CHAPTER--- II

A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

(THE STATE AND DISTRICT PROFILE OF ASSAM AND BONGAIGAON)

2.0. INTRODUCTION

This **c**hapter deals with a profile of Assam and it's origin, historical background, physical feature, climate of Assam, forest, the people of Assam and their culture like pan tamol, food habits, dress, handloom and handicraft, agriculture, industry, power and irrigation, cottage industry, demographic feature, races of Assam etc. It also includes population and their economy, primary education and various Acts passed for the development, National Policy on Education 1986 and Assam, District Primary Education Programme, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan etc. Bongaigaon district profile includes origin of the word, population, educational institution, general information of the district, agriculture, industry, transport and communication, culture, festival, projects and others.

2.01 THE STATE OF ASSAM

Assam is **a** state of India in the North **–** Eastern region. Located south of the eastern Himalayas, Assam comprises the Brahaputra and the Barak river valleys along with the Karbi Anglong and the North Cachar Hills **(**now Dima Hasao**)** with an area of 30**,** 285 square miles (78,438 km). Assam is comprises 56 Sub – Division, 214 towns, 26395 villages, 219 blocks, 2202 Gaon- panchayat and 184 Revenue Circle. Assam is surrounded by 7 other states like Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Meghalaya and Sikkim. Geographically Assam and these states are connected to the rest of India via a narrow of land in West Bengal called the Siliguri Corridor or Chicken's Neck. Assam shares international borders with Bhutan and Bangladesh; and cultures, peoples and climate with South –East Asia important elements in India's Look East Policy. Assam became a part of the British India after the British occupied the region following the First Anglo Burmese War of 1824—1826.

Table- 2.01 Figure at a Glance-2011 census (ASSAM)

Geographical Area (in sq. km)	78438
Number of District	27
Number of Sub-Division	56
Number of Circle	184
Number of Towns	214
Number of Statutory Towns	88
Nos of Census Towns	126
Nos of Villages	26395
Nos of Household	6406471
Nos of Rural	5420877
Nos of Urban	985594

Source:- Statistical Handbook, ASSAM, 2013, Directorate of Economics & Statistics.

2.02 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Assam is one of the seven states located in the North Eastern region of India. It was known as Pragjyotish in ancient times with its capital at Pragjyotishpura (Modern Guwahati) and latter as Kamrupa. While myths and legends mention several names as early rulers of this land – the most prominent among them being Naraka, father of Bhagadatta of Mohabharata fame, its political history begins with the rule of the Barman dynasty (4th Century A.D. to 7th century A.D.) with Bhaskara Barman as its most out standing ruler, who ruled a vast Kingdom in eastern India – Harshavardhana of north India being an ally of his and whose court was visited by the Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen tsang in 642 A.D. The Barman dynasty was followed by the Mlechchha, pala, Sena and the lunar dynasties until the Ahoms, a group of Shan or tie people from the east entered Assam in 1228 A.D., Captured, initially, the eastern part of the land and then expanded and ruled it for six hundred years. Internal strife in the Ahom administration led to a Burmese invasion of the lands in 1817 with repeated incursions in the subsequent years which led, in turn, to British intervention and conclusion of an Anglo – Burmese treaty, known as the Treaty of Yandaboo, in 1826, which marks the end of the sovereignty of Assam and its Annexation to the British Empire. It may be mentioned here that the present name of the state derived from the word Ahom, the native people referring to the Tai conquerors as Asam i.e. 'Peerless'

or ‘underfeated’. Other groups of people ruling parts of the land before the advent of the Ahom or contemporaneously included the Chutiyas, the Kacharies, the Jaintias and the Koches.

The boundary of Assam has undergone many changes since 1826. When the British annexed Assam in 1826, type map of Assam was more or less like the map of present day Assam excluding a chunk in the western part. The newly annexed land was brought under the British Government of Bengal. By 1874, the year in which Assam began to be ruled by a Chief Commissioner directly under the control of the Government of India, Assam become an enlarged province which included present-day Assam, Nagaland (then naga Hills district), Meghyalaya (then the two district of Garo Hills and Jaintia Hills) and the Sylhet region of Bangladesh (then referred to as the Surma valley). Later, the Lushai Hills (now Mizoram) area was also brought under the administration of Assam. Although Assam was tagged on to the Government of Eastern Bengal during the period of partition of Bengal (1905 – 1912), this enlarged map of Assam continued till the time of India’s Independence and simultaneous partition in 1947. On the eve of partition of the country, attempts however were thwarted by the people of Assam, who had fought for the Independence of India side by side with their brethren elsewhere in the country sacrificing many a life in the process. Nevertheless, the Syhlet area of the Surma Valley had to be caded to Pakistan. Insurgency and political activities led more than once to administrative reorganization of the State of Assam after Independence. The Naga Hills district of the state together with a part of eastern Arunachal (then known as North – East Frontier Agency- N.E.F.A.) became a separate state of the Indian Union in 1963. The Garo Hills and the Khasi and Jaintia Hills districts together were a separate state of the union on January 21, 1972 and named Meghalaya. On the same day the Lushai Hills district became the union territory of Mizoram (later a state).

2.03 ORIGIN OF THE TERM ASSAM.

In the early period of history Assam was not known by its present name Assam. In the early periods of time, this territory was known as Pragjyotisha and Kamrupa. The present name of Assam is only of recent origin. However there is no authentic information regarding when and how this territory was name as Assam. According to

B .K. Baruah, the nomenclature of the region is connected with the Ahoms who entered the Brahmaputra valley in the early part of 13th century A. D. The term Assam derived from the word Asama which means unequalled or peerless. This term was applied by the local tribes to refer to Ahoms at the time of their Assam invasion (Baruah 2003-4). Sir Edward Gait also gave similar argument and said that the word Assam was also found in the writings of Mohammedian historians (Phukan 2001; 188). Kakati is of the view that Asama may be sanskritised form Acham. In Tai language cham means to be defeated. With the Assamese prefix a negative marker Asam would mean undefeated. (Baruah 2003-4)

2.04. PHYSICAL FEATURES

Assam is bounded by Nagaland, Manipur and Myanmar in the East, West Bengal in the west, Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh in the north and by Mizoram, Tripura, Bangladesh and Meghalaya in the south.

The present state of Assam extends from the latitude N 22.19 ^{0} and longitude 89.42 ^{0} to 96.30 ^{0} East. Being the gateway to India's North East, its geographical location is of strategic importance. The state is linked with the country by a narrow strip of land through West Bengal. It comprises two river valleys and a hilly tract in between, viz.

- The Brahmaputra valley (through which the river Brahmaputra flows)
- The Barak valley (through which river Barak flows)
- The Hill Areas (Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills now Dima Hasao)

The total geographical area of Assam is 78,438 sq. km. of which about 25 % in under forest cover. The total operational area as per the 1991 census is 3,205 thousand hectors, of which about 227 thousand hectors of land is under 850 tea estates. Geologically, the soil of the plains of the two valleys of the state is of alluvial and that of the hills is of local origin. The soil in the plains consists of sand, sandstone pebbles, clay and sometimes a mixture of sand and clay containing decomposed vegetational matter. The tertiary deposits include a similar variety of rocks, among them hard sandstone, soft and loose sand, conglomerates, coal seams, shales, sandy clays, and limestone. The hills display a rugged territory. The state has rich deposits of minerals like petroleum, natural gases and limestone.

