CHAPTER-II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the preceding chapter, the introduction of the topic, concept, constitutional provisions, objectives, importance, problems of primary education, rationale of the study, research questions, the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, operational definitions and delimitation of the study were discussed. The present chapter had been devoted to the theoretical framework for the study, where development of primary education in India (Pre-independence period and Post independence period) was discussed. Under pre-independence period, the ancient education system, indigenous education system, education during the missionary period and education during the East India Company etc. and under post-independence period, beginning of new era of Indian education, reports of various education commissions, education during the Five Year Plans, development of primary education in Assam, Kamrup and Barpeta districts etc. had been discussed.

2.1 Development of primary education in India (Pre-independence period):

For centuries India had been famous for philosophy, literature and ancient school of learning. They were inseparably associated with the religion which dominated her people and profoundly affected the course and progress of education. In any society, however advanced or however primitive, education may be regarded as a process of adjustment to environment. Its nature is determined by the inherited powers and capabilities of the recipients as well as by the environment in which they grow up.

There was hardly any record of what the Hindus and Buddhist kings did for education before the third Century B.C. In India, the system of education at first got spread in the early years of Vedic period. There was, of course, the old Brahmanical system of education prevailing in the country. During this period, the Vedas were the sources of Indian philosophy. They were regarded as the storehouse of knowledge. On the basis of the Vedas, educational instruction was given to the disciples by the Guru in the Ashramas. According to this system, the

disciples or pupils were required to spend a good many years from the age six to twenty-one, in the house of their Guru. The disciples used to do all the work of their Guru, including the cultivation of their landlords. They occasionally used to get special grants from the kings and the landlords. There were three types of institutions viz. – the parishads, the tols and the pathsalas. Thus, education was practiced in the gurukula and the system of education spread to the society during the time of the Vedas. The objective of the Vedic education was the development of physical, moral and intellectual powers of man and to achieve salvation through it.

Another system of education prevailed in ancient India was known as the Buddhist system of education. It was coloured by its philosophy of life when the Buddhism came into existence in about 600 B.C. Education was centred round in the monasteries and viharas. Priority and efforts were made to achieve "Salvation or Nirvana" through this education. The System of education was developed during the Vedic and the Buddhist period through gurukula, pathsala, tols, temples, monasteries and viharas.

Muslim education system came into existence after the permanent settlement of Muslims in India. Islam upholds knowledge as the only way to the realization of truth. The prophet held education compulsory for the fruitful men and women. There were three types of schools – (i) Moktabs and madrassah (ii) Mosque and monastery and (iii) Private houses. The mosques had attached schools supported by grants from the state or landowners and nobles. Education was imparted in the moktabs and madrassah with the objectives of acquisition of knowledge and propogation of Islam.

The primary school was the moktabs. Majority of moktabs were non–endowed. The moktab accepted day students as well as residential students under direct care and control of Moulvis. Khanqahs (Shrines of saints) also served as schools. There was parallel domestic system of education. The house of every Mollah, Moulvi and Moulana offered board and lodging together with instructions. The village moktab meant for the poor man had a system of tuition fees in kind. The curriculum consisted mainly of the 3 R's and a bit of the Quran. It was open to the Hindus. The state established and maintained orphanage. Instructions started

with an initiation ceremony at 4 years, 4 months, 4 days of the child, known as Moktab ceremony or Bismillah Khani ceremony. The student had to repeat Surah–i-iqra, a chapter of the Quran. Richer people engaged private tutors. The common people desired practical education, particularly, leading to military career. During the Mughals, there was a mushroom growth of moktabs. There were no printed books. The child had to learn writing of alphabets and figures with fingures on dust or wood board, called Takti. School houses were rare, schools sat even under the shade of trees, the teacher being seated on mat. Difficult words from the Quran were dictated and students learnt spelling and meaning. Emphasis was placed upon calligraphy; grammar was considered as the gate to culture. Quranic texts particularly bearing upon the five compulsory prayers were specially read and recited. The main aim of the moktab was to equip the students for moral and mental development for this world and thereafter. After completion of this stage, the students had to study Gulistan and Bustan of Firdausi and also Persian books, particularly karima of sadi.

2.1.1 Indigenous education system:

The present system of education originated in the early years of the nineteenth century. In the background, there was a widespread and fairly well organized system of indigenous education, which continued intact down to the eighteenth century and the remnants of which can be seen even today in centres of traditional learning and obscure nooks of the country. It was, in fact, a well-developed national system consisting of both elementary and higher institutions. These institutions had been in existence from time immemorial and they had been woven into the texture of the social and cultural life of the people. They were the inheritors and custodians of the intellectual and cultural traditions of the people, and in their own way, they tried to fulfill their social obligations.

The elementary system was intended for the masses. It was a widespread system consisting of numerous primary schools scattered all over the country side. Practically every village had its primary schools and pathsalas. In Bengal alone it is said, there were about the year 1835, a thousand such pathsalas. In almost every village, there was a pathsala and a Guru Mahashaya. Big villages had even more than one pathsala. But every pathsala could not boast of a decent habitation. Very

often, however, the village school was housed under the hospitable roof of a well-to-do villager's drawing room. The elementary education consisted of the 3R's and nothing more. There was provision for subjects like history, geography, nature study and other activities like handwork and physical drills, whereas the curriculum in the higher learning was largely influenced by religion, the elementary schools were singularly free from any direct religious teaching. Pathsala was a single-teacher school and the Guru was its founder and proprietor. He was the sole monarch of his pathsala where he had absolute freedom in its management.

2.1.2 Educational activities during the Missionary period:

The Christian missionaries had started coming to India in the last part of 15th Century A.D. In 1498 Vasco-da-Gama, a portugese came to India. The advent of the missionaries introduced a new trend in Indian society. The Christian missionaries played the most significant role in the socio-cultural and educational development in India. The educational activities of the different groups of Christian missionaries in India were described as follws:

2.1.2.1 Educational activities of Roman Catholic missionaries:

The beginning of the present system of Indian education became possible due to the efforts of the Christian missionaries who came to India in the walk of European traders. Roman Catholic missionaries with the advent of the Portuguese in the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries appeared in the field. They settled down in the different Portuguese trade settlements mostly on the western coast of India and through their efforts, there grew up in these settlements a new system of education. It consisted of the theological seminaries for the training of missionaries and parochial schools both for Portuguese and European children as well as the children of the Indian converts to Christianity. One of the earliest Roman Catholic missionaries was Xavier, a friend and collaborator of Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit order. The Jesuits had been well known for their educational activities and as teachers, in India too they did good work in the field of education and St. Xavier's name was still associated with some educational institutions managed by the members of the Society of Jesus.

2.1.2.2 Educational activities of Danish missionaries:

With the decline of the Portuguese power, their system of education also decayed and disappeared. But then other sects of missionaries appeared in the field of the training of traders from other European countries. Among these were the Danish missionaries. Early in the eighteenth century, some of them came to the Danish settlement at Tranquebar, near Madras and began to study Tamil and other local languages with a view to undertaking teaching activities. Soon they printed translation of the Bible in Tamil and opened schools for the children of their converts. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, the schools opened by the Danish missionaries passed under the control of Church Missionary Society and other English Missionary Organization.

2.1.2.3 Educational activities of British missionaries:

With the extension of English influence in North Eastern India, the British missionaries came and began to settle in Bengal in the vicinity of Calcutta and other English trade settlements. The first to come were the Baptist missionaries, Carey and his colleagues. They came in the closing decade of the eighteenth century. By that time, the attitude of the East India Company towards missionary activities had changed. Throughout the seventeenth and the early part of eighteenth century, the Company had encouraged missionaries to come and work in this country. Many missionaries came to India either directly in the service of the company as Chaplains to their garrisons or independently but under their patronage. In the latter half of the eighteenth century, however, the company's attitude towards missionaries underwent a complete change and they no longer regarded with favour the proselytizing activities of the missionaries.

The East India Company originally did not have any educational policy or programme of its own. So, in 1793 an attempt was made by the missionaries and their supporters, who were eager to bring the Gospel to the pagans and heathens of this country and who had always looked upon India as a happy hunting ground for their missionary ventures, to compel the East India Company to encourage the importation of missionaries and schoolmasters from England, the attempt was opposed tooth and nail by the Directors of the company. Incidentally, in support of the missionary position, one Mr. Charles Grant urged the company to take active

steps to elevate the morals of the Indian people by giving them their own superior religion and culture and it was mentioned in the book entitled—"Observations on the state of society among the Asiatic subjects of Great Britain particularly with respect to their morals and on the means of improving it." The protagonists of the missionary group wanted insert a clause into the charter which would compel the company to take some interest in the education of the people and to spend money for that purpose, but the Board of Directors were vehemently opposed to the proposal, in their opinion any such measure would be in the highest degree dangerous, someone remarked—"We had lost our colonies in America by imparting education there, we would not do so in India too."India, they said, did not require any education from England. Sir Thomas Munroe actually observed, "If civilization were to become an article of trade between the two countries, England would be the gainer by the import cargo."

The pioneering activities of the missionaries had in the meantime spread far and wide. Whenever they went, they took with them the printing press, they learnt the languages of the people, printed and published the Bible and other Christian tracts in these languages, criticized and vilified the religions and social systems of this land and extolled and preached their own, made some converts and gave shelter and education to them and their children. To the missionaries, education had always been a preparation of evangelization and their schools have been fruitful media for preaching Christianity. The Baptist mission at Serampore under Carey, Ward, Brunden, Grant and Marchman, all men of distinction, was able to provide a number of schools of higher grade, where elementary works on grammar, arithmetic, astronomy, geography, general history and treatises on the Creator and on the nature of the soul were used.

However, whatever might have been the character of the early missionary schools in general, there is no doubt that they introduced a new system in this country. The schools the missionaries started were different from those in existence in the country in several respects. Firstly, they imparted religious instructions according to the tenets of Christianity. Secondly, they introduced a new type of organization hitherto unknown in this country. They taught a wider curriculum including subjects like grammar, history and geography. Besides, they were the first to write and print school textbooks. They also introduced regular

school hour, their schools were closed on Sundays. Then again, many of the schools had more than one teacher in their staff and they also introduced a clear-cut class system. Another point of the missionary activities in the field of education was the main emphasis on elementary education of the masses through the medium of the languages of the people. They taught English but their main approach was through the vernacular.

2.1.2.4 Missionary activities of Native Indians for education:

If the missionaries were busy in setting up a new system of education in the elementary stage, there were others too, who were not slow to follow their example. There were men like David Hare, Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Radha Kant Dev who also felt the need for a new type of education. David Hare was a lover of humanity and out of his love for the people of this country which he adopted as his own he dedicated his life and fortune to the education of their children. He believed that the introduction of the new type of education, English education, would lead to the improvement of the condition of the people. He was not inspired by any desire to preach Christianity or to use education for that purpose. He was essentially a rationalist in the matter of religion and had no connection with the missionaries.

2.1.3 Primary education during the East India Company:

A new era ushered in the history of education in India under the East India Company. Although at that time, the condition of Indian education had become miserable because of the wide spread discontent and anarchy, yet there was a network of educational institutions in the whole of India, which had become a part of social and cultural life of the people. There were about one lakh educational institutions in Bengal only. But the Britishers crushed and completely shattered the Indian education in order to establish their trade monopoly and political ownership. Still, they paid less attention to education in order to show that they were really interested in the public welfare. They continued the Government grants to educational institutions. Able scholars, both Hindus and Muslims, continue to receive financial supports which they were already enjoying. The Directors of the company thought that they should win the support of the influential people for consolidating their position. So, when the higher class section

of the Muslim population demanded for establishing a Madrassah for higher education, Waren Hastings laid the foundation stone of the Calcutta Madrassah in October, 1780 and Jonathan Duncan founded the Benaras Sanskrit College in 1791 for Hindus. Charles Grant was also an ordinary officer of the company who played an important role in education of that period. According to him, education should be given to them for understanding things in the right perspectives. However, Grant's real purpose was to help the Indian people. Due to efforts of Charles Grant, the Charter Act of 1813 was published and Wilberforce helped Grant immensely in getting his ideas accepted. This chapter gave a new direction to Indian education. Likewise, Lord Metcalf, Lord Bentinck, Lord Macaulay and Lord Muir etc. made attempt to bring changes in Indian education.

2.1.3.1 The Charter Act of 1813:

The Charter Act of 1813 provided that at least one lakh rupees was to be spent every year on the revival and the improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India and for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India. This clause laid the foundation of state educational system in India. The Charter Act of 1813 was published due to the efforts of Charles Grant and Wilber Force helped immensely in getting this idea accepted. The Charter Act gave a new direction to the Indian education. Although it was the first Act through which the education system was formally laid down in India, it did not clarify about the objectives of education, medium of instruction, agencies of education and methods to be adopted for spread of education in India and also there were no clear-cut instructions of utilizing the sum of money. So, finally it came to an end.

2.1.3.2 Stanley's Despatch of 1850:

Stanley's Despatch of 1850 recommended that the Government of India should take up the responsibility of primary education and advised that the Government should impose local taxes to bear the expenditure of education. Consequently, primary education made some progress during this period.

2.1.3.3 Wood's Despatch of 1854:

It was accepted in Wood's Despatch of 1854 that the education of the common people had been completely ignored and disregarded. Wood's Despatch, therefore, suggested that provision should be made to impart practical and useful education to the common people. The number of primary schools should be increased. Native schools should be encouraged through grant-in-aid system. But the officials of the East India Company ignored the primary education and spent more money on secondary and higher education. Consequently, the primary education could not make any progress.

2.1.3.4 Hunter Commission of 1882:

Indian Education Commission was appointed by Lord Ripon, the Governor General of India, on 3rd February 1882. Sir William Hunter was the chairman of this Commission.This was the first Education Commission of British India. In view of the slow progress of primary education in the period from 1854 to 1882, the Government directed the Indian Education Commission to pay special attention to the subject of primary education. The important recommendations of the Commission regarding primary education were given under six heads viz. policy, legislation and administration, encouragement of indigenous schools, school administration, training of teachers and finance. The Commission recommended that primary education should be regarded as the instruction of the masses through the vernacular languages and efforts should be made by the state for the expansion and improvement of primary education. The control of primary education should be made over to the district and municipal boards. Efforts should be made to make primary education compulsory through regulation. The indigenous schools should be encouraged. Infrastructure and equipment of primary schools should be simple. The Commission recommended that a specific fund should be created and local funds should be utilized mainly for primary education and adequate number of normal schools should be established for the training of teachers.

2.1.3.5 Lord Curzon's Educational Policy of 1904:

Lord Curzon arrived in India as Viceroy in the year 1899. Being a man of determination and efficient administrator, he tried to reform Indian education system at each level, primary, secondary and higher. In order to raise the efficiency and to improve the general standard of education, he called a Conference of the Directors of Public Instruction at Shimla in 1901 to discuss the problems of Indian education, which was known as Shimla Education Conference. The Resolution of the Conference was sent to the provincial governments and local bodies and on receiving the opinions of the provincial heads, Lord Curzon issued a resolution on the Indian Educational Policy on 11th March, 1904. According to the resolution, larger grants were sanctioned from the government funds for the expansion of primary education. Expansion of primary education was to be considered to the prime concern of the Government and a clear–cut financial policy should be followed in the sphere of primary education. He did praiseworthy works in the field of increasing number of primary schools and in raising their teaching standards. Curzon stopped the system of aiding primary schools on the basis of examination results and introduced more scientific method of paying grant-in–aid and better methods of teaching. The Poliy was considered as the beginning of a new era in the history of primary education in India.

2.1.3.6 Gokhale's Bill of 1910-11:

After Lord Curzon's Policy of education, the next stage in the field of education was dominated by the question of primary education. The Swadeshi movement and the resultant of political awakening had drawn the attention of the country to an important issue. The issue was the education of general masses. The nationalists gradually came to realize that there would be no real progress in the country so long the millions of people remained illiterate. Gokhale realized the inherent utility of compulsory education and so submitted a private bill to the Imperial Legislative Council on 18th March, 1910 to provide for the compulsory education. This Bill was known as Gokhale's Bill of 1910-11 and its main provisions were –

- An Act on lines of English Education Act of 1870 should be passed authorizing the local bodies to take initiation in the matter prepared.

- Compulsion should be made in the case of boys only in the first instance and it should be extended to girls at a later date.
- Compulsion should be restricted to a period of four years only in the first instance, 6 to 10 years of age group.
- Compulsion should be introduced in those areas where 33% of boys and girls were already under instruction.
- The Provincial Governments should bear two-third of the total expenditure involved in the scheme of compulsion.
- Local Boards and Municipalities should have the responsibility to establish and recognize new schools.
- With the permission of Provincial Governments, the Autonomous Bodies can levy a tax for education.

2.1.3.7 The Govt. of India's Resolution of 1913:

Despite the rejection of Gokhale's Bill of 1910-11 for the introduction of compulsory primary education in India, he (Gokhale) succeeded in making the British Government conscious about the necessity of introducing compulsory primary education and also drawing attention of Indians to all aspects of education. Primary education got a greater impetus when King Emperor George V visited India in 1911-12. Following the Delhi Darbar on December 12, 1912 certain administration changes took place in the country. Accordingly, the Govt. of India passed the resolution on educational policy on Feb, 1913. In the resolution every aspects of education viz. primary, secondary, collegiate, agricultural etc. were included. As regards primary education the resolution made the following suggestions:

- Large expansion should be made of lower primary schools.
- Establishment of upper primaryschools will be established.
- Local bodies should be encouraged to establish more schools.
- Provision will be made for training of primary school teachers.
- Elementay educationshould be made free in backward and poor areas.
- School buildings should be comfortable, convenient but inexpensive.
- School curriculum should be more practical.

