the qualitative and quantitative improvement in primary schools by Sarva Siksha Abhiyan in Kamrup and Barpeta districts

1.7 Operational definitions:

Primary education: Primary school education is the most often referred to as elementary school, which is usually composed of grade one to six. The main purpose of primary education is to give children a strong foundation on the basis of a general curriculum with the emphasis on reading and writing. In the present study, primary education means the range of school education of children of the age group of 6-14 years.

Sarva Siksha Abhiyan: Sarva Siksha Abhiyan is a flagship programme for achievement of universalization of elementary education to all children of the age group of 6-14 years. In the present study, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan means the scheme of education which the schools accepted for the development of education for the school children.

1.8 Delimitation of the study:

(i) The study is delimited to the primary schools which are under provincialised and recognized from both the districts - Kamrup and Barpeta.

(ii) The collection of data is restricted to the Headmasters, Assistant teachers and Guardians of the selected schools from both the districts.