The river Brahmaputra is fed throughout the year by a number of tributaries flowing from the sub – Himalayan ranges from the north and from the hills to its south. The north bank tributaries are comparatively of short length and change their courses frequently causing immense harm. The river system of the Brahmaputra in the districts of Jorhat and Lakhimpur has formed the largest river island in the world, known as Majuli. The south bank tributaries are fed mostly by monsoon rain and are relatively less harmful. Likewise, the river Barak is fed by a number of tributaries flowing mainly from the North Cachar Hills, the Mizo, Hills, and the Jaintia Hills. These tributaries too are rain-fed. The state is situated in an earthquake belt. During the past one hundred years, it has experienced, in addition to many minor ones, three major earthquakes, one in 1897, the second in 1930, and the third and the most devasting one in 1950.

2.05 CLIMATE OF ASSAM

The climate of Assam is humid. The average maximum temperature in the hot season is 30 degree Celsius and in the winter season minimum average of 10 degree Celsius. Some rain occurs from March or April onwards, but the real force of the monsoon winds is experienced from June onwards, when they blow at right angles to the Assam hills resulting in heavy rainfall. The annual average rainfall increases towards east and north – east and attains 300 cms. Largely concentrated during the months from June to September, this heavy rainfall very often results in widespread destructive floods. In 1998, for instance, the damage caused by floods in the state covered 972.33 thousand hectares of land, and crop area of 288.90 thousand hectares and affected a population of 46.98 lakhs, the total estimated loss being Rs. 1,000,00 crore.

2.06 FOREST

The state is rich in flora and fauna. A part from numerous herbs, grasses and shrubs, there are many species of timer of which about two – third are commercially exploited including a few valuable species like teak, sal, gamari, sisso, khoir, titachapa, and bansum. A wide variety of orchids also grow in the forests. Amongst the scores of species of animal and birds inhabiting the forests are rhinoceroses, elephant, tiger, deer, wild hogs, monkey pythons, hornbills, peacocks etc. The

Kaziranga Sanctuary is famous for the one – horned rhinoceros and the Manas Sanctuary for tigers. The golden langur, the pigmy hog, the white – winged wood duck and a few other species are rare and endangered.

2.07 EARTHQUAKE

As Assam is situated in a zone inclined to earthquakes, so the state very often experiences earthquake tremors. The state of Assam has experienced many disastrous earthquakes in the past. The most disastrous being the earthquakes which rocked the state during the years 1869, 1897, 1923 and 1950.

2.08. THE PEOPLE AND THEIR CULTURE

Assam is a multi – racial, multi – lingual, multi – religious and multi – cultural state – a miniature India of sorts. The earliest inhabitants of the land are supposed to have been Australoids. However, they appear to have been elbowed out by subsequent waves of migrants belonging to the Mongolid stock. Austric communities reappeared on the population scenario of Assam in the second half of the 19th century, having been brought from other parts of the country, notably the Chota Nagur region, to provide the work force for them growing tea industry, and today they constitute sizable section of the population in Assam. Different groups of people belonging to the Mongoloid stock have migrated to this land at different times since pre – historic days and today from a large chunk of the population of the state. They include the ethnic groups called Vhutiya, Moran, Ahom Bodo, Karbi, Dimasa, Tiwa Rabha, Koch – Rajbonshi, Sonowal, thengal, mech, Mising, Meitei, Hmar, etc. Some of these ethnic groups have been identified as scheduled tribes (ST) Karbis and Dimasas inhabiting the two hill districts as scheduled Tribes (Hills) and Bodos, Rabhas, Tiwas, Misings, Deoris, Meches, Sonowals and Thengals as scheduled tribes (Plains). The Koch – Rajbonshis were included in the list of Scheduled Tribes in January, 1996 but deleted again from the list soon afterwards April, 1998. The ethnic groups of Mongoloid origin, not included in the list of Scheduled tribes, have been listed as Other Backward Classes (O.B.C.). Communities of tea garden workers and a section of Muslim have been listed as More Other Backward Classes (MOBC). A few occupational ethnic groups have listed as Scheduled Castes; some of them is believed

to be of Dravidian origin. Caucasoids or Aryans too migrated to this land after the Mongoloids at different times and constitute a major section of the state's population. Although Mongoloid and Caucasoid groups of people have separate ethnic identities, experts have noticed large – scale genetic intermixture in the population, which indicates a good degree of socio – cultural integration amongst these groups of people in the past. Grazers from Nepal, traders from other parts of the country (especially Marwaris) and a large number of Muslim peasants and Hindu refugee from erstwhile Eastern Bengal (later East Pakistan and now Bangladesh) are all integral parts of the population scenario now. **T**he population of the state is heterogeneous. It has been the home of several ethnic-groups –Austro- Asiatic, Dravidians, Mongloids and Aryans belonging to different religions like, Hinduism, Islam, Christian, Buddhism and many other minor Gods and Goddesses. As a matter of fact, different branches of races, language and religion came up into the region since time immemorial as a result of which a racial confusion with their predecessors flourished in the region.

Assamese is the main language of the state of Assam and serves as lingua franca for its people. It is also the official language of the state, although English too has been retained in practice. Bengali is spoken by the majority of the people of the Barak valley and so it has been given the status of an associate official language for this valley. Likewise Bodo spoken by the Bodos has been given the status of an associate official language for the Bodoland Territorial Area District.(BTAD), Karbis, Dimasas, Misings, Rabhas, Tiwas, Deuris, Meiteis, Hmars, Bishnupriya, Manipuris, Nepalis, Tea garden communities, etc. speak their respective mother tongues. Manipuri (spoken by Meiteis of Manipur and Assam) and Nepali are developed languages. The rest are yet to be developed properly. The Ahom are now Assamese language specks, but attempts are being made by them to revive their original mother tongue – the Tai language. This linguistic diversity of the state has an important bearing on the school education of Assam. Apart from the leading Assamese literary organization, Assam Sahitya Sabha (established in the year 1917), almost all the linguistic groups have now their own Sahitya Sabhas aimed at the development of their respective languages.

Hindus constitute the bulk of the population of Assam. Apart from the Aryan Hindu communities, most of the people belonging to the Mongoloid stock have accepted Hinduism as their creed, although some of them have retained, side their original

faiths, which are animistic, or otherwise, in nature. The efforts of the great Vaishnava saint – poet, Srimanta Sankardeva (1449 – 1568) and his disciples at spreading the liberal Bhakti cult amongst all sections of the people – irrespective of caste, creed and race – played a crucial role in creating Hindu psyche amongst the non – Hindu population of the state in medieval times. Their efforts were continued after them by scores of satras (vaisnavite religious centres established by Srimanta Sankanadeva and his disciples) located in various places of the Brahmaputra Valley. It may however be mentioned here that although Srimanta Sankandeva preached a strictly monotheistic, non – idolatrous faith (devotion to Hari and none but Hari), polytheistic Hinduism, notably Shaktism and Shaivism did not die out, and in fact, thrives even today. The high degree of religious tolerance and the moderateness of Hindu casteism prevalent in Assam are ascribable primarily to the impact of the non – exclusivism of Sankardeva's creed. Island has a strong presence in Assam, next to Hinduism. Several sporadic Muslim invasions of the land, mostly ending in disaster for the invaders, took place between 1206 and 1662 A.D. which left behind certain sections of Islamic people in different parts of the state. Their descendants adopted Assamese as their mother tongue but continued to profess the Islamic faith. The Muslim population of the state increased greatly in the last century with the immigration to Assam of a large number of Bengali speaking Muslims from present – day Bangladesh. Other religious minority groups of the state include Christians, Buddhists, jains, Sikhs and others.