- Allotment of grants should be there to encourage elementary schools like pathsala and moktabs.

2.1.3.8 Hartog Committee of 1929:

The observation of the Study Committee under Sir Philip Hartog published in the form of a report in 1929 was very illuminating in regard to primary education. The Committee trenchantly remarked that even by starving primary education, disproportionate emphasis had been placed upon higher education. Primary education had not been well planned nor had the plans been implemented. Rural orientation had not been attempted, although primary education in India was basically a rural problem. It, therefore, suggested reorganization of curriculum with effective integration with rural economy and the need of guaranteering complete 4 year education and measures against lapsing into illiteracy. The Committee opined that the largely enlarged enrolment in primary education indicated that barriers to mass education were breaking down. At the primary stage, the waste was appalling, particularly in case of girls.

2.1.3.9 Wardha Scheme (Gandhiji's Basic Education Scheme) of 1937:

Mahatma Gandhi, the father of nation, was the originator of Basic Education Scheme. Gandhiji was not only a political leader, a social reformer but an educationist too. He tried to implement the concept of Basic education long back in 1914, when he was in South Africa. During his stay in South Africa he promoted educational facilities for the children of Indian origin in the "Tolstoy Firm" which he tried to mould through Basic education. After coming back from South Africa, he stayed in the Sabarmati Ashram and the children nearby the Ashram were imparted education on this ideal. In 1937 Gandhiji published some articles in the "Horijan" news paper with the title "Nai Talim." This "Nai Talim" was known as "Basic education." In that very year Gandhiji introduced Scheme of Basic education in the All India National Educational Conference held in "Wardha." After elaborate discussion on the scheme, resolutions were adopted. To materialize the idea of Gandhiji, a committee was formed under the chairmanship of Dr. Jakir Hussain and in the year 1937, the Committee prepared a curriculum in the form of resolution and named the resolution as National Educational Resolution.

Characteristics of Basic education are as follows:

- Free, universal and compulsory education should be provided for all boys and girls between the ages of 7 and 14 years
- This education should be imparted in the mother tongue of the child and English should not be taught at this stage.
- All education should centre round some basic craft chosen with due regard to the capacity of the children and the needs of the locality.
- This education will make the children self sufficient and teachers' salary will be paid from the income generated through the produced goods.
- This education will develop the mental potentialities of the child.
- Basic education will provide an environment for adjustment with real life situation.
- This will make the child aware about the duties and responsibilities of a future citizen of the country.
- This will develop in child the ideals of non-violence and international co-operation along with a realization of the virtues of truth, justice, love and service through the gandhian philosophy.

2.1.3.10 Sargent Committee Report of 1944:

At the end of the World War II, a new educational scheme, popularly known as the Sargent Scheme was submitted to the Indian Government. Sir John Sargent who was then educational adviser to the Government of India, was asked to draft such a memorandum as might contain an outline of the plan for post–war educational expansion. The Sargent Report recommended the provision of universal, free and compulsory primary education for the children between the age of 5 or 6 and 14 years. This education will be sub-divided into two heads: junior basic (6-11) and senior basic (11-14). The former type of education will be compulsory for all while the latter form of education will be meant only for those who do not intend continuing their studies in high schools.

No solid efforts were made till the beginning of 20^{th} century in regard to compulsory primary education. Yet, some Britishers who were the lovers of education were inspired to work in the field of intellectuals and social

development. Some important suggestions were made in regard to compulsory primary education. Baptist Missionary, William Adam, Capt. Wingate and T .C. Hope and the other prominent Britishers who suggested the provision of compulsory primary education, but unfortunately, the British rulers did not pay any heed to their suggestions and their suggestions were completely ignored.

2.1.3.11 National education movement in the level of primary education in India:

Educated Indians like Sir Chimman Lal Sitalvad and Sir Ibrahim Rahimutullah started the movement to make the provision of compulsory education. The King of Baroda, Maharaj Sayaji Rao Gaekawad had the credit of making the first successful experiment of compulsory education in India. The King of Baroda declared in 1892 that there would be compulsory primary education in a Talluqa of Amraili city, consisting of 9 villages in his state. This provision was started from November 18, 1893 and met with such an astonishing success that it was extended to 52 villages of the said Talluqa. Therefore, primary education was made compulsory for all children of the state by the Act of 1906.

Another great leader, Vithal Bhai Patel presented a Bill in the Provincial Legislative Assembly of Bombay. The aim of this Bill was to introduce compulsory primary education in the Municipal areas of the province. The said Bill became an Act in 1918 and was called Bombay Primary Education Act and this was the pioneer of the revolution in the field of education and spate of Compulsory laws in other provinces followed during 1919 and 1920, such as Bengal Primary Education Act, Bihar and Orissa Act, Punjab Act, U.P. Act, Madras Act etc. Bengal the first such Act was passed in 1919 which made provision for urban areas, but several years were taken to pass an Act for effective extension of primary education to the country side. Between 1919 and 1930, almost every province of India passed Acts on primary education. During the period 1921-47, second phase in the history of legislation of primary education began. A number of Laws were passed such as Bombay Act of 1923, U.P. District Board Act of 1926, Assam Education Act of 1926, Bengal Rural Act of 1936 etc. Consequently, there was a phenomenal progress in the compulsory education drive.

In 1921, there were only 8 Municipalities that introduced compulsory primary education. In 1926-27, total 114 urban and 1571 rural areas came under its scope. Ten years later, there were 167 urban and 3034 rural areas under the scheme. According to these Acts, responsibility of the primary education was entrusted to the local institutions. It was the responsibility of these institutions to implement the provisions of these Acts. These institutions were also empowered to impose education cess in order to meet the expenditure to do incurred on education. The Provincial Government also promised financial help to meet the expenditure of education. Only those boys and girls who were ordinarily between the age of 6 -7 years could take benefit of the provision of compulsory education. As a result of compulsory Education Act and the feeling of nationalism, the expansion of compulsory education received an impetus. Under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Ambedkar, women also demanded rights of receiving education equal to those of men and people started taking interest in primary education.

Fortunately for India, the organization of the provincial education came into the hands of Indian Ministers in 1929 and the Government contributed much for the expansion of primary education. This progress of compulsory primary education continued till 1930 to 1937, the development of compulsory education received a setback, because of outbreak of the World War II and its world wide economic depression and Hartog Committee's (1927) emphasis on qualitative progress of primary education instead of quantitative increase in it. But ever since Mahatma Gandhi moved the Resolution of Basic education at Wardha (in 1937) and declared that National Policy of free and compulsory primary education for all children (Boys and girls) between the age 6-14 years, the movement for legislation of compulsory education gained strong foothold although it did not succeed till 1947, when India became free. Social justice and equity are themselves a strong argument for providing Basic education for all. It was an established fact that Basic education improved the level of human wellbeing, especially with regard to life expectancy, reduced infant mortality rate, improved nutritional status of children etc. Studies had shown that universal basic education significantly contributed to economic growth.

At the time of provincial autonomy in 1937, Congress Ministers were formed in 6 out of 11 provinces. The Congress made vigorous efforts to expand compulsory primary education in their provinces. They established primary schools in those villages, where there were no primary schools. These efforts of the Congress ministers led to the great expansion of compulsory education. By that time, independence was achieved, provision had been made for compulsory education of boys in 229 cities and 10,017 villages and for girls in 10 cities and 1404 villages.

In 1944, the post-war plan of educational development, visualized free and compulsory education for all children in the age group 6-14 years age and estimated that a period of 40 years would be to attain the goal analysis. Thus, it may be observed that although, India had several Acts of primary education during the reign of East India Company, primary education in India in the past depended too much on voluntary efforts. Today, in spite of the Primary Education Acts, the situation has not altered to any real extent. Even today, it is too much dependent on voluntary efforts. In 1936-37, out of a total of 197,227 primary schools, only 2,666 were Govt. schools and 72,363 Board schools. The rest i.e. 122,198 were private schools.

The financial condition of these primary schools was too well known to any detailed mentioned. In 1936-37, the amount spent on education of all types in British India was a little over 28 crores, of this Rs. 8.4 crores were for primary education only and 1.4 crores went for girls' education and the rest for boys. Coming to the question of enrolment and attendance, we found that in 1936-37, out of about six crores of children of school going age (5-14) only about 11.5 million were under instruction in some schools or other. Of these 10 million were boys and 1.5 million were girls.

It may be said that in the absence of compulsion, 11.5 million pupils in primary schools should be considered quite a satisfactory figure, but when we examine the question wastage and stagnation in our primary schools, the real state of affairs reveals itself to us. Of the 11.5 million children going to schools in 1936-37 lakhs were in Class-I, 23.7 lakhs in Class-II, 17.2 lakhs in class-III, 12.1 lakhs in Class-IV and only 7 lakhs in Class-V. The rest were in middle schools. This

means that out of every 100 children admitted into Class-I, only 23 children came upto Class-IV and only 13 children remained to reach Class-V.

2.1.3.12 Development and trends in primary education (1921-1947):

The year 1921 was a significant landmark in the history of elementay education in India.It was in this year that the control of elementary education was transferred to Indian Ministers who were responsible to a legislature with a large elected majority. The overall progress of elementary education during this period was faster than in the preceding one, owing much to the general social awakening among the people as the deliberate of the Government and Local Bodies to expand it both on a voluntary and on a compulsory basis.

The most important event of the history of Indian education during this period was the rapid development of mass education. Prior to this period, the Government's policy had often been criticised for the slow advance of mass education which was considered as the weakest link in the British educational set up. During this period, Indian public opinion had shown keen interest in mass education and the liquidation of illiteracy. This was all the more expected from the Indian Ministers who were now in charge of the Education portfolio. This period was also important as it witnessed:

- The passing of several Acts of primary education in British Provinces.
- The execution of several schemes of compulsion and expansion on a voluntary basis.
- A large increase in the number of schools and pupils and
- Spread of literacy.

  The epoch-making event of this period was the scheme of Basic education enunciated by Mahatma Gandhi. Some steps were also taken during this period for the qualitative improvement of primary education.

2.2 Development of primary education in India (Post independence period):

A new era in the history of education in India was ushered in with the attainment of independence in 1947. The great hopes aroused and the people felt that the revolution in education for which the leaders of the country were pleading for years under the British rule, would be introduced within a short time. This was also the sentiment which the leadership of the country itself expressed. In the field of primary education the epoch-making event of this period was the scheme of Basic Education enunciated by Mahatma Gandhi. Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru the first Prime Minister of India, observed in his inaugural address to the All India Educational Conference convened by Maulana Azad, the Union Education Minister in January, 1948 whenever Conferences were called to form a plan for education in India, the tendency, as a rule, was to maintain the existing system with slight modifications. This must not happen now. Great changes had taken place in the country and the educational system must also be in keeping with them. The entire basics of education must be revolutionized.

For various reasons, e.g. influx of millions of refugees from Pakistan and their rehabilitation, the framing of the Constitution to replace the outdated Government of India Act, 1935; the reorganization of administrative services which had been depleted by sudden withdrawal of British officers and liquidation of princely states and the creation of new and more viable units of administration. Consequently, not enough attention could be given to the development of education between 1946-47 and 1950-51. This promised revolution in education never materialized. Many good and useful things were done. But in the final analysis, these did not amount to more than an expansion of the earlier education system with minor modification. On the basis of the Sargent Plan, however, the states adopted a few broad schemes of expansion and improvement even during this period. The Congress Ministry also paid attention to the problem of extending compulsory primary education. The following Table showed the areas brought under compulsion by 1947-48:

Table 2.2.1

Compulsory primary education in India during 1947-48

Province	Age group under Compulsion	Area with boys only under compulsion		Area with boys and girls under compulsion	
		No. of towns and cities	No. of villages	No.of towns and cities	No. of villages
Bihar	6-10	17	—	—	—
Bombay	7-8, 6-11	9	134	110	5100
C.P . Berar	6-11,7-12	34	1031	—	—
East Punjub	6-11	37	1420	—	—
Madras	6-14, 6-12	16	31	12	1607
Orissa	6-12, 6-13, 5-10	1	1	—	—
U.P	6-11,	36	1371	3	3
West Bengal	6-10	1	—	—	—
Delhi	6-12	1	7	—	—

Source: Nurullah, S. and Naik, J. P., A Student's History of Education in India, Revised edition, Bombay, 1962.

Above statistics noticed that the best progress was made in Bombay where compulsion was introduced in several municipal areas and in all villages with a population of 1,000 or more but in other parts of India, the progress could only be called poor. When it is remembered that the nation was irrevocably committed to the introduction of compulsory education for boys and girls in the age group of 6-14 years before 1960-61, it becomes at once evident that the progress of compulsory education in the past, if it can be called progress at all, was extremely disappointing. A considerable quickening of the pace at which compulsion would be introduced had become inevitable. The other measures adopted by the Congress Minister for the expansion of primary education included the following:

(i) Opening of schools in school-less villages;

(ii) Sanctioning additional grants to local bodies;

(iii) Opening additional girls' schools, when necessary;

(iv) Sanctioning additional post of teachers in existing schools

But in the absence of a larger scale adoption of compulsion, the progress of primary education was rather slow as the following statistics shows:

Table 2.2.2

Expansion of primary education in India during 1937-47

Year	No. of Primary Schools	No. of Pupils
1881-82	82,916	2,061,541
1901-02	93,604	3,076,671
1921-22	155,017	6,109,752
1936-37	192,244	10,224,288
1945-46	167,700	13,027,313
1946-47	134,866	10,525,943

Source: Nurullah, S. and Naik, J. P., A Student's History of Education in India, Revised edition, Bombay, 1962.

It is difficult to compare the statistics of 1946-47 with those of 1936-37 on account of the establishment of Pakistan. But the figures for 1945-46, which are for undivided India, show that there was an actual fall in the number of schools (owing to the stress of war condition) and only a relatively small rise in the number of pupils. The expansion of primary education in this decade was, therefore, far from satisfactory. This is due to the fact that the expansion of primary education on a voluntary basis appeared to have reached a saturation point in most areas. Any further expansion on a large scale, therefore necessitated compulsion. Another remedy was the organistion of mass literacy campaign on a very large scale. The recommendations of various educational policies for the development of primary education were as follows:

2.2.1 **Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948):**

It was mentioned in the Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 that everyone has the right to education. Education should be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory.

Realizing the importance of universal primary education for the proper development of democracy, the Article 45 of the Indian Constitution, which is also

a Directive Principle of State Policy, provides that- "The State shall Endeavour to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution for free and compulsory primary education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years."

On account of the priority given to compulsory education in our constitution, programme of elementary education received consideration, attention within ten years, but the rate of expansion of primary education had considerably increased after 1950, whereas it was 2 percent in 1931-47, but 9 percent since 1958-59. In 1948, at the 18th meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education, the Government of Bihar raised the question of relationships between the State Government and Local Bodies in respect of administration of elementary education. The Minister of education, there, appointed this committee in 1951 with Shri B.G.Khere, Chief Minister of Bombay as Chairman to examine the present set up of local administration of education in the different states.

On the attainment of independence, the former princely states were merged in India. Provinces were automatically extended to them. Laws were passed in Part A, Part B and Part C states in quick succession e.g. Madhya Bharata (1956), Himachal (1953), and Saurastra (1956) etc. All states had Compulsory Primary Education Acts except Manipur, Nagaland and Tripura. In 1960, the Parliament passed the Delhi primary Education. It included upto-date provisions regarding enforcement of compulsory attendance; child could serve as a model of the Delhi Primary Education Act, 1960.

2.2.2 Secondary Education Commission (1952-53):

Although the Secondary Education Commission,1952 aimed at bringing about important reforms in the field of secondary education in the country, the Commission recommended for the re-organization of the system of education at primary or junior also. It recommended 4 or 5 years primary or junior basic, 3 years junior or senior basic in the country.

2.2.3 Punjab Primary Education Act (1960):

The Punjab passed the Punjab Primary Education Act in 1960 and was promulgated from April 1, 1961. This Act had laid stress to provide free and

compulsory primary education for children of the age group 6-11 years in the state of Punjab.

2.2.4 Education Commission (1964-66):

The Education Commission (1964-66) considered the primary education as a highly significant stage in the national reconstruction and primary education is reorganized into lower primary stage and higher stage for its better improvement. Lower primary stage consists of Class I-IV or V and Higher primary stage consists of Class V or VI to class VII or VIII. It emphasized the importance of fulfillment of the Directive Principle contained in the Article 45 of the Constitution in all parts of the country that the state should strive to provide free and compulsory education for children up to the age of 14 years through the development of the following programme:

- Five years of good and effective education should be provided to all children at the earliest. Seven years of such education were to be provided by 1985-86. The Commission laid emphasis on the reduction of wastage and stagnation. The objective was to ensure that not less than 80 percent of the children that enter Class I reach Class VII in the period of seven years.
- Children who are not yet fourteen years old at the end of Class VII and who do not wish to study further, should be retained in educational system till they complete 14 years of age but should be provided with short vocational courses of their choices.