The cultural life of the people of Assam is marked, as may be expected, by great diversity. Every religious and ethnic group has its own socio – cultural traditions and religious practices. While there are temples galore for polytheistic believers – the most famous amongst them being the Kamakhya temple atop the Nilachal hills of Guwahati, which has been considered to be the centre of Tantric Shaktism since the ancient times – the starts and Namghars (Praver house) coming into existence in the wake of the introduction of Vaishnavism in Assam by Srimanta Sankardeva and dotting the entire Brahmaputra valley serve as both religious and cultural center. The satras have preserved and promoted the heritage of performing arts – music, dance and drama – bequeathed by Sankardeva and his disciples. Te devotional music of the satras, called Bargeet is a variety of Indian raga music and the dances of the satras called sattriya, a category of classical dance. Together with his chief disciple, Madhavdeva, the great saint – poet also Assamese literature on a glorious flouring in

the first half of the sixth century. As a fitting tribute to the greatest cultural hero at Guwahati, which is designed to be a centre for the preservation and promotion of all cultural expressions in the state. Apart from the music and dance of the satras, there are many other forms of traditional music and dance preserved at the folk level by various ethnic groups of the state.

Many pan- Indian Hindu festivals like Durga Puja, Holi and Deepavali (Diwali) are celebrated in Assam with great fanfare. In addition, there are many community – specific and region – specific festivals celebrated on different occasions. However, the most popular festival, which is secular in nature, is the Bohag Bihu (also called Bihu i.e. merry making festival or the festival of joy) celebrated in both villages and towns of the Brahmaputra valley in mid – April to mark the beginning of the Indian New Year. Veneration of cows (in the villages), presentation by women folk of gamochas (hand – woven towels) to elders to show respect and to others to show love and mirthful singing and dancing in groups for two weeks or more are salient features of the Bohag Bihu. Magh Bihu (or Bhogali Bihu i.e. festival of feasts) is another popular festival of secular character celebrated in mid – January at the end of the harvesting season, it is a time of plenty or peasants – fish and wild edible roots, in particular, are plentiful. So people in villages and towns alike enjoy the pleasure of eating on this occasion, as the name 'Bhogali' readily suggests.

Another important aspect of the cultural life of the people of Assam is weaving of fine silk and cotton cloths with various floral and other decorative designs. The three main varieties of silk cloths, viz Pat, Muga and Eri the golden brown Muga dresses of women are the most attractive. The cloths woven by Scheduled Tribes women and worn on festive and ceremonial occasions are extremely colorful and full of artistic designs. There was a time when every grown - up girl in Assam was required to know the art of weaving, but the scenario has changed gradually with increasing urbanization and unprecedented commercialization of the cloth industry.

2.09. ORNAMENTS

The male and female folk of Assam are not only blessed with a delicate style of dressing but also with beautiful and exclusive ornaments which are basically made of gold and silver. The traditional ornaments worn by the men folk of Assam are Biri,

Magardana, Motamoni, Kundal and Lokaparo and the traditional ornaments worn by the women folk of Assam are Keru, Kanphul, Kharu, Aangathi, Nalak, Keyur , Kardhani, Baju, Kinkini, Nupur,etc.

2.10. DRESS

The traditional dress worn by the womenfolk of Assam is called Mekhela –Chadar or Riha Mekhela. The Mekhela is worn around the waist and is pleated into three folds whereas; the riha is wrapped over the upper part of the body over which the chadar is worn. The traditional Mekhela Chadar is made from the prestigious Muga Silk which has peculiarity, as well as the pride of Assam. The traditional dress worn by the men folk of Assam is Saria or Dhuti which is tied round their waist. The upper part of the body is covered by Kameez or shirt and over it a chadar known as Seleng is spread by the men folk of Assam.

2.11. FOOD HABITS

Rice or Bhaat is the staple food crop of Assam and is also the chief constituent for the production of some unbelievable palatable items like, Muri, Aakhoi, Chira, Sandah etc. pitha, a kind of rice cake , makes an integral item of the Assamese plate during the Bihu festival and other major occasions . The most lovable and relishable item among the Assamese people is Khar which is a reddish curry seasoned with alkali. Fish, specially with a mild sour curry, is also a favourite dish of the Assamese people. In upper Assam Kharisha a kind of pickle prepared from bamboo shoots, is vastly consumed. Kharoli is another favourite food item of the Assamese people.

2.12. TAMOL PAN AND ASSAM

Tamol pan is an indispensable part of the Assamese society. It holds an important position in the Assamese culture. Tamol pan, as it is popularly known is a combination of two ingredients namely, Tamol which implies arecanut or betel nut and pan which means betel leaf. Tamol pan, after meal is must for every Assamese and is also served to each and every guest. It is also the first thing to be gathered for

every socio- cultural and even religious and marriage ceremonies. There is no binding on the consumption of Tamol pan. Men and women of any age can consume it.

2.13. HANDLOOM AND HANDICRAFT

Assam is enriched with a variety of handloom and handicraft items which represent the artistic skill of the Assamese craftsmen. It comprises cane and bamboo products toys, mask, brass-wares, jewellery, figures carved on wood and terracotta etc. The handloom products of Assam include a variety of handloom garments , woolen shawls , the intricately woven traditional Gamocha (towel woven in cloth) and the unique and most graceful handwoven , Mekhela Chadar which is the traditional dress worn with pride by the Assamese women.

2.14. AGRICULTURE

In Assam among all the productive sectors, agriculture makes the highest contribution to its domestic sectors, accounting for more than a third of Assam's income and employs 69% of workforce. Assam's biggest contribution to the world is tea. It produces some of the finest and most expensive teas and has its own variety Camellia assamica. Assam also accounts for a fair share of India's production of rice rapeseed, mustard seed, jute, potato, sweet potato, banana, papaya sugarcane and turmeric. It is also a home of large varieties of citrus fruits, leaf vegetable, vegetables, useful grasses, herbs, spices etc. Assam's agriculture is yet to experience modernization in a real sense. With implications for food security, per capita food grain production has declined in the past five decades. Productivity has increased marginally, but is still low compared to highly productive regions. For instance, the yield of rice (staple food of Assam) was just 1531 kg per hectare against India's 1927 kg per hectare in 2000—01. (which itself is much lower than Egypt's 9283 , U.S.'s 7279, South Korea's 6838, Japan's 6635 and China's 6131 kg per hectare in 2001 . On the other hand, after having strong domestic demand and with 1.5 million hectares of inland water bodies, numerous river and 165 varieties of fishes, fishing is still in its traditional form production is not self- sufficient.

2.15. INDUSTRY

Its economy is based on agriculture and oil. Assam produces a significant part of the total tea production of the world. Assam produces more than half of India's petroleum. Apart from tea petroleum and petro chemicals, other industries in sectors like paper, fertilizer, cement coke lime sugar, plastic, cosmetics, poultry and dairy products along with handloom and handicraft have thrived in the state. Dibrugarh and Tinsukia are the major industrial districts of Assam. Most of the big industries are in and around Dibrugarh district. Dibrugarh is one of the 10 richest revenue districts of India. Assam is a major producer of crude oil and it accounts about 15% of India's crude output exploited by the Assam Oil Company Ltd. and natural gas in India and is the second place in the world (after Titustaille in the United States) where petroleum was discovered. Asia's first successful mechanically drilled oil well was drilled at Makum (Assam) way back in 1867. Most of the oilfields are located in the Eastern Assam region. Assam has four oil refineries at Digboi, Guwahati, Bongaigaon and Numaligarh and with a total capacity of 7 million metric tone per annum.