2.2.5 Report of the International Commission on Education (1972):

The Report under the title "Learning to be" was a nice interpretation of current educational challenges. It gave top priority to primary education for children. All children must be guaranteed the practical possibility of receiving Basic (Primary) education, full time if possible, in other forms if necessary. Universal basic (Primary) education in a variety of forms depending on possibilities and needs, need to be provided to all children through any of the following forms:

- Complete full-time primary education
- Complete part-time primary education
- Incomplete elementary education for children.

2.2.6 National Policy on Education (1986):

India had launched a new grandiose scheme of education for all by the year 2010. The National Policy (NPE-1986) aimed making it "an effective instrument for taking the country into the 21st century" accorded a very high priority to the programme of universalization elementary education to ensure essential minimum education of all children upto the age of 14 years. The primary stage had been divided into lower primary of 4 or 5 years and higher primary of 2 or 3 years. The New Policy on Education proposed to enlarge the scope of "Operation Blackboard" and to improve the basic infrastructure of primary schools is also being pursued through it. Till 1989-90, a total of Rs. 382.09 crore had been spent under the scheme.

2.2.7 Ramamurti Committee (1990):

The Committee reviewed the state of universalization of education in the country and suggested the following strategies—

- Making each primary school or middle school fully responsible and accountable or formulating and implementing strategies for VEC in villages / habitation /mohallas in the areas under its coverage.
- Authorize the school headmaster/ headmistress to recruit "Para teachers" (Shiksha Karmis) for reaching out either to unserved habitations or to those children who cannot attend the school in the day hours.
- The goal of universalization of education may be viewed in two phases – the first phase of universalization of primary education (UPE) and the second phase of Universalization of elementary education (UEE).

2.2.8 Janadharna Committee (1992):

The Committee gave recommendations on universalization of elementary education that the Central and State Governments should bestow the universalization of elementary education and provide programmes in these two

areas in total support of financial, administrative and politically, which is commensurate with the priority. Every effort should be made to ensure that the Constitutional obligation of providing free and compulsory education upto the age of 14 years becomes a reality before we enter the twenty first century.

2.2.9 Delhi Declaration (1993):

The historic event for education was the hosting of Education for All (EFA) Summit of nine high population countries of the world in New Delhi on 16th December, 1993. These countries were Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan. The countries accounted for more than half the world's population whereas 70 percent of the world was illiterate. The heads of three United Nations agencies viz. UNESCO, UNICEF and UNFPA also participated in the Summit. The nine high population countries adopted the "Delhi Declaration and framework of actions." The Declaration called for ensuring a place for every child in a school or an appropriate education programme according to his or her capability consolidating efforts towards basic education for children, for improving the quality and relevance of basic education and in all actions to accord to human development. The provisions of the Delhi Declaration regarding elementary education were as follows:

- Universalization of elementary education / basic education for all children of age group (6-14) years
- Provisions of opportunities and facilities of education
- Creation of necessary structures
- Improving the content and process
- Improving and extending literacy
- Improving the quality and relevance of Basic education and in all actions to accord human development.

2.2.10 Right to Education Act (2009):

Every child between the ages of 6-14 years has the right to free and compulsory primary education. This is stated as per the 86th Amendment Act of the Indian Constitution and added in the Article 21A. The Right to Education Act seeks to give effect to this amendment. Accordingly, the Right to Education Act

tries to give the children free and compulsory education. The schools need to have certain minimum facilities like adequate teachers, playground and infrastructure facilities. Unaided and private schools shall ensure that children from weaker sections and disadvantage groups shall not be segregated from the other children in the classrooms. The Act had come into force from April 1, 2010 and it made education as fundamental right of every child between the ages of 6-14 years and specified minimum norms in Government schools. It requires the reservation of 25% of places/seats in private schools for children who are from poor families, prohibits unrecognized schools from practice and makes provisions for no donation of fees and no interview of the child or parent for admission.

2.2.11 Education during the Five Year Plans of India:

In 1950, the system of planned development was adopted. The planning Commission was created at the centre and made responsible for preparing Comprehensive Five Year Plans dealing with all aspects of national development, including education. The development of education thus became an integral part of the overall development of the country. Since then, the country had witnessed the implementation of the First Five Year Plan (1950-55), the Second Five Year Plan (1956-60), the Third Five Year Plan (1961-65) and the Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-73). The years (1966-67, 1967-68 and 1968-69) were known as Annual Plan Years and a fifth Five Year Plan to cover the period (1974-78) had just been published in a draft form. The development of education in India in the post-independence period could, therefore, be best studied in the context of these programmes of planned development.

Education ranked as an important input of creating a social order founded on the values of freedom, social justice and equal opportunity. Accordingly, it had assigned a pivotal role in the developmental process through the plan periods. Rapid expansion of educational facilities from one plan to another had been a characteristic feature of educational planning in India.

First Five Year Plan (1951-52 to 1955-56): The provision of free and compulsory primary education was the first necessary step towards establishing equality of opportunity of every citizen. Regarding ordinary primary education, the tendency to open new schools should not be encouraged and as far as possible, resources

should be concentrated on basic education and the improvement and remodeling of existing primary schools on basic lines that could be done with the personnel available.

Second Five Year Plan (1956-57 to 1960-61): The problem of education at the elementary level was mainly two: the expansion of existing facilities and the re-orientation of the system of education on basic lines. Both were equally urgent tasks and vital to social and economic development. An aspect of the situation which caused concern was the wastage and stagnation. To prevent wastage the introduction of compulsion was essential.

Third Five Year Plan (1961-62 to 1965-66): A large gap still existed between the promotion of boys and girls attending the elementary schools. Introduction of compulsion, appointment of trained and qualified teachers, improvement in the methods of teaching, greater understanding on the parts of parents of desirability of telling their children at school and planning of school holidays etc. were among the steps to be taken to reduce of the incidence of stagnation and wastage.

Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-70 to 1973-74): This plan took into account the recommendations of the Education Commission (1964-66) and the Resolution on National Policy (1968). The chapter on education was entitled "Education and Manpower" in the fourth five year plan document. In regard to the age group of 11-14, the problem was much more difficult as majority of the parents in rural areas withdraw their children from schools. This problem needed special attention in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

Fifth Five Year Plan (1975-79): Very high priority had been given to the problem of elementary education. Adequate provision had been made for additional enrolment in terms of teaching personnel and construction of classroom, especially in backward area in the fifth five year plan (1975-79). In addition to the expansion of educational facilities, provision had been made for curricular activities, re-orientation, work-experience and strengthening of educational institutions for the training of teachers.

Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85): The approach in the Sixth plan was for all the states, which were yet to universalize the primary education to reach

universalization (Class I-V) upto the age of 11 years, in the next five years and in case of the other states, to achieve a substantial increase in the enrolment at the middle stage (Class V-VIII) of children upto 14 years so as to move towards the goal as far as possible. It was proposed to establish special monitoring arrangements at the centre and the state level to review progress of elementary education, particularly of the target group, which were yet to be provided with universal elementary education. They would be supplied with midday meals, free books, uniforms and stationery as well as attendance scholarships as incentives.

Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90): The development of education during this period was marked by the formulation of the National Policy on Education (1986) and the Programme of Action (1986). This plan provided for the re-orientation of the education system so as to prepare the country to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Priority would be given to realizing universalization of elementary education for children in the age group of 6-14 years by 1990. The emphasis would shift from mere enrolment to retention of pupils in schools and the attainment by them of basic elements of learning. Special operational targets would require to be worked out by the State Government concerned block wise and village wise through decentralized planning. The rate of the teacher was most crucial in achieving universal education.

Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97): The main objectives of the eighth five year plan were to achieve the targets of universalization of elementary education and eradication of illiteracy among the 15-35 years age group. The modalities for achieving these targets would be adoption of the decentralized approach to educational planning and management at all levels through Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002): The Ninth Five year plan launched in the fiftieth year of Indian independence covered the period 1997 to 2002. The Plan laid special emphasis on primary education and information technology. The Ninth Plan envisaged that the Panchayati Raj Institutions would be empowered to serve as nucleus in programme implementation. Besides, it stipulated that Non-Governmental Organizations would be encouraged to supplement the Government efforts. A major dent would be made in the eradication of illiteracy. As regards the

convergence of Basic Minimum Services for contributing to educational development, emphasis would be laid on providing all primary schools with clean drinking water, sanitary facilities, better nutrition for the pupils through midday meals, health check up and primary health care facilities and a network of roads for making the schools easily accessible.

Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007): The main objectives of the Tenth Five year plan were to achieve the targets of universal acess to primary education by 2007. The five year plan also targeted to increase the literacy rate upto 72% within the plan period and to bring an increase of 80% by 2012.

Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007- 2012) : The approach in the Eleventh Five year plan was for all the states, which were to reduce drop-outs of children from the elementary schools from 52.2% in 2003-04 to 20% by 2011-12. Also, it targeted to increase the literacy rate for persons of age 7 years or above to 85% and all villages to have access to clean drinking water by 2012 within the plan.

Twelveth FiveYear Plan (2012-2017): The development of education during this Five year plan would be the improvement of the status of elementary education in India. The education of the girls, SC/ST, minority, poor and deprived children and pre school education had been taken into account. Moreover, this five year plan would emphasize to develop the infrastructure facilities of the schools as well as professional growth of the teachers in the country.

The account of the development of primary education highlighted two main issues - provision of universal and compulsory education for all children in the age group of 6-14 years was a cherished national ideal and had been given over riding priority by incorporation as a Directive principle of state policy in the Article 45 of the Constitution and transformation of the character of the system and to orient it to productivity in the form of basic or similar pattern. Both these were the professed goals of the development of primary education.

Regarding the expansion of primary education perhaps the best achievement of the last twenty-five years was in respect of the universal provision of facilities for primary education. In 1947, there were large areas of the country which had no such facilities. In the successive five year plans, however, thousands

of new primary schools had been established. The present position, therefore, is that there is a lower primary school (Class I-V) within easy walking distance from the home of every child. The provision of upper primary schools Classes (VI-VIII) was not so universal in all parts of the country. Some states like Kerala or Tamil Nadu had been able to provide even upper primary schools while states like Andhra Pradesh or Rajasthan have still a long way to go on. Taking India, as a whole, there are now about 500,000 lower primary schools (I-V) and about 100,000 upper primary schools (VI-VIII) which gives a ratio of one upper primary school to every five lower primary schools. There are, of course, immense variations from state to state. The ratio is as low as about 1:2 in Tamil Nadu and as high as about 1:10 in Andhra Pradesh. The Education Commission recommended that there should be one upper primary school to every three primary schools and it appears that this target may be achieved by the end of the Fifth Five Year Plan. All things considered, it may be said that the country has been able to provide universal provision of facilities at the lower primary stage (Class I-V) and that within the next five years or so, it may also be possible to provide universal facilities for upper primary education (Classes VI-VIII). The problem of universal enrolment is, therefore, obviously more difficult; but even here an immense progress has been made. In 1947, the enrolment of boys in Classes (I-V) was 106.3 lakhs (or 53.1 percent of the age group 6-11 years) and that of girls was 34.8 lakhs (or 17.4 percent of the age group 6-11 years). Similarly, the enrolment of boys in Classes (VI-VIII) was 17.2 lakhs (or 15.4 percent of the age group 11-14 years and that of girls was only 3.2 lakhs (or 2.9 percent of the age group 11-14 years). In other words, in the age group 6-11years only one child out of three had been enrolled in schools and in the age group 11-14 years, only one child out of eleven had been enrolled.

Bhargava (1990) observed in his study that there had been a steady growth of the educational facilities at the primary stage. In 1957, 59.75 percent schools had schooling facilities within a distance of one kilometer, but this was available to 80.34 percent in 1986. Among the states, Nagaland had the highest and Tripura, the lowest facility. The other states that followed Nagaland were Mizoram, Gujarat and Punjab.

Gupta and Gupta (1992) found in their study that 83.8 percent of 216 schools had two all weather classrooms and 55.6 percent of schools had verandahs while only 9.7 percent of schools had toilet facilities. 46.2 percent of schools had at least two teachers and 42 percent of schools had more than two teachers, 20.4 percent of the two –teacher schools had a woman teacher.

The immense progress made during the last twenty-five years in increasing enrolments at the primary stage in India (National level) is shown in the Table below:

Table 2.2.3

Enrolments in Elementary education (1950-1978) in India (National level) under Five Year Plans:

Plan & Year	Enrolment ingrades IV-V (Millions)	P.c.of Children enrolled in grade I-V age group 6-11years	Enrolment in gradesVI-VIII (Millions)	P.c.of children enrolled in grades IV-VIII, age group 11-14 years
1	2	3	4	5
1950-51	Boys 13.8	60.8	2.6	20.8
First Plan	Girls 5.4	24.9	0.5	4.3
	Total 19.2	43.1	3.1	12.8
1955-56	Boys 17.5	72.0	3.4	25.4
Second	Girls 7.6	32.8	0.9	6.9
Plan	Total 25.1	52.8	4.3	16.5
1960-61	Boys 23.6	82.6	5.1	32.2
Third Plan	Girls 11.4	41.4	1.6	11.3
	Total 35.0	62.4	6.7	22.5
1965—66	Boys 32.2	96.3	7.7	44.2
1968-69	Girls 18.9	56.5	2.8	17.0
Fourth Plan	Total 50.5	76.7	10.5	30.8
	Boys 34.0	92.7	8.7	45.6
	Girls 19.9	56.6	3.4	18.3
	Total 53.9	75.1	12.1	32.1
1973-74	Boys 39.4	I00.0	10.5	48.0
Fifth Plan	Girls 24.4	66.0	4.5	22.0
	Total 63.8	84.0	15.0	36.0
1978-79	Boys 46.3	111.0	14.3	60.0
Projection	Girls 31.9	82.0	7.3	33.0
	Total78.2	97.0	21.6	47.0

Source: Education in the Fifth Year Plan (1974-79), Ministry of Education and Social welfare, 1972 (for 1950-51,1955-56, 1960-61, 1965-66, and 1968-69). Draft Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-79), Planning Commission Chapter VIII for 1973-74 and 1978-79.

Comments on the above statistics were as follows –

(i) Of the children enrolled in Class I-V, not all belong to the age group of 6-11 years. In fact, about 30 percent of the children enrolled in these classes were either below 6 or above 11 years age. If due allowance is to be made for this fact, the target of enrolment would be 13.9 percent and not 100 percent. This showed that even with an enrolment of 97 percent as visualized in 1978-79, we had still a long way to go to reach universal enrolment in the age group of 6-11 years. This was all the more important because the children now left out of schools belonging to the weakest social groups and in bringing them into schools, the effort and cost involved would be proportionately very large.

(ii) The enrolment of girls is now much better than what it was in 1947. Still, a much greater headway has to be made in enrolling girls than boys. Very special efforts are obviously called for in this area.

(iii) The same observation can be made about children from the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes.

(iv) Not all areas of the country show the same progress in elementary education. Enrolments are best in urban areas, both for boys and girls. The enrolment in rural areas is generally much less and there is especially true in the case of girls. Some states like Kerala or Tamil Nadu are considerably advanced while others like Rajasthan, Bihar or Orissa are very backward. Even in the same state, primary education has progressed very well in some districts and is backward in others. Not frequently the progress of primary education varies considerably from one part of a district to another. Special efforts are needed to overcome these social and regional inequalities in the development of education.

2.3 Development of primary education in Assam (Pre-independence period):

It was mentioned that the Pre-historical period of Assam was obscure because there was no system of keeping important records, events as well as documents in written form in that period and so there were no available historical documents of the past Assam to be known. From the Period of Ahom invansion in

1228 A.D., we obtain anything at all approaching a connected account of the people and their rulers. For several hundred years previously some scattered facts may be gleaned from a few ancient inscriptions and from observations of a Chinese traveler. Before that nothing definite was known and our information consists of some dubious and fragmentary references in the Mahabharata and the Puranas and Tantras and other similar records.

Ancient Assam, known as Pragjyotispur or Kamrupa in the great epics like the Ramayana and Mahabharata and other principal Puranas, occupied an area larger than that of the modern Assam state and extended westward towards to the river Karatoya. The Kingdom comprised the whole of the Brahmaputra valley, together with Rongpur and Cooch Behar. The Kingdom included Manipur, Jaintia hills, Cachar and parts of Mymensingha and Syhlet.

In ancient period, Assam was known as Kamrupa, which had a glorious ancient heritage and history going back several centuries before the Christian era. The history was full of heroic deeds done by warrior kings and generals and great humanitarian works done by well known saints and seers. Mahiranga Danava, Bhagadutta, Narkasura, Sambasura, Bana Raja, Kumar Bhaskar Barman, Rudra Singha, Narnarayan-Chilarai, Lachit Barphukan, Sri Shankardeva, Sri Madhav Deva etc. were amongst the many historic names that adorned the past history. Though, Assam was united with the rest of India at all times culturally, politically and geographically, Assam was an independent state before the advent of the British administration in 1826, when the six hundred years old rule of the Ahom came to an end. Assam was thus one of the latest victims of the British imperialism in India and after having independence of India in 1947, Assam since then became an integral part of Republic India.

2.3.1 Assam profile: Physical background:

In the North–East**,** Assam is the frontier province of India. The boundary of Assam lies between latitudes $28^0 18^/$ and 24^0 North longitudes $89^0 46^/$ and $97^0 4^/$ East. It contains at present an area of 54,000 square miles of which a little over 24,000 square miles constitute the plain districts, 19,500 the southern Hill tract to the north.

On three sides, the province is shut in by great mountain ranges, inhabited by people mostly of Mongolian stock. To the North lie the Himalayan regions of Bhutan and Tibet. Below the high mountains is a range of sub- Himalayan Hills, inhabited to the west by small races of Bhutia origin, and further eastward by Tibeto Burman tribes-Akas, Doflas, Miris, Abors and Mishmis. To the North- East lie Mishmi hills, curving round the head of the Brahmaputra valleys. With the reference to these Nothern frontier tracts, it is noteworthy that the International boundary between Assam and Tibet has not been clearly defined.

However, in 1914, a tentative agreement was reached embodying a line on the map called the Mc Mohan Line. Continuing to the east is the Patkai range, which defines the western boundary of Ava, the intervening ranges being inhabited chiefly by various tribes of Nagas and the native state of Manipur. Though the great natural boundary between Assam and Burma consists of a tangled mass of mountains whose summits rise to 12,000 ft, yet the geographical barriers are not insuperable, the passes crossing these mountainous regions are actually not very difficult and inter communication has been plentiful and constant. To the South lie the Lushai hills, Hill Tippera and the Bengal districts of Mymensingh and Rongpur (Before independence). Here also, is the native state of Cooch Behar which was once integral part of Kamrupa (Assam).

Assam is, therefore, divided physically into two main parts, the high lands of the frontier tracts to the north and east and the plains below. The plains consist of the great river valley of the Brahmaputra. The area of the Brahmaputra valley is 24, 283 sq.miles. Between the valley lie the broken hills of the Assam range comprising the administrative districts of Garo, Khasi Jaintia hills, the North Cachar hills (Sub-division) and the Naga hills. Cachar was originally an independent state. It came under British possession in 1830 and was subsequently attached to Assam as an administrative unit.

Through the heart of the province runs the great river called in Sanskrit the Brahmaputra Sri Lauhitya, in Assamese it is called Lohit or Luit. It enters the north eastern corner of Assam through the Mishmi hills and turning nearly due west, passes through all the districts of north Assam. It is the chief artery and highway of Assam. For generations, the Assamese have watered their fields with

its life-giving floods and drunk of its blessed water, their whole history and culture are intimately connected with the Brahmaputra.

The Brahmaputra valley comprises the modern districts of Goalpara, Kamrup, Darrang, Nowgaon, Sibsagar, Cachar and the frontier tracts of Balipara and Sadiya. It consists of a wide alluvial plains, about450 miles in lenth, with an average breadth of about 50 miles, lying almost east and west in its lower portion.

Assam should be racially and linguistically homogenous, that is to say, its inhabitations form a distinct entity among the people of India, united by a common language, an Aryan dialect of great antiquity. Even in the early part of the seven century, Hiuen Tsang was able to report that the language of Assam different a little from that of Mid-India.

2.3.2 Aboriginal inhabitants of Assam:

The Kiratas, Cinas and other primitive tribes of Mongoloid group commonly designated as "Mlecchas" and "Asuras." were the earliest inhabitants of Assam. The Mahabharata refered to the Army of Bhagadatta composed of Cina and Kirata soldiers who glittered like gold; tasya Cinaih Kirataisca kanca nairiva samvrtam babhau balam. Kirata according to the Samhitas is a name applied to the people living in the caves (guha) of mountains as it appears clearly from the dedication of the Kirata to the caves in the Vajasaneye samhita and from the reference in the Atharva Veda to a kirata girl (Kairatika). According to the Mahabharata, the Kiratas were placed around the Brahmaputra valley. The Kalika Purana describes those original inhabitants of Assam as Kiratas with shaven heads and yellow skins.

The linguistic evidences, popular customs and some of the place-names of the province also indicate that the earliest inhabitants of Assam were speakers of the Indo-Chinese language of the Mon-khmer family which has been characterized by Schimdt as the Austric family of languages. The data when the Austric speakers began to filter into Assam is not known, but it must have been several hundreds years B.C. and certainly long anterior to the advent of the Aryans from the west.

The next wave of the Indo-Chinese invasion is represented by the various people speaking Tibeto-Burman languages. The original home of the speakers was

in western China near the Yang-tse-kiang and the Hwang-ho river. From these, they went down the courses of the Brahmaputra, the Chindwin and the Irrawaddy and entered India and Burma. The swarm which came to Assam proceeded down to the great bend of the river Brahmaputra near Dhubri. From there, some of them went to the south and occupied first the Garo hills and the state of Hill Tippera (Tripura). Others appear to have ascended the valley of the Kopili and the neighbouring streams into the hilly country of the North Cachar. Other members of this Tibeto-Burman family halted at the head of the Brahmaputra valley and turned south. They took possession of the Naga hills and became the ancestors of that confused sample-bag of Tribes whose speeches are classed as the Naga group. Another of the swarms that scattered in the upper basins of the Chindwin and the Irrawaddy gradually advanced towards the south of Assam and colonized in the Lu shai hills (Presently Mizoram), Cachar and even in some parts of Manipur and Naga hills. The most important group of the Tribe of Tibeto-Burman race known as Bodo, forms the numerous and the important sections of the Non-Aryan people of Assam. The Bodo group of the Tribes includes the Koch, the Sonowal kochari, the Dimasa, the Garo, the Rabha, the Tipra, the Chutiya, and the Moran. The Bodo people who live to the west of the present Kamrup district are called “Mech” by their Hindu neighbours. This word is probably a corruption of Sanskrit word “Mleccha.” Those of them who live in and to the west of the district of Kamrup are called Kochari. Various guesses have been made about the origin of the word “Kochari” but it seems that the word is connected with Sanskrit word “Kirata.”

Linguistic evidence shows that at one time the Bodo people extended over the whole of the present province west of Manipur and the Naga hills excepting only the Khasi and Jaintia hills. The Bodos built their colonies near about streams and so most of the river names in eastern Assam are of Bodo origin like Dichang, Dibang, Dikhou, Dikhrong, Dibru etc. The Bodo equivalent for water is “Di” (in the hills and in eastern Assam, e.g. Di-hong etc.). The Bodos built strong Kingdoms and with various Tribes names–the Chutiya, the Kochari and the Koch etc. in the pre-historical periods of Assam.

2.3.3 Primary education in Assam during Ancient period:

The early political history of Assam or Kamrup was rather obscure and wrapped up with legends. The first mention of the country is found in the Epics, Puranas and religious legends of Gangetic India. The legends connected with the political history began sometime before "Naraka" who established himself in Pragjyotishpur after killing Ghatakasura of the Danava dynasty. But there was no any clear mention about education system existed in the Pre-historical period of Assam. Of course, learning flourished in Assam and made it attractive to scholars of other countries. Hiuen Tsang remarked that "Man of abilities came from far to study here." This is evident from the visits of such scholars as Shankaracharya (788-820) A.D., Nanaka (1538-1649) A.D. and Guru Teg Bahadur in 17th Century. Elsewhere, in Assam also both Brahman and Non-Brahman scholars and teachers were holding debates and disputations with teachers of rival sect. The defeated teachers would usually give up his own doctrines and embraced those of the winner. As for instance, Madhavadeva happened to be defeated by Vaisnavite Guru Shakardeva over the issue of the respective merits of Sakta and Vaisnava faith and accepted Shankardeva a spiritual Guru. Shankardeva defeated many Brahman Scholars brought from Banaras and other religious centres of Northern India, for which Shankardeva was given a high place in the Court of Koch Kingdom.

Besides, the kings in their Court used to maintain eminent Scholars and poets, who were encouraged to compose and compile treatise on various subjects. The two great epics the Ramayana and the Mahabharata were translated into Assamese at the Court of Kochari King Mahamanikya in the 13th Century and the Koch King Naranarayana in the 16th Century.

However, education system in Assam first started to grow during the Ahom period but still there was no well-organized system of primary education. The Ahoms came to Assam in 1228 A.D. and ruled the state for about six hundred years. They patronized a domestic system (Known as Gurukula system) of education. In this system, the teachers (Guru) would impart education free of chargeon pupils had to remain with him as the members of his family. But this education was mainly confined to the priestly class not open to all.

2.3.3.1 Ahom kingdom and Education system:

The history revealed that the Ahoms came first from their homeland and they brought with them their rich canonical classics which consisted of worship manuals, astrological treaties, chronicles and romances. They carried on the tradition and culture of their homeland and tried to sustain and develop their own language and literature in the early stages. The story of the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Puranas was translated into the Ahom language. Lexicons from Ahom to Assamese and Assamese to Ahoms were compiled. "Min-Mang-phura-lang" is their greatest work. It elaborates the gospel of Ahoms in the form of a simple story. The Ahoms produced manuscripts on diverse subjects. It was considered essential for the members of the Royal family and the nobility to learn history and the priests carried on the tradition of imparting education in scriptures and History from generation to generation.

The Ahom rulers gave a great importance to the elementary education in Ahom language and they employed the Pundits to teach Ahoms. Regarding the teaching of Ahoms, N.K. Basu wrote-"The Pundits for service to the state were granted 7,000 puras of land and 20 attendents, the pupil-pundits or sub-ordinate pundits were also allowed 6 puras of land and 2 paiks each. There were two officers Chirang Phukan and Bar Chiring Barua, who had the charge of the subjects like teaching of Ahom language, promotion of study of history and writing of books in Ahom and their preservation etc. After learning the Ahom alphabets, the students had to learn grammar and commit the same to memory and study of Ahom religious lore and history. Sons of almost all respectable Ahoms and particulary of Deodhais, Mohans and Bailungs of the Ahom priestly class used to be trained in the Ahom language.

2.3.3.2 Indigenous educational institutions in Assam:

It is obvious that there were indigenous institutions for education in Assam like pathsalas, Tols and Satras for Hindus and Moktabs and Madrassahs for Muslims. The great Vaisnavite apostle Shankardeva received his education at Tol maintained by Brahman Guru Mahendra Kandali. The kings were keenly interested in the spread of learning and education and made large grants for that purpose. The Chinese Pilgrim Hiuen Tsang remarked that the King Bhaskar Burman of

Kamrupa, was fond of learning and "Men of high talents" visited his kingdom from different parts of the world. Whatever it might be, Assam occupied as the centre of learning in the past days.

2.3.3.3 Aim of education during Ancient period:

The main aim of ancient education system in Assam was individual attainment, state and social service and the realization of higher ends in life. Moral and spiritual aspects of life greatly shaped in type of education. It was perhaps culture and not literacy was the highest aim of India and Assam. The common objective of education was cultural rather than utilitarian. Ahoms who invaded Assam and ruled for about 600 years since 1228 A.D. were patriotic and enthusiastic for promotion of learning and culture.

2.3.3.4 Religious influence leading to education in Assam:

Due to the influence of Vaisnava education system in the fifteenth and sixteenth century, the great religious leader Shankardeva and Madhavdeva resorted their rightful place in the main body of Hindu culture in Assam. It was through their catholicity in outlook and universalism in the spread of Vaisnava literature and education, destroyed the artificial barrier of people, races, classes and gave Assam a common platform of culture and education.

The Satras which were established by Shankardeva and Madhavdeva became the main centre of education. In these satras, education was imparted through the Vaisnava philosophy and idealogy which were propogated through the religion, literature, dance, music, dramatic performance, paintings etc. Besides, the study of Sanskrit, Dr. S.N.Sarma remarks ---" The Cultural history of Assam in respect of fine arts, crafts, educational learning since the beginning of the sixteenth century till the advent of the British largely developed centering round the Vaisnava movement, which in turn, found expression through the satra institutions."

The Namghars (Prayer Hall) established by Shankardeva in the later period of the fifteenth century also played an important role in spreading education among the Hindus in Assam. The Namghars were the common platforms to hold discussion disputations of any kind besides prayer, which still had its impact on the

lifes of every Assamese Hindu people. Moreover, the Masjids of Muslims also played an important role in spreading education among the Muslim people. The different social taboos, customs, fairs and festivals, Bhaonas had contributed in spreading informal but useful education among the people of Assam in general in the Pre-British period. It may be mentioned here that mass education in its proper sense was made wide spread throughout Assam by the profile writers of the Pre-Vaisnava and Vaisnava periods.

2.3.3.5 Curriculum in Ancient Assam:

The Curriculum of ancient education system of Assam included the four Vedas, the four Upvedas such as Ayurveda, Dhanurveda, Gandharva Vidya and Tantras, the six vedangas, Itihas, Puranas, Smritis, Arthasatra, Kamasastra, Silpasastra, Alankara Kavya etc. Besides, Jyotisa vidya, the Science which measured time by studying the movements of the planets and stars, was extensively studied.

2.3.3.6 Materials used for writing during Ancient period:

The existing manuscripts of present period may give us some idea of the writing materials used. These consisted of inner bark of the Bhurjapatra, aloe wood, and sancipat (Aquilaria agallocha), tulapot (Leaves made of cotton cloth), wooden board, plam leaves and animal substances etc. The use of ink was common. Ink was usually prepared from silikha (Terminalia Cibizina) and bull's urine. The use of sap of earthworms for invisible writing is also found. Pen and pencil were made of bamboo, wood, reed, animal horn, metal chalk etc and were known commonly as lekhani or varnaka. At present, they are known as "kalama."

2.3.3.7 Administration of education system during Ancient period:

It may be observed that Assam in the ancient period particularly during the reign of Barman dynasty might have a system of education but it was not clearly mentioned. However, education during the Ahom period got a little organized form but it was far from satisfaction, because in spite of having administration and organization of the schools, a large section of the population remained illiterate and uneducated. The system of education was conducted under the patronage of Royal families, Brahman Scholars, religious saints and by some

enlightened individuals at their own initiatives. As there was no state system of education, the administrative set up of the schools, established by different sections were different. Generally, the Pundits (teachers) who engaged in the task of teaching were held in the key position of educational administration. There was no superior forces except the teachers who could be solely responsible for organization, control and management. That is both instruction and administration of education was conducted by the teachers. But at present, instruction and administration have been separated. In the elementary level, a teacher is nothing to do except imparting lesions to the pupils. Further there was no system of financial assistance to the schools as it is today. But the Royal families gave assistance to the teachers for the education of their children. In other cases, the teachers concerned had to manage the schools out of their own capacity, either by collecting gifts from the scholars or by whatever means possible.

2.3.4 Primary education in Assam during Missionary period:

Before the "Treaty of Yangdaboo" in 1826 Assam was an independent province and after the treaty, it (Assam) was annexed with the British Empire and came under the control of the East India Company's rule. The missionaries came very lately to Assam in comparison of the other Presidencies of Madras, Bombay and Calcutta of India and they deserved credit for promoting the cause of educational process and progress in Assam. Among the unofficial enterprises, the contribution made by the Christian missionaries to the vernacular schools in Assam, the tribal areas in particular, though inspired by the zeal of spreading Gospel, was indeed unparalleled.

2.3.4.1 Educational contributions of Baptist missionaries in Assam:

The missionaries learnt the language of the local people and familiarized with the customs, traditions and culture of the regions. They did social works in various fields where they won the confidence of the people and their self-sacrificing spirit led them to travel to the remote areas for the purpose of establishing mission societies. On the representation of David Scott, a branch of Serampore missionary was set up at Guwahati in 1829, under James Rae, a native of Dumfrice. The American Baptist Mission Foreign Society sent a mission under

Reverends – Nathan Brown and Oliver Cutter to Assam and reached Sadiya on 23rd March, 1836.

After three months of their stay at Sadiya, they started their work of establishing schools. But the drowning of Rev. Thomas in 1837 while travelling by boat on route to Sadiya and the sufferings of other missionaries due to the unhealthy climate and natural discomfort, they returned to Sibsagar from Sadiya and by 1844, they set up as many as 14 schools in Sibsagar district.

2.3.4.2 Educational contributions of Welsh missionaries in Assam:

Twelve schools were established by Welsh missionary during 1853-63 in Khasi-Jaitia, Garo and Naga Hills, also in Nagaon and in Kachari mahal of Darrang district. In 1840, Brownson taught the Nagas and the Namsangs, the Bible as well improved methods of manufacturing tea and salt. By 1845, the Baptist missionaries at Nagaon founded an orphanage, started schools and hospitals. They openly taught the Bible in their schools, but espoused the cause of the vernacular of the people and made invaluable contributions to the Assamese language as literature.

2.3.4.3 Indigenous education system and Missionary schools during the East India Company in Assam:

With the exception of the missionary institutions and the few indigenous schools sponsored by the public where teachers were mostly Assamese, both Hindu and Muslims, instruction was imparted in all Government village schools in Bengali language on elementary reading, writing and arithmetic, where it was the Assamese language or the mother tongue of the pupils in the missionary schools. It is interesting to note that Bengali language was used as the medium of instruction in all primary schools started by East India Company since 1836 with the powerful influence of Bengali intelligentia those who came with the East India Company. But with the pioneering effort of missionaries like George Campbell, Lieutenant Bogle, James Matthie etc. who emphasized Assamese as the medium of instruction in all schools of Brahmaputra valley in 1837. Assamese language was used as the medium of instruction and also used as the language of the court at the lower level. It was an ardous task for the missionaries to impart institutions to the pupils due to

the dearth of available textbooks. Furthermore, it was a time when both pupils and parents were indifferent to education, the missionaries being the pioneers in the field of modern education in Assam wrote books on diverse subjects.