2.16. POWER AND IRRIGATION

Assam is a potential storehouse of power ranging from hydel to thermal, including both coal based and gas based units. The total installed capacity of power generation in Assam was 446.80 MW on November 30, 2011. About 5697 villages of the state has been electrified as on 29th August` 2011 as per Power data, out of the 11,068 inhabited villages as per 2001 census. Thus, the percentage of villages electrified in the state was 51.47% at the end of August 2011. At present, there are six installed power projects and fifteen captive power projects in Assam. Assam is bestowed with plenty of natural resources among which, the two principal rivers namely the Brahmaputra and Barak along with their numerous tributaries play a major role in providing irrigation facilities to the state. The gross irrigation potential created up to 2006-07 is about 6.84 lakh hectares.

2.17. COTTAGE INDUSTRY

Assam is traditionally famous for cottage industry and it plays a significant role in the economy of Assam. Moreover, these industries grow on the basis of local resources

and are therefore, concentrated in different parts of the state. This industry being labour intensive provides employment opportunities on a large basis. The main cottage industries of Assam are silk industry that comprises Eri, Muga and pat products, weaving industry, bell metal industry, brass work industry, pottery works, ivory works etc.

2.18. DEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES

The distribution of population in Assam is uneven owing to the hilly terrain, the number of rivers, the forests, and lack of industrialization. The last century witnessed an unusually rapid growth of population in the state due do mostly immigration into Assam of tea garden laborers, grazers from Nepal, Muslim peasants and Hindu refugee from erstwhile East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). Total population of Assam was 26.66 million with 4.91 million households in 2001. Higher population was recorded in the districts of Kamrup, Nagaon, Sonitpur, Barpeta, Dhubri, Darang and Cachar. Assam's population was estimated 28.67 million in 2006 and at 30.57 million in 2011, 34.18 million by 2021 and 35.60 million by2026. As per 2011 census, total population of Assam was 31,169,272. The total population of the state has increased from 26,638,407 to 31,169,272 in the last ten years with a growth rate of 16.93%.Out of 27 district of Assam, eight districts registered rise in the decadal population growth rate. Religious minority dominated districts like Dhubri, Goalpara, Barpeta, Morigaon, Nagaon, Hailakandi etc. recorded growth rates ranging from 20% to 24% during the last decade. On the other hand eastern Assam districts like Sibsagar, Jorhat, Dibrugarh etc. registered around 9% population growth and for the record, these districts do not share any international border. In 2011, literacy rate in state was 73.18%. Male literacy rate was 78.81% and female literacy rate was 67.27%. In 2001, the census had recorded literacy in Assam at 63.3% with male literacy at 71.3% and female at 54.6%. Urbanization rate was recorded 12.9%. Assam has many ethnic groups and the people of India project have studied 115 of these. Out of which 79 (69%) identify themselves regionally, 22 (19%) locally and 3 trans- nationally. The earliest settlers were Austroasiatic, followed by Tibeto- Burman, Indo- Aryan speakers, Tai –Kadai speakers. Forty five languages are spoken by different communities, including three major language families; Austroasiatic- 5, Sino-Tibetan-24 and Indo- European-12. Three of the spoken languages do not fall in these

families. There is the high degree of bilingualism. The mistrust/ classes between native Bodos and East Bengal rooted Muslim started as early as 1952. At least 77 people died and 400,000 people displaced in the 2012 Assam violence between indigenous Bodos and East Bengal rooted Muslim.

The plains area of Assam is administratively divided into 27 districts and 48 sub-divisions. The Hills of Assam have two Autonomous districts with 5 subdivisions. There are 219 Development Blocks (as on 31 – 03 – 1998), 149 Revenue Circles (as per 1991 Census), 43 Mahkuma parishads (as on 31 – 03 – 1998), 2486 Gaon Panchayats (as on 31 – 03 – 1998) and 25590 villages (as per 1991 census) in the state. There are 905 uninhabitanted villages. Apart from the two Autonomous Hill District Councils, viz the Karbi Anglong Autonomous District Council and the North Cachar Hills District Council, there are four other Autonomous Councils constituted in the Brahmaputra valley viz, the Bodoland Territorial Council, the Mising Autonomous Council, the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council and the Tiwa Autonomous Council with decentralization of some power for the development of the respective ethnic groups. The table below shows the density and, male – female breakup.

2.19. CENSUS OF INDIA, 2011

Table 2.02: Population of Assam (2011), Density and Male/ Female percentage

Total population	31169272 (provisional)
Density of population	400 (per square km.)
Literacy rate	73.18%
Rank	14
Male Literacy	78.81%
Female Literacy	67.27%

2.20 THE ECONOMY

The economy of Assam is overwhelmingly agricultural. Much of the agricultural activity is subsistence farming, particularly in the hill areas, where jhum cultivation is

the mainstay. The state has a gross cropped area of about 39.40 lakh hectares and approximately 87 percent of the state's main workers pursue agriculture and allied activities. Food crops are grown in more than 79 percent of this gross cropped area. In addition to rice, which is the principal crop wheat and pulses are grown. Jute, tea, cotton, oil seeds, sugarcane, potato etc. are important cash crops. Fruits like orange, banana, pineapple, coconut, guava, mango, jackfruit, etc. are also grown. Tea has an important position in the sector of agro – based industries; tea gardens occupy about 2.30 lakh hectares of the state's land and contribute 15 percent of the world's total tea production. The state produces a considerable amount of crude oil for the country. With three oil refineries in the state (with a fourth refinery commissioned in 1991), petrochemicals are the major heavy industry in Assam. Other industries include manufacturing of paper, nylon, fertilizer, sugar, jute, timer, cement, plywood products etc. Sericulture and handloom weaving are important cottage industries. Cane and bamboo products, carpentry, brass and metal crafts are also popular cottage industries. An export – oriented handloom project has been established at Sualkuchi to explore the export potentials of muga silk and textiles. Though rich in natural resources like forest wealth, minerals and hydropower, the economy of Assam still depends mainly on agriculture. The over – dependence on agricultur with an outdated agricultural technology, the pressure of the population on land, an increase in the weaker sections of the population like the landless laborers and small farmers, etc have resulted in a slow pace on industrialization, lower rate of capital formation, mounting unemployment and an inadequate economic infrastructure. The percentage of the population below the poverty line in 1993 – 94 at state level was 40.9 as against the all India percentage of 36.0. In this respect, there is a significant disparity between the figures in the rural and urban areas of the state, which calls for rural reconstruction and development on a priority basis. The government of Assam has focused on a number of developmental programs in the agricultural, economic and social sectors during the various Five year plans. The setting up of the Agro – Industrial Development Corporation, Agricultural Marketing Corporation and a Regional Research Centre for horticulture, various hydroelectric projects in the hill areas, the implementation of diverse centrally sponsored rural development schemes like IRDP, NREP, RLEGP, SGSY[1], JGSY[2], IAY[3] and EAS[4], etc. deserve special mention in this context.