The Serampore Trio- Carey, Marshman and Ward in collaboration with an Assamese scholar Atma Ram Sarma translated the holy Bible into Assamese and published in 1813. Bronson Brown and Nidhai Levi Farwell, the Trio, laid the foundation of the Christian Assamese literature.

Bronson's monumental work "Anglo-Assamese Dictionary" with 1400 words was published from the Baptist mission Press, Sibsagar in 1867 the earliest of its kind till 1900. Brown translated the "New Testament" into Assamese and published his Grammartical notes in the Assamese language (1849) and collected a goodnumber of Assamese manuscript. He also wrote many books on History, Arithmatic and Geography. Nedhi Levi was credited with a historical work, a number of story books. Prior to that, in 1846, the branch of Sibsagar missionary published the first Assamese Newspaper "The Arunodoi" which became the powerful vehicle of Assamese language. In 1839, William Robinson another missionary wrote the first Assamese grammar.

Thus, the missionaries developed the modern Assamese prose literature. Disseminating western thought and learning the "Arunodoi" inspired the younger generation and paved the way for an intellectual awakening. Thus one can easily conclude that the Christian missionaries did the excellent work in Assam in the field of elementary education and covered the hill areas with a network of elementary schools. The schools were better staffed as better equipped than many of our existing schools. The contribution of the missionaries and a few others both Assamese and non-Assamese, backed by the untiring efforts of the benevolent commissioner Major Genkins prepared the ground and sowed the seeds in the field of education, which germinated and born fruits early in the next century in Assam.

The progress of education was too distressingly slow, in fact, no serious attempts was made at any level to introduce a liberal system of education. The indigenous system of education, however continued to exist even after the period of the Burmese invasion, the courses of study in those institutions were of stereotyped nature – calculated to impart lesions for leading a pious and religious

life and not so much for any useful purpose of widening the mental horizon. Assam, since long although had indigenous system of imparting elementary education through formal institutions like Tols, Madrassahs and pathsalas, before the advent of the East India Company and Christian missionaries because of the curtain of ignorance and superstitious beliefs which pervaded almost all classes.

2.3.5. Establishment of schools during the East India Company in Assam:

Assam came under the East India Company's rule after the "Treaty of Yangdaboo" in 1826, David Scott, an agent to the Governor General for whole Eastern Frontier, flavoured the encouragement of Oriental learning by improving the indigenous system of education in Assam. The educational institutions which survived after the Burmese ravages, continued to be controlled by the priestly class who had also exercised considerable influence over the masses. David Scott realized that the introduction of any scheme for secular education affecting their monopoly would be productive of great dissatisfaction and resentment which might be prejudicial to the interests of the British Government. He, therefore, left the indigenous system undisturbed and continued to make grants of land to the institutions like the former Government. In early 1826, with the approval of the government of Bengal, David Scott made additional grants for the establishment of several indigenous schools in upper and lower Assam. Accordingly, in September 1826, eleven schools were established in the lower and upper Assam. Of these, two schools were at Nineduars and one in each station of Guwahati, Nilachal, Patte Darrang, Hazo, Bajali, Silah, Biswanath, Nowgaon and Desh Darrang. Within a few months, the number of schools rose to sixteen by the addition of schools at Guwahati, Behajnee, Dharampore, Pattee Darrang and Boreegoge. In1813, Adam White, the Collector of Guwahati, rewarded several students of these institutions by placing them in Government services. In the same year, in collaboration with James Rae, a member of Serampore Missionary Society, Adam White started an elementary English school at Guwahati.

However, the scheme of imparting useful education to the Assamese youths received serious consideration of Captain Francis Jenkin's in early 1834. He drew up a scheme of education. It envisaged the educating of a few Assamese boys in Calcutta, for he felt, the acquisitions they would bring back with them

would attract the upper classes of society and thus, the progress of education would be ensured. Jenkins pointed out to the Government of Bengal that in a backward state like Assam, instruction should be concern of the Government. For the promotion of education in a Resolution of the Governor- General in Council on 17 July, 1823, a General Committee of Public Instruction was constituted for the Presidency of Bengal. Before long, a controversy arose amongst the members of the committee as to the nature, medium and agency for the spread of education and as regards the agency it was resolved and recommended that the state should take direct responsibility of educating people. Consequently, in June, 1835, the Committee recommended the establishment of an English School at Guwahati and Mr. Singer was appointed its Headmaster.

In the meantime, Lieutenant Bogle, Collector of Kamrup emphasized the importance of vernacular education in Assam. In 1837, he pointed out to the Government of Bengal that English education would help only a few intelligent learners whereas to the great majority, it would be a mere waste of time to acquire even the rudimentary knowledge of it. Therefore, he urged on the introduction of vernacular education by which all kind of information would be easily attained by the people at large. Moreover, he added that there would be also a desire for English education that would act as the proper channel of all higher branches of knowledge. As a result, the supreme Government sanctioned in 1837, an amount of rupees Sixty four for the establishment of vernacular schools in Darrang, Chatgaree and Tezpur.

2.3.5.1 Primary schools maintained by different agencies in Assam:

Besides the schools managed by the local bodies, there were other primary schools maintained by different agencies which were given below:

- **Departmental primary schools:** Under the recommendations of the commission, these schools were established and maintained by the state in the Khasi and Jaitia hills, Naga hills, Garo hills, Mikir hills and in the backward places in the Darrang district. Some pathsalas attached to Normal schools were maintained in Kamrup, Sibsagar and Tezpur for practice-teaching work.

- **Aided schools:** These were maintained by the missionaries who received lump sum grants from the Education Department. Other schools managed by private bodies received result-grants from local bodies. Up to 1917, these schools were known as combined schools as they were supported by a very small amount for fixed payments to teachers and certain specified rewards earned under the reward rules. The payment-by-result was introduced in Assam in a modified form, and it was abolished in 1917.

- **Unaided schools:** These were schools started by individuals or private bodies without any aid from local bodies. Some of these schools followed the prescribed curriculum and courses of studies of the Department and upgraded to the aided list when they applied for grants.

- **Indigenous schools:** These were schools conducted by the local people and they taught through 'native method.' Indian Education Commission strongly recommended the improvement and expansion of these types of schools by extending the payment-by-result system to them. But in effect these schools were neglected completely and so they were in a decayed condition.

There were two grades of primary schools – upper and lower. The upper primary schools had seven classes while the lower primary ones consisted of five classes. Extension of the primary course by two years without giving any complete course came to be considered a 'superfluity' and therefore, the upper primary type of schools disappeared by 1915. Preference was given to the establishment of middle vernacular (M.V.) schools. Management of primary schools by different agencies naturally led to partnership. The government schools or schools run by the local bodies enjoyed more facilities and commanded a greater amount of finance than the aided or unaided schools could ever hope to do. Most of the aided or privately managed schools did not have their own buildings or furniture.

From the survey report, it was known that the progress of primary education was not of that extent as it ought to have attained. Resolution, Acts and programmes had been there, what was lacking was any sustained attempt to implement the accepted provisions. The Government failed miserably in the matter of providing compulsory

primary education. When the will was not there to educate the masses, any Act failed to bring about the desired changes in the field of primary education.

2.3.5.2 Expansion of education in different districts of Assam:

But it was the last credit of James Matthie, a Collector of Kamrup in 1838, strived to spread mass education in the rural areas. Firstly, Matthie opened a branch of Anglo-Vernacular school at Dharampur, the most central and convenient place situated on the North Bank of the river Brahmaputra and secondly, several vernacular schools in the mofussil areas. In his letter of 13 February 1838, to the Commissioner of Assam, Matthie proposed the immediate establishment of this school particularly for the benefit of the children of the areas remote from the Sadar station. At the same time, he wanted to establish twenty-one Mofussil vernacular schools for the instruction of the masses through the medium of both Assamese and Bengali in the principal paragonas of Kamrup at a cost of rupees Seventy-nine per month. In August, 1838, the Commissioner established twenty-one village schools in the district of Kamrup. Within a year the number rose to twenty-two with an enrolment of 795 in regular attendance. The growing demand for such institutions compelled the Government to sanction two more schools in Lukimpore, three in Darrang and four in Nagaon. With five years, the number of schools in active operation increased to twelve in Nagaon with 458 pupils, in Darrang five with 121, in Kamrup twenty two with 1102 scholars, exclusive of Gauhati schools. The Resolution of 11 October, 1844 of Lord Hardinge, Governor-General of India, laid down that even in the selection of persons to fill the lowest offices under the Government due consideration should be given to those who could read and write. In June 1847, eight Government village schools were sanctioned in Goalpara, six in Darrang, three in Lukimpore, two in Kamrup and two in Nagaon. Thus, the total number of schools, including the vernacular and branch schools increased to seventy- one in 1846-47 as against fifty in 1843-44. But although the Resolution did not indicate clearly whether men with English education were to be preferred for the Government employment, the effect was in favour of the English, educated people in other parts of India. In Assam, the Resolution had its effect more in the expansion of the vernacular than in that of English education.The Local Authorities thought that in the backward state of

Assam, it was not possible to improve English education and hence they resolved that vernacular schools should only be instrument for the promotion of education in Assam. The immediate effect of the Hardinge's Resolution was the creation of a post of Inspector of Schools whose main duties were to recommend the establishment of additional schools, where required, to persuade the inhabitants to send their children to the schools and to carry out the view of Government in diffusing throughout the state a sound and gradually improving system of education in the indigenous language. In 1852, there rose to seventy-four with an enrolment of four thousand twenty five pupils receiving instruction. Of these, twenty-six were in Kamrup, ten Goalpara, five in Lukimpore, thirteen in Nagaon and nine in each of the districts of Sibsagar and Darrang.

2.3.5.3 Reflection of Wood's Despatch (1854) in Assam:

The Wood's Despatch (1854) through its policy of giving grant-in-aids to private schools greatly helped the development of primary education in Assam. A grant of one rupee was paid to every ten boys attending the schools. As a result of all these, the number of schools and pupils increased considerably. According the Report of Director of Public Instruction in Bengal, there were 750 schools in Sibsagar and 500 schools in Kamrup district at that time.

The East India Company amalgamated Assam with the Presidency of Bengal. Since Bengal came under the East India Company much earlier and since the "People of the higher class" in Bengal took advantage of the English language earlier, most of the jobs of the Company in Assam went to the Bengalees. Through the efforts of these Officers, Bengali continued to be the language of the Court as well as the medium of instruction in the schools till March, 1873. The Christian Missionaries also started certain schools in Assam, in which the instructions were imparted through the Assamese language or the mother tongue of the pupils.

2.3.5.4 Hunter Commission's Report (1882) in Assam:

In 1882, the Hunter Commission recommended the transfer of primary schools to the local authorities and introduced the system of "Payment by Result," while giving grants to schools. During 1892-1897, the Government and the Board schools in Assam increased, but by a small number. In Garo hills, several schools

were opened and many misssionary schools, which were meant for the backward people, mainly aboriginals received monetary help out of the provincial revenues of the state.

2.3.5.5 Lord Curzon's Policy (1904) in Assam:

The Primary education in Assam received a great impetus and made considerable progress as a result of the official policy of Lord Curzon of 1904 and the Government of India Act of 1919, when the education was transferred to the Indian Ministers. The Government of Assam felt, at that time, the need of making primary education compulsory in the state through the Local Boards and the Municipalities in gradual stages.

2.3.5.6 Assam Govt.'s initiation on Education in created province:

After the creation of Assam as a separate province in 1914, the Government of Assam felt the need of defining the duties of the Local Boards in respect of education once more. An Act of 1915 empowered the Local Boards to establish, to maintain and manage all the primary and M.V. schools, they were to appoint all teachers, bear the cost of construction and repair of buildings, and arrange for giving grants to primary schools. The main purpose of this Act was to convert all aided primary schools into Local Boards because the aided schools with meager facilities failed to provide good primary education. As the Act of 1915 did not cover the Municipalities which independently spent little on education, another Act was passed in 1923. This Act made each Municipality responsible for the establishment, maintenance and management within its area. These two Acts made the Local Bodies directly responsible for the spread of primary education in Assam.

2.3.5.7 Compulsory Primary Education Act, 1926:

Within three years of the Municipality Act, the famous Compulsory Primary Education Act was passed in 1926. The main provisions of this Act could be summarized in the following way:

(i) Any local authority may resolve, by a majority of two- thirds of the members present, at a meeting specially convened for the purpose, that

this Act shall be applied to the whole or any part of the area within its jurisdiction or the children of either sex or both sexes resident in the area within its jurisdiction, with or without the exemption of any particular community or communities.

(ii) The local authority shall at the same time submit to the Government a statement showing all particulars relating to the proposal including details concerning the total existing expenditure incurred by the local authority and by the provincial Government on primary education in the area in question, and the additional cost to be incurred for the introduction of compulsory education.

(iii) The local authority of any area which decided to introduce primary education under the Act should provide one-third of the educational cost while two-thirds would be borne by the provincial Government if the scheme were sanctioned. An educational cess was to be levied for the purpose.

(iv) On the failure of a local authority to submit a scheme for introducing compulsory education within a reasonable time, the Government might, after due enquiry, appoint a person or persons to prepare the scheme or to bring it into operation or to keep it in operation as the case might be.

(v) The Government could exempt children of either sex or both sexes of particular community or class in any part of compulsion from the operation of the Act.

(vi) No tution fee was to be charged from any pupil of recognized primary schools maintained or aided by the local authority.

(vii) The children of necessitous guardians, too poor to buy books and writing materials might, if the education committee so recommended, be provided with the use of necessary books and writing materials free of cost by the local authority.

(viii) The local authority and the Education Committee concerned should be responsible for the enforcement of the provisions of the Act; they should provide for all such facilities of accommodation, equipment and staff as might be considered necessary by the Director of Public Instruction.

The above provisions coupled with the power conferred on the bodies to proceed with the prosecution of parents failing to send children to schools, brought great hopes for the expansion of primary education. But those that enthusiastic they should have been. They accepted the introduction of primary education on a compulsory basis as a matter of routine work and did not come forward with the necessary vigour in action to fulfill the provisions of the Act. The Result was that the Act failed to be implemented due to the attitude of the local bodies.

Despite the increase, the progress of primary education was not satisfactory and the knowledge that was imparted in those schools was so disappointing that it was difficult to find even one in two hundred capable of reading and writing. The primary cause of slow progress was the continuance of Bengali as the medium of instruction, to the majority of the people Bengali was a language different from their own and not intelligible and as such, parents found little interest in sending their children to such schools. So, the adoption of regional language as the medium of instruction became imperative. In 1872, George Campbell, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, made Assamese as the medium of instruction in all the schools of the valley of Brahmaputra. Within a few years of the introduction of the new measure, the number of primary schools or the pathsalas rose to 355 with 9,820 pupils as against 204 with 4,395 pupils in 1871-72. At the end of 1874, the primary schools numbered 481 with 11,338 pupils. Even the number of schools under regular inspection rose to 1,351 with 38,182 pupils as observed in 1882. A new set of schools, namely, lower vernacular schools came into existence in 1882, which were intermediaries between the existing pathsalas and middle schools. Seventy-two schools of this type with an average of fourty pupils in each were established in both the valleys under the jurisdiction of the Commissioner of Assam.

This rapid growth in the number of schools and scholars resulted in social regeneration of the people of the valleys. Within a few years, the pupils were able to read and write letters, to survey the land they cultivated and to compute the rent they had to pay for it. The knowledge of this nature was very useful to the people in the interior in their daily transactions, and it was this usefulness that made them appreciate the system of education newly introduced.

2.4 Development of primary education in Assam (Post-independence period):

The administrative control of primary schools was partly in the hands of the Government and partly in the Local body during the period from 1942-47. There had been a steady increase of the number of schools due to policy of expansion followed by the Government. The Government sanctioned a large sum of money for the purpose of taking over a large number of schools. Compulsory primary education, however, was not introduced in any area in the province. However, attempts had been made for compulsory primary education in Assam through several educational policies which are as follows:

2.4.1 Assam Primary Education Act, 1947:

Soon after independence in 1947, another Primary Education Act was passed to introduce free and compulsory primary education in Assam. The name of the Act was Assam Primary Education Act, 1947. According to this Act, compulsory primary education was enforced in some selected areas only. This Act was passed as a result of popular enthusiasm from the people as free citizens of independent India. The Chief features of this Act were almost similar to the Act which was passed long ago in 1926. But in some cases, there were some differences. In the Act of 1947 mentioned that "A state Primary Education Board' was organized and in the district level some "District Primary Education Boards" were organized to conduct and control the primary schools in their respective jurisdiction. But unfortunately due to some reasons, the Act could not be implemented.

So far as the progress of elementary education was concerned, there was 742 M.E. and M.V. schools with 4,65,113 pupils and 7,547 primary schools with 4,46,972 pupils for general education, while the number of primary schools in 1946-47 was 1,72,663 in India.

So, the Government of Assam in 1954 accepted Basic education as its future pattern of elementary education and to make better provisions for the development, expansion and control of Basic education and to introduce universal, free and compulsory Basic education in gradual stages. So, the Government of Assam passed the Assam Basic Education Act in 1954.

2.4.2 Assam Basic Education Act, 1954:

After independence, movement for Basic education sponsored and initiated by Mahatma Gandhi and given formal organizational shape by Zakir Hussain Committee in 1937, which provided for integrated education through self activity of some productive and purposeful craftwork, started in many provinces of India. The father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi gave Basic education to India as the last and most precious of life. The wave of Basic education had swept the frontier province of Assam also. The Govt. of Assam adopted as the future pattern of elementary education like other provinces of India. Subsequently in 1954 Basic Education Act was passed with some important provisions to make education compulsory, universal and free for the children between 6-14 years of age. The distinctive element of Basic education was to learn purposeful and productive activity by learning by doing method through the medium of mother tongue of the pupils.