The economy is subjected to various stresses and strains. As a result, the growth of the state's economy in real term has not been encouraging. During the last 50 years since independence particularly in recent years, the rate of growth of Assam's economy has lagged behind the rate at which the country as a whole is progressing. The economy of the state in terms of Net State Domestic Product (NSDP) registered an annual growth rate of 2.8 % at constant (1980 – 81) prices during the Eight Five Year plan as against a marginally higher growth of 3.2 % during the seventh Five Year plan period. As against this, the national economy in terms of gross Domestic Product (GDP) at constant price (1980 -81) registered an average growth rate of 6% and 6.8 % over the Seventh Five Year plan (1985 – 90) and Eighth Five Year plan (1992 – 97) period respectively. During 1999 – 2000 (i.e. Quick estimates) the contributions of primary, secondary and tertiary sectors to the total NSDP of the state at current prices stand at 46.14 %, 14.40 % and 39.46 % respectively. During the same year, the contributions of primary, secondary and tertiary sectors at constant (1993 – 94) prices have been found to be 46.26 %, 13.78 % and 39.96 % respectively. Regarding the state's position in respect of Net State Domestic product and performance of the agricultural sector, the Economic Survey of Assam, 2000 – 2001 (Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Assam) reports as follows:

1) IRDP, DWCRA, TRYSEM, SITRA, GKY and MWS programs have been merged with SGSY (Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojna) with effect from April 1, 1999.
2) Jawahar Gram Samriddhi Yojna (reconstructed JRY)
3) Indira Avas Yojana.
4) Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS)

The state's economy in terms of the Net State Domestic Product (NSDP) has registered an annual growth rate 8.2 per cent at constant (1993 – 94) prices during 1999 – 2000 (quick estimates) as against a negative growth rate of 2.2 per cent during 1998 – 99 (provisional estimates). At current prices the NSDP recorded a growth of 16.0 percent in 1999 – 2000 (quick estimates) as against 6.9 per cent growth recorded in the preceding year. In respect of the per capita income, the year registered a growth of 6.8 per cent in real terms as against a negative growth of 3.6 per cent recorded in 1998 – 99. At current prices the per capita income registered a growth 14.5 per cent in 1999 – 2000 as against 5.4 per cent in 1998 – 99. The advanced estimates of the

NSDP at constant (1993 – 94) prices has shown an annual growth rate of 1.8 per cent during 2000 – 2001 as against a growth rate of 8.2 per cent during 1999 – 2000 and a current prices the same has been estimated at 6.4 per cent during 2000 – 2001 as against 16.0 per cent during 1999 – 2000. The performance of certain important sectors during 1999 – 2000 indicates that the economic growth of the state is likely to register an increase during the year 2000 – 2001 onwards than the preceding years. The year 1999 – 2000 was a good year as far as the agriculture sector of the state is concerned. The share of this sector in NSDP of Assam at constant (1993 – 94) prices was 36.3 per cent and at current prices 37.8 per cent in 1999 – 2000. As regards the performance of industrial and mineral sector, the overall output during the year 1999 – 2000 reveals a mixed performance. The performance of power sector also did not show much improvement during the year.

2.21. PRIMARY EDUCATION IN ASSAM

The provincial government of Assam had made an early attempt to make Primary education free and compulsory by passing the primary education Act, 1926 as a follow – up of the Central government's resolution of 1913 for such measures. Incidentally, this was the first of a serious of similar Acts passed by the government of Assam after Independence. It made 'local authorities' i.e. Local Boards and Municipal Boards responsible for the implementation of the policy of compulsory Primary Education with the provincial authorities undertaking to provide two – third of the fund required for the purpose. The local authorities however failed to implement the Act because of the educational tax needed to be levied on the people of the area which was viewed as an unpopular measure. Moreover, it was not easy to compel farmers to send all their children to school. As a result, illiteracy in the society continued to be very widespread. The second legislative action was taken shortly after Independence in 1947 for making Primary education universal, free and compulsory. The provincial legislature of Assam passed the Assam Primary Education Act, 1947, which shifted the responsibility for introducing free and compulsory primary education from Local Municipal Boards to Sub – divisional School Boards created under the provisions of the Act, there being a provincial Advisory Board for Primary education (also constituted as per the Act) headed by the DPI to advise the government for control and direction of School Boards, recruitment of primary school

teachers and Attendance officers, teacher training, curriculum of Primary education, textbooks etc. Although the 1947 Act too failed to achieve the objective of compulsory Primary education, it paved the way for increased opportunities for Primary education. The Educational Survey in the State of Assam, 1957 reports that during the period from 1949 – 50 to 1956 – 57, enrolments raining from 80 % to 8 % of the estimate number of children of school going age took place in many areas of compulsion. For instance, in 1956 – 57, 82.14 % of the estimated number of 3,50,323 children of school going age in 13 towns and 4405 villages, which were declared as areas of compulsion, were enrolled in the Primary schools of the areas concerned. The Assam Primary Education Act to provide facilities for introduction of compulsory primary education in the province of Assam was passed in 1926. It is called the first primary education act in Assam. The Act states that--

a) It extends to the whole of Assam.
b) Any local authority may resolve by a majority of two-thirds of the members present, at a meeting specially convened for the purpose, to apply the section regarding introduction of compulsory education to whole or any part of the area.
c) The local authority shall submit to the government for consideration the resolution.
d) 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 Government on primary education.
e) In the event of the proposal being sanctioned, the Government shall provide to the local authority the remaining two thirds of the additional cost of the scheme.
f) The local authority of any area which resolves to introduce a scheme of compulsory primary education shall without diminishing its current expenditure on primary education in that area.
g) No fees shall be charged from any pupil for tuition in any recognized primary school maintained by the local authority.
h) The local authority and the education committee concerned shall be responsible for the enforcement of the provision of the act and shall provide

and maintain such school accommodation and equipment and shall employ such educational staff as the Director of public Instruction may consider necessary. It has not yet been enforced in any area.

The Assam Primary Education Act, 1947 was followed by four other Acts passed by the Legislative Assembly of Assam during the next three decades, these are

a) The Assam Basic Education Act, 1954.
b) The Assam Elementary Education Act, 1962.
c) The Assam Elementary Education Act, 1968.
d) The Assam Elementary Education (Provincialisation) Act, 1974.

The 1954 Act aimed at the systematic introduction of Basic education in the State for children of the age group of 6 to 14 years and accordingly a process of conversion of existing primary schools and Middle Vernacular schools to Junior Basic and Senior Basic schools respectively was started. However, the process of conversion was rather slow and by 1961 – 62, there were only 2618 junior basic schools out of a total number of 18,184 Primary schools (i.e. less than 15 %) of the total number and only 221 Senior Basic Schools out of a total number of 753 Middle Vernacular and senior basic schools (i.e. less than 30 % of the total number). Moreover, education of all subjects through a craft turned out to be a little unpractical and eventually the process was discontinued. The Assam Basic Education Act, 1954, was replaced by a new Act, viz. The Assam Elementary Education Act, 1962. With this Act, the focus of Elementary education shifted back to free and compulsory education in the State 'in gradual stages', although the efforts for such free and compulsory education had been continued during the Basic education phase also. Meanwhile, the Assam Panchayat Act was passed in 1959 and local authorities involved in the process of implementation of the Act including Gaon Panchayats also, the Block Development Officer with the help of the officers of the education department acting as the coordinating agency between the Gaon Panchayat and the state Board for Elementary Education headed by the Minister of Education. The Act entrusted the State government with the responsibility of administration, supervision inspection, curriculum and syllabus and training of teachers for Elementary education. The State Government was also vested with powers to rescind in part or whole any decision of a local authority. The Act passed in 1968 aimed basically at organizational

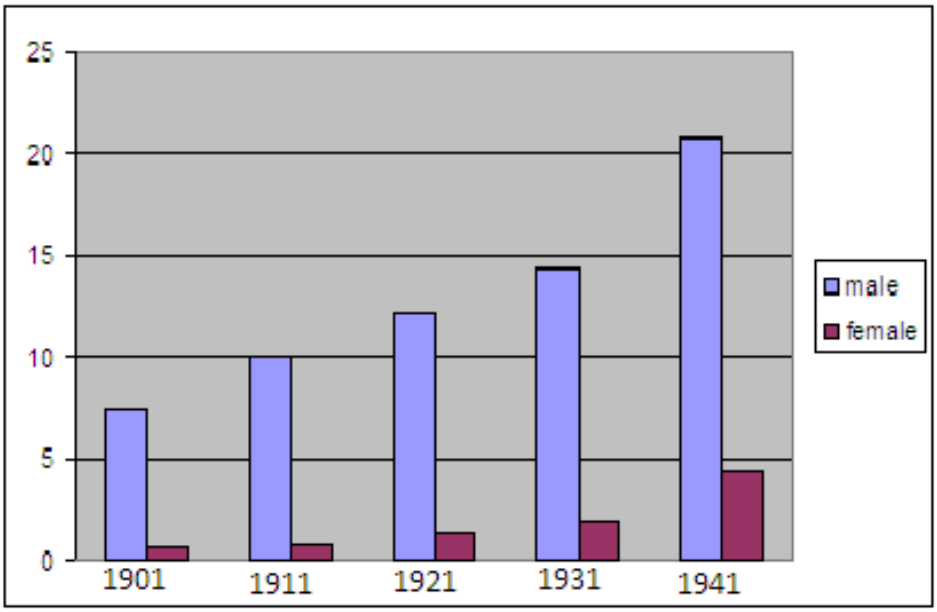
rearrangements for implementing the policy of free and compulsory Elementary education.