The outstanding feature of the Basic Education Act of 1954 is the creation of two separate Boards with their distinctive funds and sanctions for smooth administration. They are – (a) State Advisory Board of Basic education and (b) District or Regional Board for Basic education.

A State Board of Basic education should be constituted to advise the Govt. in making the Minister of education as the President and Director of Public Instruction as the vice president. The Board shall advise the Govt. in the matter of giving grants to schools, control and management, recruitment and service condition of teachers, selection of textbooks and training of teachers. The Board will maintain a fund under the charge of Director of Public Instruction.

In each District, under the administrative area of Deputy Inspector, a Regional Board of Basic education will be constituted, where the Deputy Inspector will be the Secretary of the Board. He will maintain and administer a fund for the same.

All the Govt. Middle Vernacular schools, all Middle Vernacular schools managed by private authorities, all Primary and Basic schools and all Private Elementary schools were included under Basic Education Act of 1954.

The Board will be formed from the representatives of the Local Board, Municipality, Panchayat and teachers of schools. The Board will have to perform the following functions:

(a) Creation of new schools
(b) Recognition, control, redistribution, expansion, amalgamation of Basic schools
(c) Preservation of old schools
(d) To provide material conditions
(e) To provide teachers
(f) Inspection of health of the pupils
(g) Arrangement for selling the school products

As an effect of this Act of 1954, steps were taken by the Govt. of Assam to cover all the L.P. and M.V. schools into Junior Basic and Senior Basic schools respectively by a gradual process. The Primary Teachers' Training Centres had also been converted into Junior Basic Training Centres. Arrangements were also made for the training of Senior Basic School teachers.

In 1944, the total number of Basic schools in India was 261. After five years in 1951, at the commencement of First Five Year Plan, the number of Junior and Senior Basic schools in the country was 33,379 and 388 respectively and it rose to 1, 53, 000 and 16,700 in 1965-66. Because, many primary schools were converted into Junior Basic Schools and Middle Vernacular schools into Senior Basic schools. The number of schools converted into the Basic pattern till March, 1960, was 2388 as against 616 at the end of the First Five Year Plan. Along with it, 27 Basic Training Centres were established in different parts of the state in order to train the primary school teachers in the Basic system of education. Besides, an Orientation Programme with proper syllabus and reading materials for untrained teachers was also undertaken in order to bridge the gap between the tradition of Elementary education and the Basic education system. The programme was to continue till all Elementary schools of Assam became Basic schools. But for various reasons, the Basic scheme of education was not very successful in Assam as in other parts of the country. The Act of 1954 failed to make primary education compulsory in the state.It was a fact that before converting all schools into Basic

schools, the people of India had lost faith in it. People had developed an idea that Basic education was meant only for the weaker section of the community, although it was a wrong conception. So, not to speak of making Basic education compulsory, but it became difficult even to preserve the identity of it.

2.4.3 Assam Elementary Education Act, 1962:

In 1962, another Act, known as the Assam Elementary Education Act, was passed. This Act seeks "to make provision for management and control of elementary education and to provide for free and compulsory elementary education in Assam in gradual stages." It extends to the whole of Assam except the Autonomous Districts. The Elementary Education Act, 1962, will repeat the Basic Education Act of 1954 and will control all institutions, basic or non-basic.

(i) As per this Act, the Government is empowered to constitute a State Board of elementary education to advise the Government for the development, expansion, management and control of elementary education in the state. The following are the members of this Board who will hold office for five years:

- The Minister of Education –Chairman
- The Deputy Minister of Education –Vice Chairman
- The Joint D.P.I. or the Officer –in-Charge of elementary education who shall be the ex-officio secretary of the Board
- The A.D.P.I. in charge of woman's education
- One Inspector of Schools, nominated by the State Government
- One Principal of a Basic Training Centre to be nominated

(ii) The main functions of the State Board of elementary education will be the following:

- To lay down the principles for the allocation of grants to local authorities.
- To lay down the procedure for recruitment of teachers and their condition of service.
- To frame rules for the recognition, expansion and opening of new schools.
- To perform any other Act necessary for the purposes.

(iii) A fund called "Elementary Education Fund" shall be created and maintained by the State Board for defraying the expenses incurred in connection with elementary education

(iv) As soon as the Act comes into operation, the management of elementary education shall be vested in the local authority of the area.

(v) The Autonomous Hill Districts shall have the power to establish and maintain schools in their areas.

(vi) All Government M.V. schools, all Senior Govt. Basic schools, all M.V.schools, Middle Madrassahs, all Primary schools and Senior Basic schools maintained or aided by the Govt. shall be recognized as Elementary schools under this Act.

(vii) No fee shall be charged for attending a recognized school which is under the State Board of local authority.

(viii) The Assistant Secretary may appoint the Attendance Authority for the purpose of enforcing attendance in schools.

(ix) The State Govt. shall determine the curriculum and duration, standard and the course of instructions to be imparted in the elementary schools.

2.4.4 Assam Primary Education Act, 1974

After the Assam Elementary Education Act of 1962, the Govt. of Assam gave stress on the compulsory primary education and the number of elementary schools has been increasing day by day. Another primary education Act was passed in 1974 in Assam. It is expected that all children of the age groups of 6-10 years will receive free and compulsory primary education in gradual stages within the period of 1974-1979. The Govt. of Assam decided to establish one primary school in every 1.5 km. The State Govt. prepared a plan for the universalization of elementary education during the Janata Govt. was in power. The policy of the Govt. was changed from time to time and the local public established some schools in different places to meet the local needs. Some of them were recognized by the Govt., others remain static. There were some primary schools of private management. The standard of education of the provincialised of primary schools

and Govt. primary schools was declining. So the conscious guardians had got admitted their sons and daughters in privately managed schools. The Govt. of Assam implemented the "Operation Blackboard Scheme" of New Educational Policy, 1986 to make the primary education more effective and fruitful for the new generation.

2.4.5 Operation Blackboard Scheme in Assam:

The National Policy on Education, 1986 and Programme of Action had recommended a number of schemes for the quantitative and qualitative improvement of primary education. One of these had been termed as "Operation Blackboard Scheme" which aimed at substantial improvement in facilities in primary education. Operation Blackboard laid down the minimum level of facilities to be provided in all elementary schools which had so far been established. It had also prescribed the minimum level of funding for all primary schools to be opened in future. The use of the word "Operation" indicated that there was an urgency in this programme. Its goals were clear and well-defined and the Govt. was determined to achieve these goals with the cooperation of the people within a pre-determined time frame.

Components of the Scheme: There were three components of Operation Blackboard Scheme, viz.

(i) Provision of at least two reasonably large rooms that are usable in all weathers, with a deep veranda along with separate toilet facilities for boys and girls.

(ii) Provision of at least two teachers, as far as possible, one of them a woman, in every primary school.

(iii) Provision of essential teaching and learning materials including Blackboards, maps, charts, toys and equipment for work experience.

Implementation of the Scheme:

As it was not possible to provide these facilities to all schools at the same time, owing to financial constraints, the implementation had been phased out over a period of three years. During 1987-88 only 22% of the Community development, Blocks and Municipal areas in all states / union territories were covered, another

30% Blocks / Municipal areas to be covered during 1988-89, and the remaining 50% during 1989-90. The coverage of Operation of Blackboard had to extend to all primary schools run by the Government, local bodies and Panchayati Raj institutions. Since the inception of this scheme in 1987; 103,364 teachers (of whom 48% were women) had been recruited and 115,091 class rooms had been constructed. The scope of OBB was to be expanded under the Eighth plan. A third teacher and a third classroom was to be provided to primary and upper primary schools where enrolment level came up to sufficient levels.

2.4.6 District Primary Education Programme (DPEP):

It was in May, 1986, the Parliament adopted the National Policy on Education (NPE). In August, 1986, after two months a detailed programme of Action (POA) for the implementation of the National Policy was approved by the Government. The Programme of Action (POA) for implementing the National Policy on Education had rightly observed, NPE gave an unqualified priority to universalization of elementary education (UEE). The thrust in elementary education emphasized universal enrolment and a substantial improvement in the quality of education. Since the time of the acceptance of the Constitution, the different measures and steps had been suggested and implemented to reach the target of the cent percent literacy. But, because of many constraints everytime the mission had been failing to reach the target.

After the formulation of the National Policy and Program me of Action, it was felt the necessity to increase the involvement of voluntary agencies and their contributions in the field of elementary education. Thus, efforts had been made and steps had also been taken to entrust responsibility for formal or non-formal education, of young people and adults to suitable voluntary agencies. For the organization of innovative and pace-setter programmes, their services had particularly been looked at. Thus, its satisfactory arrangement had been made for the involvement of all individuals and agencies for the achievement of educational goals.

DPEP was a centrally sponsored scheme which was launched in the country in the year 1993-94. This scheme was launched with a view to taking special responsibilities and playing an important role in the process of

universalization of primary education in the country. The scheme had been operated by the help of state level registered committees under the Govt. rules. The whole idea behind the DPEP had been to develop a replicable, sustainable and cost-affective programme of universalization of elementary education. Thus the main aims and objectives of the scheme were as follows:

- To reduce differences in enrolment, drop-out and learning achievement in primary level among gender and social groups to less than five percent.
- To reduce overall drop-out rates for all students to less than 10 %.
- To increase the average primary learning achievement by 25%.
- To provide access to all children of primary education class (I to iv /v) wherever its equivalent non-formal education as per the national norms.

The goal of "Education For All" (EFA) had been receiving priority at the International level and had been regarded as an essential pre-condition for the human development. Education had been included in the Child Rights under Right for Development. Providing Basic education to all children had been emphasized in the United Nation Resolutions adopted at Jomtien, Dakar and other places. For the last five decades, universalization of elementary education (UEE) and the fulfillment of the mandate of Indian Constitution had been attracting the attention of educational planners, administrators, educationist and the nation as a whole.

In accordance with the Constitutional commitment to ensure free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14 years, provision of universal elementary education had been a silent feature of National Policy since independence. This resolve had been spelt out emphatically in the National Policy Education and the Programme of Action (POA), 1992. A number of Programmes were pursued in pursuance of the emphasis embodied in the National Policy of Education and Programme of Action. These included the scheme of Operation Blackboard (OB), Non-formal education , Teacher education, Mohila Samakha, State Specific Basic Education Projects like the Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project, Bihar Education Project, Lok Jumbish in Rajasthan, Education For All Project in Uttar Pradesh, Siksha Karmi Project in Rajasthan, National Programme for Nutritional Support to Primary education, District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) etc.

2.4.7 Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) in 2000:

According to the National Committee's Report on UEE in the Mission mode, 1999, UEE should be pursued in a mission mode with a holistic and convergent approach with emphasis on preparation of District Elementary Education Plans for UEE. It supported the fundamental right of education and desired quick action towards operationalization of the mission mode towards UEE.

Consequent to several efforts, India has 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 has exceeded 100 percent. Access to schools is no longer a major problem. At the primary stage, 94 percent of the country's rural population has schooling facilities within one kilometer and the upper primary stage, it is 84 percent.

Although the country has made impressive achievement in the elementary education sector, yet the flipside is that out of the 200 million children in the age group of 6-14 years, 59 million children are not attending schools. Of this 35 million are girls and 24million are boys. There are problems relating to drop out rate, low levels of learning achievement and low participation of girls, SC, ST and other disadvantaged groups. There are still at least one lakh habitations in the country without schooling facilities within one kilometre. Coupled with it are 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 is yet to achieve the elusive goal of UEE, which means 100 percent enrolment and retention of children with schooling facilities in all habitations. It is to fill this gap that the Govt. has launched the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA).

The Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (The Education for All movement, sometimes referred to as "each one teach one") is a flagship programme of the Government of India for achievement of universalization of elementary education in a time bound

manner, as mandated by the 86th amendment of the Constitution of India making free and compulsory education to children of age group of 6-14 years (estimated to be 205 million in number in 2001) a fundamental right. The Programme aims to achieve the goal of universalization of elementary education of satisfactory quality by 2010. The National Mission of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan is constituted taking the Prime Minister as the Chairperson. Until now, at least in 512 districts of the country, the first phase of works of the Abhiyan has been completed.

Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a holistic and convergent programme targeting both primary and upper primary stages of education with the main focus on providing quality basic education within a clear time frame. It aims at providing access to schooling to all children in the age group of 6-14 years and ensuring their completion of five years of primary schooling and eight years of elementary education of satisfactory quality respectively by 2007 and 2010. The main features of the SSA include : Sustainable and long term financial partnership between the Centre and States, institutional reforms to improve delivery systems, Community partnership in all aspects of the programme, bottom-top approach to planning , education of special focus groups and active involvement of professional institutions at various levels. The unrealized goal of providing quality elementary education to all children upto the age of 14 years, which is a Constitutional mandate and as fundamental right now, prompted educational planners to design and implement an effective and worthwhile educational programme to achieve this goal. Keeping in view the past experiences of micro and macro level educational interventions and to ensure equal opportunity to education in all districts, a comprehensive and community based Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) was launched in 2000.

The programme seeks to open new schools in those habitations which do not have schooling facilities and strengthen existing school infrastructure through the provision of additional classrooms, toilets, drinking water, maintenance grants and school improvement grants. Existing schools with inadequate teacher strength are provided with additional teachers , while the capacity of existing teachers is being strengthened by extensive training ; grants for developing teaching – learning materials and strengthening of academic support structure at a cluster , block and district level.

Thus, the Government must take care of every child and think about new schemes and policies for the universalization of primary education upto the age group of 6-14 years. This had resulted that the formulation and approval of the new scheme i.e. Sarva Siksha Abhiyan Programme.

2.4.7.1 Objectives of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan:

Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a scheme which was specially launched for the universalization of Primary education within a stipulated period of time. This Abhiyan is in operation with the help of Panchayati Raj Institutions, School Managing Authorities or Committees, Siksha Samities or Education Committees of villages and slum areas of town and cities. Tribal Autonomous Councils and other agencies are related with the spread of primary education. More or less by this Abhiyan, it has been tried to involve all men and women to continue to work through voluntary agencies in the process of universalization of primary education in the country. The objectives of the scheme are as follows:

- Provision of admission in primary education for those children whose age group are within 6-14 years by the help of Education Gaurantee Schemes (EGS), Alternative Schooling Campus to return to schools etc. within2003.
- All children complete five years of primary schooling by 2007.
- All children complete eight years of elementary schooling by 2010.
- Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on "Education for life."
- Bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010.
- Universal Retention by 2010.

2.4.7.2 Broad Strategies of Central to SSA Programme :

The goal of "Education For All (EFA)" has been receiving priority at the National and International levels and has been regarded as an essential precondition for the human development. Education has been included in the child Rights under Right for Development. Providing basic education to all children has been emphasized in the U N Resolutions adopted at Jomtien, Dakar and other

places. Universalization of elementary education and the fulfilment of the mandate of Indian Constitution have been attracting the attention of educational planners, administrators, educationists and the nation as a whole. The National Policy on Education,1986 and 1992 have given top priority to the achievement of goals of universal elementary education for the children of the age group of 6-14 years, which has been made fundamental right by the 86th Constitutional Amendment Act. In order to achieve this goal, some broad strategies about the programme, which are more operational, functional and adopted under the decentralized planning are very important and effective and some of these strategies are as follows:

- **Institutional Reforms:** As part of the SSA the Central and State Government will undertake reforms in order to improve efficiency of the delivery system.
- **Sustainable Financing:** This calls for a long term perspective on financial partnership between the Central and the State Governments.
- **Community ownership**: The programme calls for community ownership of school-based interventions through effective decentralization.
- **Institutional Capacity Building**: The SSA conceives a major capacity building role for national and state level institutions like NIEPA/NCERT/NCTE/SCERT/SIEMAT.
- **Improving Mainstream Educational Administration**: It calls for improvement of mainstream educational administration by institutional development, infusion of new approaches and by adoption of cost effective and efficient methods.
- **Community Based Monitoring with Full Transparency:** the Programme will have a community based monitoring system. The Educational Management Information system (EMIS) will correlate school level data with community-based information from micro planning.
- **Habitation as a Unit of planning**: The SSA works on a community based approach to planning with habitation as a unit of planning.
- **Accountability to community**: SSA envisages co-operation between teachers, parents and PRIs, as well as accountability and transparency.

- **Priority to Education of Girls**: Education of girls, especially those belonging to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, will be one of the principal concerns in Sarva Siksha Abhiyan.
- **Focus on Special Groups**: There will be a focus on the educational participation of children from SC/ST, religious and linguistic minorities, disadvantaged groups and the disabled children.
- **Pre-project phase**: SSA will commence throughout the country with a well planned pre-project phase that provides for a large number of interventions for capacity development to improve the delivery and monitoring system.
- **Trust on Quality**: SSA lays a special thrust on making education at the elementary level useful and relevant for children by improving the curriculum, child- centred activities and effective.