Apart from continuing the policy of free and compulsory primary education, the Assam Elementary schools (pre-primary, Primary and Middle Vernacular) through provincialisation of their services. As per the provisions of this Act the services of all teachers and employees, who had rendered services under the three previous repealed Acts were deemed to be services under the State government, making them eligible for pension and other retirement benefits like other State government employees. The authority for management and control of Elementary education was also taken over by the State government as per this Act, the later assuming thereby direct responsibility of Elementary education. The 1974 Act is still in force. Starting with 7,347 Primary schools in 1947, the system of Primary education in the state witness considerable expansion during the decades of Independence, although the quality of Primary education in general and the problem of untrained teachers in particular have always remained a weak pint in the system. The objective of universalisation of Primary education (UPE), not to speak of universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE), still remains unfulfilled, and in spite of very positive contributions of the operation Blackboard scheme and the District Primary Education Program after NPE, 1986, infrastructural weakness remain still visible in many Primary schools. The literacy rate of Assam prior to independence and after independence is shown in table 2.03 and table 2.01 respectively with their graphical representations.

Table—2.03 Literacy rate of Assam prior to Independence

Year	Male %	Female %	Total %
1901	7.5	0.6	8.2
1911	10.0	0.8	5.6
1921	12.2	1.4	7.1
1931	14.4	1.9	8.6
1941	20.8	4.4	13.1

Figure: 2.01 The graphical representation of the above facts is shown below:-

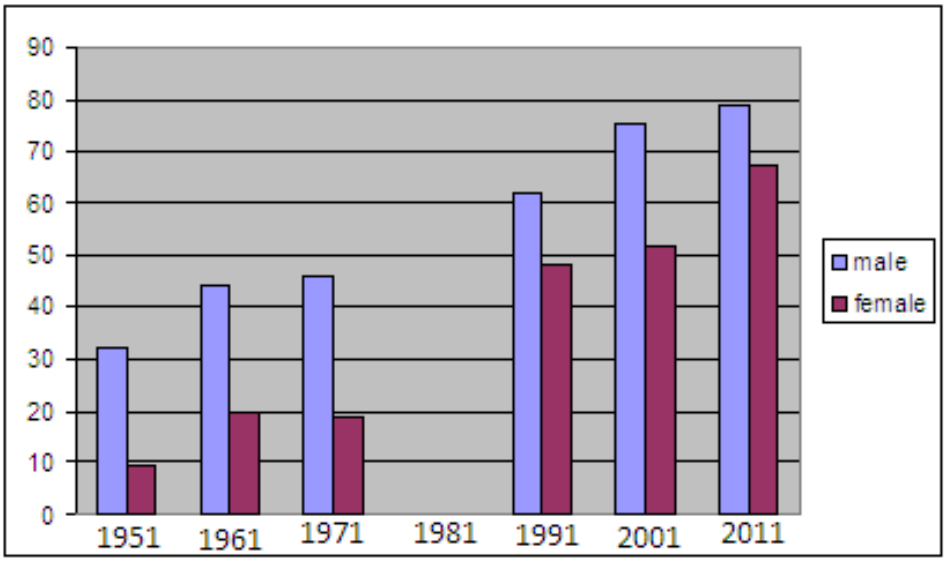


Table—2.04 Literacy rate of Assam after Independence

Year	Male %	Female %	Total %
1951	32.3	9.5	21.7
1961	44.3	19.6	33.0
1971	46.0	18.6	28.2
*1981	---	----	----
1991	61.9	48.03	52.9
2001	75.23	51.85	63.25
2011	78.81	67.27	73.18

*No census was held in 1981 in Assam.

Figure -2.02: The graphical representation of the above facts is shown below:-



The table 2.03 and table 2.04 reflect that the literacy percentage of male and female before and after independence gradually increased.

The recommendations made by the Kothari Commission (1964-66) are very useful and the Central Government has accepted the recommendations regarding pattern of education. National policy on Education 1968, recommended the introduction of the 10+2+3 pattern of education in the country. The Central Advisory Board of Education in its meeting held in November, 1974 recommended the introduction of 10+2+3 pattern of education all over the country during the Fifth Five year plan. In the year 1978, primary education was made provincialised in Assam. For effective running of primary schools, Assam Government has created a separate Directorate of education. During this period, various steps were taken such as, appointment of joint directors of education, establishment of state education organization, flexibility in administrative structure etc. In the year 1977 State Advisory Board of Education was established. The main duty of the board is to give necessary suggestion for the improvement of primary education and to find out the various problems of primary education. The total numbers of primary schools were 21,603, 26,603 and 33,236 during the year 1986, 1991 and 2000 respectively. The total number of teachers in Assam were 86,810 in the year 2000.

In the year 1986, the parliament adopted the National Policy on Education where many new approaches, schemes and measures were provided for the development of primary education. The Govt. of India has accepted and launched different new

programmes like Operation Blackboard, District Primary Education Programme, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan for the universalization of primary education in the country. In the year 1987-88 Operation Blackboard scheme was adopted in Assam and the main aim of this scheme is to improve condition of the schools, supply learning equipment, provide mid-day meal, distribute free text books, construction of school building etc. The centrally sponsored scheme of DPEP was launched in 1994 to revitalize the primary education system and to achieve the objective of universalisation of primary education. During the period of 1993-94 the program of operation blackboard is extended to the upper primary stages and under it a grant was given to purchase teaching- learning materials in the schools.

The scheme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was adopted in Assam in the year 2001-02. The main aim of this scheme is to provide useful and practical primary education to all children of 6-14 years by 2010. After making a holistic survey, it is found that in Assam there were 13.40 lakh students who are deprived of getting primary education. Therefore more emphasis was given to established schools in the remote areas and to make education accessible for each and every child under the scheme. The scheme has been launched its program under the mission of "Education for All" within 2010. As a result 90% of children within the age group 5—6 years are enrolled under SSA under the name of a programme Sishur Uttaran. From that time 1st to 10th January every year Vidya Aramva Mela is conducted by the SSA in every school for the admission of the children. By this the children is motivated to admit in the primary school. As a part of SSA, short term Setubandhan curriculum were launched where after passing the courses a child can enroll in the primary school. On the other hand where such facilities is unavailable, the centres of "Amar Padasali was established. During the period of 2004- 05, more than 5000 of such centres were established. Apart from it, another abhiyan "Asha Deep" was taken and with the help of it 9 district of Assam were selected to provide residential Setubandhan curriculum for the learners of 10 years and above. To maintain a balance between pupil-teacher ratio at the primary level, "Siksha Sarathi" and "Siksha Karmi" were appointed. Again for smooth functioning of SSA, more than 18,000 para teachers (contractual) has been appointed in Assam under the program "Aashawas", continuous evaluation, holding conference for teacher- pupil relation, facilities for drinking water, sanitation etc. were taken up. The provision of drinking water and improvement of hygienic condition of

school has been taken under the scheme of “Swajaldhara”. More than 500 schools are recognized as a”Smart schools” and distributed computer to these schools. Besides, “Siksha Nyayas Mancha” is established so that necessary improvement on primary education can be made and this programme is also undertaken in Sarva Siksha Abhiyan.

Every child between the ages of 6-14 years has the right to get free and compulsory education and the 86th Amendment of Constitution introduced a new article 21A, making the primary education free and compulsory. The Right To Education Act, 2009 Bill is presented in the Parliament on 24th August, 2009 and passed the bill in both Loksabha and Rajyasabha. Accordingly free and compulsory education act has come into force from 1st April 2010. At present there are altogether 35,000 schools in the state and 3800000 students are studying in various schools of Assam. In the Assam Assembly held in March, 2011, it is reported that 7470 schools are running by single teacher. The Congress Govt. retain to power for the third time and Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma became Education Minister of Assam. After that the Assam Govt. conducted the Teacher Eligibility Test (TET). On the basis of merit from the successful candidates, more than 40,000 teachers were appointed in the year 2012 as TET teacher. The Education Minister had a commitment to change scenario of education in Assam. There are also lots of problem of primary schools like lack of trained teachers, proper infrastructure facilities, inspections etc. Thus it is observed that in spite of the various problems attempts taken by the Govt. to provide free and compulsory primary education to the children between 6-14 years, it is not yet realized.

Table-2.05 Total Primary schools in Assam district wise

District	Government / Provincialised	Tea Garden / Local body managed	Total
Bongaigaon	696	0	696
Kokrajhar	1314	4	1318
Dhubri	1634	2	1636
Goalpara	1298	1	1299
Barpeta	1663	0	1663
Morigaon	1048	2	1050
Nagaon	2341	31	2372
Sonitpur	1775	98	1873
Lakhimpur	1505	11	1516
Dhemaji	1136	0	1136
Tinsukia	989	122	1111
Dibrugarh	1302	146	1448
Sibsagar	1762	0	1762
Jorhat	1631	6	1637
Golaghat	1093	0	1093
Karbi Anglong	1773	4	1777
Dima Hasao	753	14	767
Cachar	1855	0	1855
Karimganj	1429	0	1429
Hailakandi	1099	0	1099
Chirang	725	0	725
Kamrup	1680	1	1681
Kamrup(Metro)	490	6	496
Nalbari	883	0	883
Baksa	1188	6	1194
Darrang	967	2	969
Udalguri	1035	24	1059
Assam	35064	480	35544

Number of Lower Primary Schools in Assam, 2012—13. Statistical Hand Book, Assam 2013

2.22. NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION, 1986 AND ASSAM

A variety of new challenges and social needs make it imperative for the Government of Assam to formulate and implement the New Education policy of 1986 and more emphasis on –

1) Universal enrolment and universal retention of children up to 14years of age.
2) Substantial improvement in the quality of education.
3) Systematic efforts to provide non- formal education to educate school dropouts, children from areas without school, working children who are unable to attend the school during day time.
4) Implementing Operation Black Board scheme to provide essential facilities in the school.

Measures under operation black board scheme in Assam

The following measures were adopted by the Government of Assam for the implementation of the Operation Black Board scheme –

1. Establishment of schools in different villages.
2. Construction of 2 extra classrooms in schools.
3. Provision for free text book and other materials.
4. Supply of black board to school.
5. Appointment of teachers in single teacher schools.
6. Establishment of teacher training institutes for primary school teachers.
7. Provision for additional posts of school inspector for better inspection and supervision.

2.23. DISTRICT PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME

The District Primary Education Programme is a centrally sponsored scheme for universalization of primary education launched in Assam in the year 1994 in 9 district in phase-I . These districts are Dudhnoi of Goalpara, Titaguri of Kokrajhar, Agomoni of Dhubri, Boitamri in Bongaigaon, Chenga of Barpeta, Dalgaon of Darrang, Na- duar

of Sonitpur, Lahorighat of Morigaon and Howraghat of Karbi Anglong. In the second phase the entire districts of Assam covered by the DPEP.

2.24. SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN (SSA) IN ASSAM

The education of children of age 6—14 years has become a fundamental right after the 86th Constitutional Amendment. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan designed by the government to provide primary education to all children of age group 6—14years. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was started in the later part of 2001 – 02 in the state of Assam. To encourage community involvement peoples committees have been constituted at school, villages, ward, tea garde, Gaon panchayat, Anchalik panchayat and District level. These committees are:--

1. School Management Committee (SMC)
2. Village Education Committee (VEC)
3. Tea Garden Education Committee (TGEC)
4. Ward Education Committee (WEC)
5. Gaon panchayat Education Committee (GPEC)

SSA provides regular support to the committees so that they can take up the responsibility of universal enrolment and retention and school improvement on their own.

2.25. BONGAIGAON DISTRICT PROFILE

The decision of the State government Assam was taken in 1989 to create a new district of Bongaigaon carving out some areas of Goalpara and Kokrajhar district with its headquarter located at Bongaigaon. On 29 September 1989 the creation of Bongaigaon district was declared by the Govt. of Assam with it's headquarter at Bongaigaon. It has two Sub-division namely, North Salmara (Abhayapuri) and Bongaigaon. The district is bounded by Chirang district in the North and in the West, Goalpara and Dhubri in the South, Barpeta in the East.

Bongaigaon is situated at an average altitude of 62.6 m with the cardinal points 26028 east latitude and 90034 north longitude. The town is situated at a distance 200 km

west from the state capital Guahati and occupies an important place in the communication network in Assam as well as North East India. New Bongaigaon Railway Junction is a major junction connecting Assam with rest of India. This city is also very well connected by road through the National Highway 31 and 37. This connectivity and the strategic location of the town in the regional setup have helped it to emerge as an important centre in trade and commerce in western Assam serving a vast hinter land. Bongaigaon is the largest city in lower Assam and one of the most important city in Assam. The city is one of the biggest commercial and industrial hubs of North East India and also of Assam. It is the 4th largest city of Assam by municipal areas and population. The Asian Development Bank selected the city on their urban agglomerian in Assam with line of Guwahati, Dibrugarh and Kolkata. The city is the administrative headquarters and municipal board of Bongaigaon district.

2.26 ORIGIN OF THE WORD BONGAIGAON

There is no information regarding the origin of the word Bongaigaon. But from the informal sources we have got that once a saint had many Gai (cow) and they were grassed in a Ban (forest, jungle) place. Later on the people of that area could see the cow of the saint. The forest or the jungle where the saint had grassed his cow, it is known as Bongaigaon. There may be some other etymological meaning of the word Bongaigaon.