2.4.7.3 Sarva Siksha Abhiyan and Quality education:

Quality of education has always been a priority area and prominent agenda of various Committees and Commissions in education. Consistent efforts had been made in the past to improve the quality of elementary education. The National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 and Programme of Action, 1992 had recommended a number of measures for improvement in the quality of education through reforms in content and processes of classroom teaching, improvement in school facilities, provision of additional teachers, standardizing levels of learning at primary stage and so on. All these are reflected in Sarva Siksha Abhiyan Programme, which has been formulated and shaped as a new Programme in the year of 2000 under the Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) for making primary education universal for the age group of 6-14 years.

The term “quality” generally refers to high degree of goodness, worth or excellence in an “object” or system. Quality is an attribute of any object, structure or system that is relative in nature and cannot be measured in isolation.

Gandhiji expressed that true education is the one that draws out and stimulates the spiritual, intellectual and physical faculties of children.

According to Rabindra Nath Tagore, true education should realize at every step how our training and knowledge have organic connections with our surroundings.

Dr. Radhakrishnan felt that quality is that which gives the children a purpose in life. Education in his view should aim at perfection of the individuals.

2.4.7.4 Major contributors to quality elementary education:

The major factors that influence quality of education are as follows:

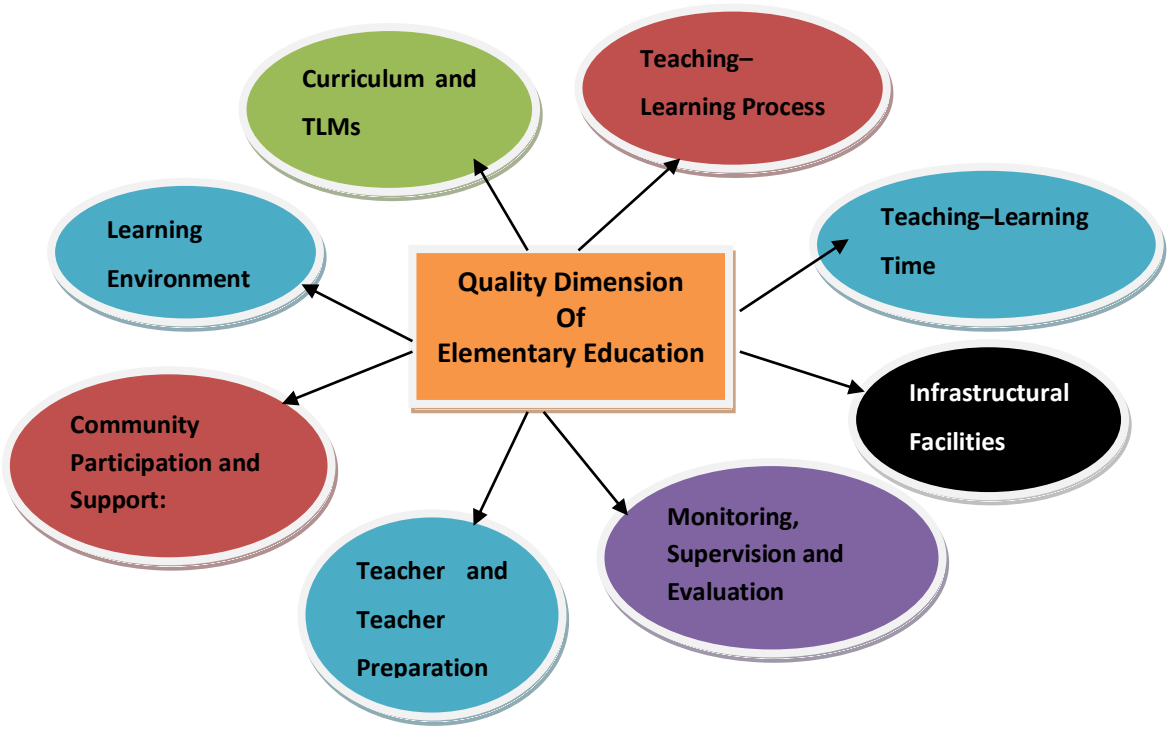

Figure 1: Factors influencing quality of education

(i) Infrastructure facilities:

Availability of basic minimum infrastructure facilities is a pre-requisite condition for child's learning. Some of the basic physical facilities are namely– classroom, toilets, drinking water, playground, usable blackboard, seating facilities for children etc. These facilities play an important role in improving teaching – learning environment and consequently overall school quality. There is a need to initiate comprehensive measures for equipping every primary and upper primary

school with basic minimum facilities. SSA framework prescribes financial norms for improvement of basic facilities in schools. SSA has a provision of Rs. 2000/- per annum as school grant for primary and upper primary schools for replacement of non – functional school equipment and Rs. 5000/- per year for maintenance and repair of the school building.

(ii) Learning environment:

Proper learning environment is a prerequisite for quality education. The learning environment available to a child, both in school and outside the school has direct as well as indirect influence on learning. Learning environment not only facilitates learning of a prescribed curriculum and syllabus but also promotes values and attitudes. In Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, the creation of a suitable environment has been emphasized. Here, the environment includes school environment, family environment and community environment. Family environment includes parents' educational status, income, social background, educational situation at home, educational facilities, parent-child relationship; school environment includes both in and outside the classrooms namely school infrastructures, stimulating classroom, organizational climate, teacher, teaching and alternative schooling and community environment includes Parent-Teacher Association, Village Education Committee, Mother-Teacher Association etc.

(iii) Teacher and Teacher preparation:

School provides the setting where teachers and students interact, curriculum is transacted and learning process takes place. It is also recognized that teachers influence the learning of students not only through classroom teaching but also through their own personality. A teacher's knowledge of the subject and the mastery over the pedagogical skills has a strong and positive effect on students' learning. So, realizing this need, teacher's training is important for upgrading their academic and professional competencies. In SSA, there is a provision of 20 days in–service training for all teachers each year, 60 days refresher for untrained teachers already employed as teachers and 30 days orientation for freshly trained recruits.

(iv) Curriculum and Teaching–Learning Materials:

It is an important factor that influences the quality of education. Loaded with irrelevant information, centralised curriculum, inappropriate distribution of time, inadequate weightage to different subjects and poorly designed sequence of materials etc. which adversely affect the transaction of the curriculum. Broadly speaking, teaching–learning materials include textbooks, workbooks, teaching–learning aids, supplementary reading materials, teacher's guide, educational kits etc. Under SSA, there is a provision of TLM grant at the rate of Rs. 500/- per year per teacher for primary and upper primary schools to utilize this grant for the development of teaching–learning materials.

(v) Teaching–Learning Process:

Teaching–Learning is a process, that is, central for effective teaching–learning wherein learners and teachers get the opportunity for interaction, thereby facilitating and enhancing mutual learning. Ideally, in the normal course of the teaching–learning process, schools are expected to transact the same set of curriculum inputs. To make teaching–learning process effective, teachers are given need based and problem-solving training regarding content and pedagogy under Sarva Siksha Abhiyan Programme.

(vi) Teaching–Learning Time:

Teaching–Learning Time generally refers to the actual time available for transacting the curriculum in a stipulated period. Transaction of curriculum at any stage of education is planned keeping in view the time available for teaching–learning. In reality, however, teaching–learning time is not sufficient for completing the prescribed syllabus. In SSA, it is recommended that there should be 220 days of teaching, in actual reality the teachers often get 150 to 180 days only.

(vii) Monitoring, supervision and evaluation:

Regular evaluation, monitoring and supervision are important for ensuring that school functions regularly and the teachers perform the assigned functions. Learners' evaluation should be continuous and an integral component of teaching–learning as it gives the feedback about the learners' feedback to the

teachers in relation to which he/she can modify the teaching style. Remedial teaching and content enrichment programmes should be based on feedback from evaluation of learners' performance. The SSA framework provides for a community based monitoring system. They, therefore, contribute significantly to the quality of education.

(viii) Community participation and support:

Sarva Siksha Abhiyan underlines the significance of community participation and support for achieving the goal of universal elementary education. The involvement of community should be ensured in every aspect from micro planning to monitoring and supervision.There would be an effective involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions, School Management Committees, Parent-Teachers' Associations, Mother-Teachers' Associations, Tribal Autonomous Councils and other grassroot level structures. In the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan framework, there is a provision of training of community leaders preferably women, maximum 8 persons in a village, for 2 days in a year.

2.4.8 Sarva Siksha Abhiyan in Assam:

It becomes a fundamental right of children in age group of 6-14 years to have compulsory primary education after the Constitution was passed in 1947. The State of Assam is also marching ahead for universalization of elementary education keeping pace with other states. Like implementing in other states, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan in Assam was started in the later part of 2001-02 and by the first part of 2002-03. Due to the survey and preliminary works, the major interventions, therefore launched from the middle of 2002-03 and in the district levels, different Programmes and activities have been undertaken to implement under Sarva Siksha Abhiyan to achieve the goals of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan Programme. The various components that are extending their supports to the Mission are - Alternative schooling, civil works, community mobilization, deprived urban children, integrated education for disabled children and early childhood education, management information system (MIS) and teachers training etc.

In the access front of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan in Assam, it was estimated that more than 13.40 lakh children in the age group of 6-14 years were out–of-

schools and more than 12,000 habitations were not having any kind of schooling facility. The first priority, therefore, was attached to the establishment of schooling facility in the unreserved habitations as well as for bringing all the out–of-school children to the schools.

The different types of bridge courses had been designed for bringing the out-of-school children and short-term bridge courses of 45 days duration had been opened in the districts of Assam under DPEP. In Assam, Sarva SIksha Abhiyan has been launching its programmes in full swing with a view to complete the mission of "Education for All" in 2010. Already 90 percent of children within the age group of 6-14 years were admitted under the Abhiyan Programme by the name of "Sishur uttaran."

Ashadeep is another scheme by the help of which the children of the age group of 10 years and above had been imparted the "Residential Setubandhan Curriculum." To perform the works of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan in a systematic way in Assam, at least 18,000 para-teachers had already been appointed.

Under the Sajjaldhara scheme, for the provision of drinkable water and hygienic environment, in 40,000 primary and upper primary schools of the state, works of setting tubewell and constructing lavatories had been progressed.

Smart School Scheme is another newly introduced scheme by Sarva Siksha Abhiyan which was launched in 500 primary schools of Assam in the year 2004. Under this scheme, the pupils of the primary schools had been imparted computer aided education so that the pupils could learn and cultivate basic knowledge and skills about computer from their early age. For this purpose, 100 computer technicians were engaged to give on-site technical support to each school. A 10-day teacher training for 2 teachers from each of the 500 schools was given training on basic computer operation and use of multimedia based on content for English, Science and Mathematics for Class V and VI related to textbooks. A total 977 teachers out of 1000 were trained during the year 2007. Computer Learning Centres had been set up at each of the 145 Block Resource Centres (BRCs) and 15 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas KGBVs).

In the same way, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) had been striving to change the scenario of out-of-school children in the state through the activities of its various committees viz.- Village Education Committee, Tea Garden Education Committee, Ward Education Committee, Gaon Panchayat Education Committee, Core Education Committee, School Managing Committee, Mother Groups and its Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative Innovative Education (AIE) strategies like Sanjyogi Siksha Kendra, Community Coaching Programme, Residential Bridge Course, Jyoti Kendra (for deprived urban children) and Worksite Sanjyogi Siksha Kendra, Kasturba Gandhi Valika vidyalaya etc. had been trying to give universal primary education to the children of the age group of 6-14 years, and the various SSA Committees working to make primary education accessible by all children in the entire state of Assam and related to it, a list of SSA Committees in Assam (As on 2007-08) is given below:

Table 2.4.1

SSA Committees in Assam (As on 2007-08)

Committee	Nos.
School Managing Committee	40,215
Village Education Committee	20,935
Tea Garden Education Committee	1,052
Ward Education Committee	779
Gaon Panchayat Education Committee	2,547
Core Education Committee	303
Mother Groups	38,244

Source: Annual Progress Report, SSA, Assam (As on 2007-08)

Table 2.4.2

SSA Centres in Assam (As on 2007-08)

Centre	Nos.
Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS)	40,215
Sanjyogi Siksha Kendra (SSK)	12,484
Worksite SSK	316
Hard To Reach (HTR)	1,240
Residential Bridge Course Centre (RBCC)	1,200
Kasturba Gandhi Valika Vidyalaya (KGBV)	15

Source: Annual Progress Report, SSA, Assam -2007-08.

For the improvement and universalization of primary education in the state, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan has been arranging various types of training and workshops e.g. Two days' training programme, Seven days Refresher training programme for workers of its various branches which are given below :

Table 2.4.3

Workers given training under SSA Programme (As on 2007-08)

Teachers given training	Nos.
Teachers	1,67,267
Community members	10,123
School Teachers (FC- SEDE)	230
EGS Workers	9,787

Source: Annual Progress Report, SSA, Assam -2007-08.

According to the Survey Report (As on 2007-08) conducted by Sarva Siksha Abhiyan itself on various centres the enrolment of out–of–school children in the different branches in the entire state of Assam is given below :

Table 2.4.4

Enrolment of out of school children (As on 2007-08)

SSA Centres	Nos.
In Schools, EGS and HTR Centre (Children with special needs)	64,460
Through Home Based Education (CWSN)	12,267
Sanjyogi Siksha Kendra	3,50,169
Worksite Sanjyogi Siksha Kendra	12,109
Residential Bridge Course Centre	1,200
Community Coaching programme Centre	26,904
Deprived Urban Children Centre	36,145
Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya	733

Source: Annual Progress Report, SSA, Assam -2007-08.

Moreover, regarding the distribution of free textbooks, 3.86 Crore copies of free textbooks were printed and distributed amongst the pupils class - I to class – VIII) during the Academic year of 2007-08.

Remedial teaching had been made an integral part of the teaching –learning processes. It was given to weak academic performers every month after assessing in monthly evaluations. A total of 1, 42, 992 numbers of students were covered under the programme in the state of Assam. The annual infrastructural grant of Rs. 2,000/- had been released to all the existing EGS centres during 2007-08. Thus, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan is a very expensive scheme, which has targeted to complete the mission of universalization of primary education in the state of Assam.

2.4.9 A brief account of Kamrup district (Area description):

Kamrup district was one of the large districts of Assam before independence. In earlier times, the district had three Sub-divisions viz. - (1) Gauhati (2) Nalbari (3) Barpeta Sub- division. For the convenience of administration, the then district had been bifurcated into three new districts in the year 1983 such as - (1) Kamrup district (2) Nalbari district and (3) Barpeta district.

Kamrup is an important district of Assam having an area of 4,345 Sq.Kms, which lies towards the north side and south side of the river Brahmaputra. It lies towards the west side of Assam. Kamrup district is located west region of Assam

between the 25.75 to 27.230 latitude and 91^0 0 E to $92^0$10 latitude. The area is bounded by several regions viz. - Bhutan hill and Nalbari district in the region, Meghalaya state in the south, Darrang and Morigaon district in the east and Goalpara, Barpeta and Nalbari district in the west. The general topography of the area is plain, cultivated land and hills.The chief crops like paddy, tea, mustard seeds, betelnuts, banana, papaya, orange, pineapple, coconuts and others are produced. The river Brahmaputra and its tributaries such as Nuna, Barolia, Puthimari, Sesa, Digaru, Bharalu, Kolong, Kulsi and Singara etc. are the important rivers which are flowing through this district.

The area is inhabited by the different castes, creeds, tribes, minorities, linguistics and religious people. The total population of Kamrup district according to Population Census, 2001 was 2515030. The literacy rate of the district was 74.69 percent in 2001. Some important data of the area is given below:

Table 2.4.5

Administrative information of Kamrup district:

Items	Nos.
Number of Sub-divisions	2
Number of Development Blocks	17
Number of Educational Blocks	11
Number of Gaon Panchayat	180
Number of Anchalik Panchayat	17
Number of Villages	1279
Number of Towns	7
Number of Police Station	27

Source: Annual Progress Report, 2004-05, SSA, Kamrup.

2.4.9.1 Development of education in Kamrup district (Ancient period):

Prior to the introduction of English education, the "Gurukula system" of education was prevalent in this district as it was in other parts of the country. This system of education also met with serious blows with the inhumane aggression of the Burmese invaders. The Treaty of Yangdaboo," however, made it possible to restore peace and steps were taken by the agents of the East India Company like David Scott, Robinson and Captain Jenkins to rehabilitate and expand the indigenous system of education with the hope of winning over the heart of people.

The aristocratic families gave their children education at home under the proper guidance of Brahmin or family scholars. Schools were held also in the temples, private dwellings, house of the teachers and under the shade of big trees. Though elementary education was given mainly on the 3 R's, yet the higher studies consisted of Sanskrit language, literature, grammar, philosophy, the sastras, astronomy, the Vedas and the kavyas which were imparted specially in Tols where the scholars, educated in Banaras and Nadia, imparted knowledge to the pupils.

2.4.9.2 Development of education in Kamrup district (Early modern period):

History does not speak of an organized system of education during this period. As in other parts of India, here too, was the same system of handing down the family trades, arts, crafts etc. to prosperity. In satras, education and training in satriya cults and crafts like music, dance, musical instrument, philosophy, religion etc. were imparted to resident students. Besides this, there was prevalent at a study of astronomy which is evident from the name "Pragjyotisha" by which the present Kamrupa was then known.

Nabagraha was the main seat of this study where Suryya Bipras engaged themselves in Astronomical studies and preparation of horoscope etc. This study was, however, extremely limited and confined to a particular class. The Ahom kings Shiva Singha, Rudra Singha and Rajeswari Singha gave liberal donation of land etc. for the development of the Nabagraha mandir. Gradually, indigenous schools sprang up though very few in the number. These are known as Tols, Pathsalas, Madrassahs, Satras and Namghars.

Unlike the Tols, there were some agencies of education which imparted education in 3R's. These were called Pathsalas. Same as pathsalas but some were exclusively meant for the Muslims. Apart from the formal agencies, there were and still are, the important indigenous centres of learning, the Satras and the Namghars. Satras are few in numbers whereas almost each village had its own Namghar. Satras were of higher order and had a wide jurisdiction. They were endowed with more power than the Namghar. The aim of these institutions though mainly religious, these might be considered to be the nerve-centre of Assam's cultural and educational life during those days. These institutions had all along served not only as centres of all important functions of the society i.e. religious, social, legal, cultural, political, educational etc. These were originated by Mahapurusha Shankardeva and Madhavadeva.

2.4.9.3 Beginning of Western education in Kamrup district:

For the sake of convenience of administration, the British kept Assam as a part of Bengal and instructed its administration on David Scott, the first of North Eastern Frontier of India. But as ill luck would have it, Assam suffered a double blow. Firstly by coming under the British rule and secondly, by being attached to Bengal. Being trigged to Bengal, Bengali was improved in schools of Assam instead of Assamese as the medium of instruction. David Scott, however, was in favour of imposing indigenous education and during his time, as many as, eleven such schools were established throughout Assam. Of these, one in each station Gauhati, Nilachal, Patte Darrang, Hazo and Bajali also. The curriculum of these schools consisted of Sastras, Sanskrit, Grammar, Astronomy and in some schools the Bhagavata and the Ramayana. The medium of instruction was Sanskrit. Subsequently Mr. Mills in his Report of 1854 suggested the following steps for improvement of indigenous education:

(a) Remodeling of Vernacular schools
(b) Establishment of Normal schools to train up a body of teachers
(c) Creation of a Separate Department for the study of Sanskrit in general
(d) Sanskrit Department for mofussil schools
(e) Two Sanskrit colleges in Upper and Lower Assam.

Adam also supported the Plan. In the same year, in collaboration with James Rae, a member of Serampore Missionary Society, Adam while started on Elementary English school at Gauhati.

David Scott not only encouraged indigenous education, but also advocated for the establishment of schools for teaching of 3 R's. The policy of establishing schools for teaching of 3 R's had the support of Mr. Jenkins, the Commissioner.

The gravity of the situation was realized by T.C. Robertson who succeeded Scott as an agent to the Governor-general in April 1832. He felt that the position of the Govt. would be jeopardized unless immediate steps were taken to educate the local people with a view to absorbing them in the Govt. services. He drew up an elaborate plan under which a number of institutions were to be started with the aid of the Moravians (Christian Missionary group of Moravia, now a part of Czechoslovakia). He thought that the best way to establish an institution on Moravian plan would be to obtain from the Govt. a grant of land either in Kamrup or Darrang.

Table 2.4.6

Nos. of primary schools and students' enrolment in Kamrup division

(As on: 1838-39)

Name of pargonas	No. of schools	No. of pupils
Gauhati	1	---
Bellallah	1	2
Neelachal	1	35
Deshranee	1	27
Chumooryah	1	21
Bungong Duar	1	16
Looke Duar	1	15
Pattee Darrang	1	27
Poorb Par	1	60
Boree goge	1	62
Dhoom dhuma	1	34
Majoo	1	23
Khata	1	63
Banajauce	1	55
Pokawa	1	35
Namburbhaugh	1	65
Poorb Bujalee	1	50
Saroo Khetri	1	63
Barpeta	1	33
Ooper Purbboubough	1	31
Dharmapore	1	58

Source: Assam District Gazetteers, Kamrup district, 1990

Jenkin pointed out to the Govt. of Bengal that in a backward state like Assam, instruction should be the concern of the Govt. alone, because most of the people were not in a position to take the responsibility of education as they were universally poor and incapable of judging themselves. He proposed to start a few schools to impart English education in each station Gauhati. Consequently, the

Gauhati English School was opened in 1835 with a European Headmaster. In the meantime, Lieutenant Bogle, the Collector of Kamrup emphasized the importance of Vernacular education in Assam. But it was the lasting credit of James Mathie who prepared a scheme of village education in 1838 by increasing and remodeling the indigenous schools for spreading mass education in the rural areas. On the representation made by a number of village headmen, Mathie drew up a plan for mass education. His plan envisaged the opening of a branch Anglo-Vernacular school at Dharampore and several vernacular schools in the mofussil area. To cater to the demand, additional schools were started at Beltola and Amingaon in 1840 and one in North Gauhati in 1841.

Table 2.4.7

Number of primary schools and pupils in Kamrup (1874-1980):

Year	Number of Schools	Number of Pupils
1874-75	175	3634
1880-81	203	5106
1890-91	219	9236
1900-01	281	10,881
1959-60	2,730 (Primary & Junior Basic schools) 1 (Pre-primary schools)	1,97,062 42
1960-61	2,984 (Primary & Junior Basic schools) 1 (Pre-Primary schools)	2,12,477 55
1979-80	3,995 (Primary schools) 123 (Pre-primary schools)	3,43,007 4,603

Source: Assam District Gazetteers, Kamrup district, 1990

The Wood's Despatch (1854) through its policy of giving grant-in-aid to private schools greatly helped the development of primary education in Assam. A grant of one Rupee was paid to every ten boys attending the schools.This gave fillip to the establishment of new schools in imparting knowledge of 3 R's, side by side , the Missionaries too established primary schools, fortunately enough for Assam in Assamese medium. It is actually due to the effort of the Missionaries that in 1873, Assamese was introduced as the medium of introduction in primary schools of Assam. As a result, the number of schools and pupils increased

considerably. According to the Report of Director of Public Instruction in Bengal, there were 500 schools in Kamrup district at that time.

In 1961, out of every 10,000 population of Assam, Kamrup district had 1,594 teachers. The district had 172 villages without any school, 1,743 villages having single teacher school and 1,056 villages having multi-teacher schools. In 1979-80, there were total 3,995 primary and 123 pre-primary schools in Kamrup district where 3, 43, 007 pupils were studying in the primary schools and other 4,603 students were studying in the pre-primary schools.

2.4.9.4 Sarva Siksha Abhiyan in Kamrup district:

Kamrup is an important district of Assam having two sub-divisions, 11 education Blocks, 161 CRCCs, 180 Gaon Panchayats, 1279 Villages and 2631 Elementary schools. According to the Population Census of 2001, the literacy rate of the district was 74.69 percent. The condition of primary education before implementation of SSA was not satisfactory, but after the implementation of SSA in 2000, it had been marching ahead for universalization of elementary education in the state.

For the universalization of elementary education in the district, the different activities and programmes were being implemented and amongst these– Alternative schooling, Community mobilization, Deprived Urban children integrated education for disabled children, early childhood education, Management information system, Teachers' training and Civil works etc. were notable ones. In the district, the various branches of committee had been constituted for emphasizing universalization of elementary education. Each and every centre had developed different activities for the purpose of fulfilment of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan. So, committees had been developed in Kamrup district, which are as follows-

Table 2.4.8

SSA Centres in Kamrup district (As on 2009-10).

Centres	Nos.
School Managing Committee	2989
Village Education Committee	1189
Tea Garden Education Committee	11
Ward Education Committee	84
GaonPanchayatEducationCommittee	176
Mother Groups	3101
Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS)	111
Sanjyogi siksha Kendra (SSK)	426
Worksite Sanjyogi Siksha Kendra (WSSK)	60
Hard To Reach (HTR) Centre (Jyoti Kendra)	240
Deprived Urban Children Centre	235
Residential Bridge Courses Centre (RBCC)	02
Community Coaching Programme Centre	38
Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya	02

Source: Annual Progress Report, 2009-10, SSA, Kamrup district.

In Kamrup district, the out-of-school children are primarily targeted under the Alternative Innovative Education (AIE) interventions in the rural areas. Amongst these, Sanjyogi Siksha Kendra, Worksite Sanjyogi Siksha Kendra, Community Coaching Programme, Residential Bridge Courses, Shishu Somaroh and Sanjyogi Siksha Sivir etc. were implemented under AIE programmes in the district.

Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, Kamrup had been opening and running Sanjyogi Siksha Kendra to cover the out-of-school children of 6-14 years age in the several areas of the district. According to House to House Survey as on March, 2009-10, 2110 Nos. of out of school children in the age group of 6-14 years were identified. SSA, Kamrup, at first time, had already opened 571 Nos. of Sanjyogi Siksha Kendra as on 2006-07. There were 426 Nos. of centres covering 7895 learners from total 13,098 out-of-school children. In this area, total 423 Nos. of Sanjyogi Siksha Kendra are smoothly running from 2005-06-07. Residential Bridge courses (RBC) are implemented in this district to bring back the out-of-school children of

10-14 years age to the schools. At present 2 Nos. of RBC centres are in the district namely in Rangia and Dimoria. In these centre, 200 Nos. of out-of-school children were enrolled.

Kakoty (2008) revealed that the Jyoti Kendras had been able to enroll quite a large number of Hard-to-reach children. The functioning of Ward education committee was not satisfactory. The involvement of the community was not upto the expected level. The pace of mainstreaming was slow.

However, in the different centres of Kamrup district, a total 36,197 nos. of out-of-school children were enrolled and had been brought to the main stream of education in the year 2009-10. Evaluation is one part of the district SSA, where every month evaluation and mid term evaluation in schools were followed by subsequent Remedial teaching. The district had engaged 480 Nos. Community volunteers to the single- teacher school through concern School Managing Committee in Assamese, Bodo and Bengali medium schools.

The following Table reflected the enrollment of out-of-school children in Kamrup district:

Table 2.4.9

Enrolment of Out-of-school children of Kamrup district (As on 2009-10)

Centre	Enrolment of out-of-school children
Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS)	8518
Sanjyogi Siksha Kendra (SSK)	7855
Worksite Sanjyogi Siksha Kendra (WSSK)	2316
Communit Coaching Programme Centre (CCP)	1063
Hard To Reach (HTR) Centre	6195
Deprived Urban Children Centre (Jyoti Kendra)	7634
Through Home Based Education (CWSN)	1474
Religious Minority's Education Centre (RMEC)	942
Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV)	200

Source: Annual Progress Report, 2009-10; SSA, Kamrup. Total = 36,197

In the district, the training programme for the teachers had the service of teachers' training, two or three days training or workshop etc. by SSA. A total of 76,852 man-days (LP and UP schools teachers) had achieved till 20th February, 2008 and its physical achievement was 4.47 percent.

Moreover, in the district, civil works had been taken to increase the sitting facilities for children and improved the existing building conditions for the schools. Civil works had been undertaken for construction of additional classroom, construction of new school buildings, toilets and drinking water facilities etc.

The District Sarva Siksha Abhiyan Mission had released the Annual school infrastructure grant of Rs. 2,000/- and annual maintenance grant of Rs. 5,000/- to 2403 nos. primary schools for the year of 2006-07. A sum of Rs. 48.06 lakhs for infrastructure and Rs. 120.15 lakhs for maintenance had been granted to the schools. It was inceased up to Rs. 171.23 lakhs in the year 2007-08.

2.4.10 Brief account of Barpeta district:

The present Barpeta district, which derived its name from the Headquarter town of Barpeta, was one of the three civil sub-divisions of undivided Kamrup district, created in 1841 by the British ruler John Batlor. Butler was the first administrative officer of the erstwhile Barpeta sub-division.

In July 1983, the erstwhile Kamrup district was divided into three separate districts viz.- (i) Kamrup (ii) Nalbari and (iii) Barpeta district. Thus, Barpeta became a full fledged and independent district. The Barpeta district consists of two sub-divisions viz.- (i) Barpeta (Sadar) sub-division and (ii) Bajali(Civil) sub-division.

Covering an area of 3245 Sq.Kms., Barpeta district is bounded by the international and inter district borders i.e. Bhutan hills in the north, Nalbari district in the east, Kamrup and Goalpara district in the south and Bongaigaon district in the west. The district lies between 90'-45," and 91'-15" longitude and between 26'-5" to 26'- 49" north and 30'- 39" to 91'-17" east latitude. The general topography of the district varies from low-lying plains to elevated lands having small Hillock in the south west corner viz. Baghbor, Fulora and Chatala.

The district enjoys tropical monsoon climate having two district seasons-summer and winter. The summer season of March to May is followed by the Monsoon from June to September. The retreating Monsoon occurs from October to November. The winter season from December to February is characterized by cool weather and foggy mornings with temperatures remaining generally above 12.8 degrees Celsius.

The total population of Barpeta district according to 2001 Population Census was 16, 42,420. Literacy rate was 47 percent and 57.35 percent according to 2001 and 2011 Population Census respectively.

2.4.10.1 Sarva Siksha Abhiyan in Barpeta district:

Sarva Siksha Abhiyan is a national programme which launched with the objective of fulfilling the Constitutional obligation of providing elementary education to all children in the age group of 6-14 years. SSA adopts zero rejection policy so that no child is left out from the education system. There are a number of habitations in the state of Asam where are no school of any kind. SSA, Assam has come forward to provide education to the children of such habitations in cooperation with the local community under the various schemes and committees of SSA.

Barpeta is an important district of Assam, having total 8 Education blocks, 146 Cluster Resource Centres, 149 Gaon Panchayats, 6 Town Committees, 48 Wards and 3880 habitations. According to Population Census of 2011, the literacy rate the district is 57.35 percent. Before implementation of SSA, it was not satisfactorily improved. But after implementation of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, it had rapidly been changing the former status of the district primary education. In this area, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan had been started in the later part of of the year 2001-02 and by the first part of 2002-03 with the basic objectives to achieve the goal of universalization of elementary education in a time bound manner. It was marching ahead for universalization of elementary education keeping pace with other districts and took active participation and accelerated the different activities under various schemes and activities to its goal.

For the universalization of elementary education, the different activities and programmes had been implemented and amongst these – Alternative schooling, Community mobilization, Deprived urban children, Integrated education for disabled children, Early childhood education, Management Information system, Teachers' training and Civil works etc. were notable ones. In this district, the various branches of the committee had been constituted for emphasizing universalization of elementary education. Each and every centre was developing different activities for the purpose of fulfillment of SSA. So, various committees had been developed in Barpeta district, which were reflected in the following Table:

Table 2.4.10

SSA Centres in Barpeta district (As on 2005-07)

Centres	Nos.
School Managing Committee	2,408
Village Education Committee	1,031
Tea Garden Education Committee	01
Ward Education Committee	48
Gaon Panchayat Education Committee	149
Mother Groups	2,408
Education Guarantee Scheme	169
Sanjyogi Siksha Kendra (SSK)	595
Hard to Reach (HTR) Centre	42
Residential Bridge Course Centre	402
Community Coaching Programme Cetre	133
Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya	01

Source: Annual Progress Report, 2007-08; SSA, Barpeta, Assam.

In Barpeta district also, the out-of-school children were primarily targeted under the Alternative Innovative Education (AIE) interventions in the rural areas. Amongst these - Sanjyogi Siksha Kendra, Worksite Sanjyogi Siksha Kendra, Community Coaching Programme, Residential Bridge Course, Sishu Somaroh and Sanjyogi Siksha Sibir etc. were implemented under AIE programme in this district.

Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, Barpeta had been opening and running Sanjyogi Siksha Kendra to cover the out-of-school childrenof 7-14 years age in the served areas of rural district. According to house to house survey (As on March, 2007); 20,812 out-of-school children in the age group of 7-14 years were identified. SSA, Barpeta at first time, had already opened 240 Nos. of Sanjyogi Siksha Kendra. The 247 Nos. centres covering 7682 learners from total 20,815 out-of-school children. In this area, total 595 Nos. of Sanjyogi Siksha Kendra were smoothly running from 2005-06-07.

Residential Bridge Centres (RBC) were implemented in this district to bring back the out-of-school children of 10-14 years age to the schools. At present, 2 Nos. of RBC Centres were in the district – one was Chenga RBCC under Chenga block and another was Alopati majar char RBCC, under Mandia block. In these two centres, 230 out-of-school children had been enrolled. Evaluation was one part of the district Sarva Siksha Abhiyan where every monthly evaluation and mid-term evaluation in the schools had been carried out by subsequent remedial teaching. The district had engaged 480 community volunteers to the single teacher schools through the concern School Managing Committee in Assamese, Bodo and Bengali medium schools.

In this district, Training programmes for the teachers had been arranged to enhance their teaching capacity for 15 days in-service teachers' training, two or three days' training or workshops etc by Sarva Siksha Abhiyan. A total of 76,852 Man-Days (LP and UP school teachers) had achieved till 20th February, 2008 and its physical achievement was 4.47 percent.

Moreover, in the district, civil works had taken to increase the seating facilities for children and improve the existing building conditions of the school. Civil works had been undertaken for construction of additional classrooms (1596), construction of new school buildings (4 nos.), toilets (57 nos.) and drinking water sources (22 nos.) etc. The District Abhiyan Mission had released the Annual school infrastructure grant of Rs. 2000/- and Annual maintenance grant of 5000/- to 2,403 nos. elementary schools for the year of 2006-07. A sum of Rs. 48.06 lakhs for infrastructure and Rs. 120.15 lakhs for maintenance had been granted to the schools. It was increased upto Rs. 171.23 lakhs in the year 2007-08.