2.27. POPULATION

Bongaigaon district has the total population 732639. Out of this 373590 is male and 359049 is female population. The decadal growth rate is 19.58%. The sex ratio in 1000 male is 961 female. The density of population is 425 per square km. The literacy rate of this district is 70.44, out of this male literacy is 75.48% and female literacy is 65.18%. From the literacy side Bongaigaon district is occupying 17th rank in Assam. Despite a rise in overall literacy levels several island of mass illiteracy remains, which not only pulls down the average but also creates division, discord, and dis enhancement among the masses. Here we deal with one such area, namely the char areas of Bongaigaon district. Chars are nothing but geological formations in the river Brahmaputra and some sub – river like Iye, Manas, Pokalagi etc. of the district which

are formed due to abrupt differences in slope and gradient of the river. The char area is more fertile land. There is no recorded evidence regarding the history of their formation but human habitations in these stretches are over hundred years old. They are settlers from erstwhile East Bengal (now Bangladesh) who have settled in chars for number of generations. These settlers played an important role in developing the agriculture sector in the district and by dinot of sheer courage and hard work these barren stretches have been turned into revenue yielding fields from the days of colonial rule. The livelihood pattern of these settlers have remained similar although their habitats are under constant threat of erosion during the floods in Brahmaputra. According to estimates more than 50% of the char dwellers are below official poverty line. These areas have the dubious distinction of being the islands of illiteracy too. Rampant illiteracy and poverty adds fuel to the fire of discord which is aptly exploited by the power brokers to retain their hold over our democratic power structure. The Koch Rajbonshi is the dominant community of the district, Major portion of people belongs to Koch Rajbonshi in town area of Bongaigaon district. Atugaon, Jalkajhar, Bachhan gaon, Mulagaon Boitamari, North Salmara, Majgaon, Chokapara Chaprakata, North Bongaigaon, Simlaguri these are dominant by Rajbonshi. Besides this community there are Nepali, Garo, Santali, Bengali and Muslim communities living together peacefully along with Rajbonshis of this district. The main rivers of this district are Brahmaputra, Manah, Aie, Pokalagi Kujia etc. The river is continuing Erosion every year and creating problem living besides the river. A thousand of Bighas of crops field erosion and peoples are to be shifted to other places during the flood. The person of this area depends on agriculture. They produces all kinds of crops and supplied to other place also. The rural economy is basically agricultural economy and it is the backbone of the people. The rural unemployed also depend on agriculture. Some of the rural unemployed youths have adopted agriculture as their occupation. The people of this district is developed educationally and economically. Majority of the people still living below poverty level in char areas. In case of education the district is still lacking for higher, technical and medical education.

Table-2.06 Literacy

Literacy	As per 2001census	As per 2011census
Average	60.26%	70.44%
Male	68.81%	75.48%
Female	51.16%	65.18%

Source--- Rastriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, RMSA, SSA and Directorate of Secondary Education, Directorate of Higher Education

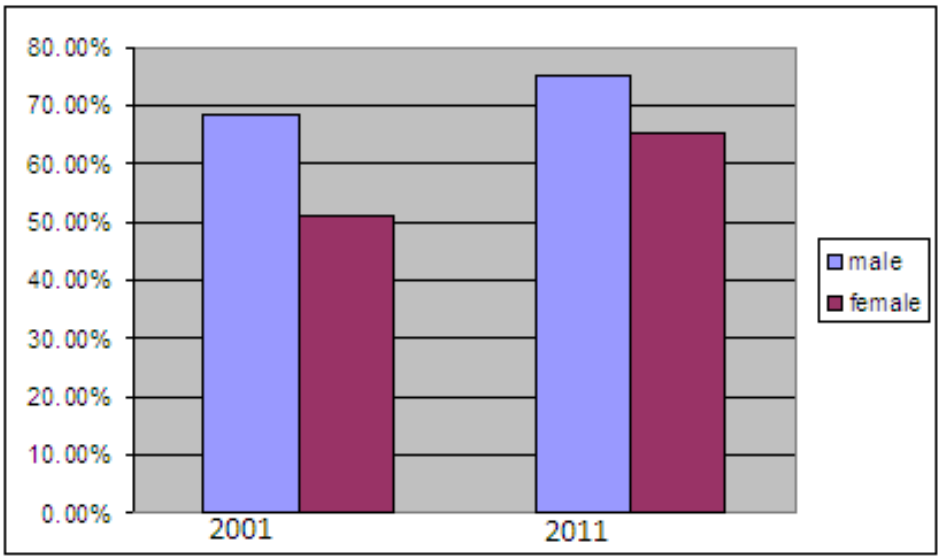


Figure-2.03 The above table and graph reflects that the literacy of male percentage is higher than female in Bongaigaon District. Bongaigaon District at a Glance is shown in below.

Table—2.07 Data of Bongaigaon district

General Information	Number
LAC	3
Member of Assembly Constituencies	3
Sub- Division	2
Anchalik Parishad	7
Educational Blocks	4
Rural Blocks	4
Urban Blocks	0
Community Development Blocks	4
Towns	2
Gaon Panchayat	65
Wards	28
Clusters	67
Tea Gardens	1
Tea Garden Divisions	1
Villages	597
Habitations	1539

Source: Educational Statistics of SSA, Bongaigaon (2013—14)

Table—2.08 Bongaigaon district population

Population	As Per 2001 Census	As Per 2011 Census		
		Male	Female	Total
Total	606315	373,590	359049	732639
SC	92770	42513	40271	82784
ST	110696	9377	9458	18858
Rural	795053	321206	310607	631813
Urban	109782	52384	48442	100826

2.28 EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

Various educational institutions of Bongaigaon district imparting education to the students. The following Provincialised colleges are providing higher education ---

1. Abhayapuri college
2. Bongaigaon college
3. Birjhora (science) Mahavidyalaya, Bongaigaon
4. Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Bongaigaon
5. Rajib Gandhi Memorial college, Lengtisinga
6. Manikpur Anchalik college.
7. Mahatma Gandhi college Jogighopa

Another college is Indira Gandhi college (Financial Assisted) by govt. of Assam. There is one Polytechnical Institute at Bacchangaon 4.4 km. distance from Bongaigaon town. Another milestone of educational institution is Industrial Training Institute located at Bongaigaon. One B. Ed. college is located in Bongaigaon town. There are 121 high schools, 11 higher secondary school and 4 Junior colleges providing higher secondary level of education. In Bongaigaon district, there are 844 provincialised primary, 136 upper primary and 19 upper primary with high school.

2.29 AGRICULTURE

In Bongaigaon district agriculture occupied a very important place. The farmer of this district produces various types of crops like, paddy, jute, mustard seed, potato, sweet potato, brinjal, tomato, turmeric etc. It is also a home of large varieties of citrus fruits, leaf vegetable, vegetable, useful grasses, herbs spices etc. Productivity has increased marginally as compared to the earlier. Particularly Eri paddy production is very high in char area of Bongaigaon district. There are several places of this district where jute production is very high. This district export jute to many places of India.

2.30 INDUSTRY

Once Bongaigaon was very famous for industry. There were several industris viz- Ashok paper Mill, Boitamari spinning Mill, Noapara (Manikpur), spinning Mill, produces high quality thread. The paper mill also produces good quality paper and supply various places of Assam. Unfortunately the Ashok paper mill is closed a few years back. Bongaigaon Refinery and Petro- chemical Limited (BRPL) is a Government sector industry refines crude oil and produces various things. Now it is included in Chirang district. There are so many industries in this district. Industrially Bongaigaon district is rich.

2.31. CULTURE

Bongaigaon district is a multi- cultural one. Some of the common and unique cultural traits of this district are people respect with areca nut betel leaves, symbolic (Gamosa, Arnai), traditional silk garments (Mekhala chador) etc. Moreover great hospitality and bamboo culture are common. With rich tradition the modern culture is greatly influenced by the western.

2.32. FESTIVAL

There are diversified important traditional festivals in Bongaigaon district. Bihu is the most important and common and celebrated all over Bongaigaon district. Durga puja is another festival celebrated with great enthusiasm. Muslim celebrated two Eid with much eagerness all over the district. Bwisagu is one of the popular seasonal festival of the Bodos. Bwisagu is a Bodo word which originated from the word Baisa which means year or age and Agu that means starting or start. Bwisagu start of the New Year or age. Bongaigaon district is multi traditional and many festivals are observed.

2.33. PROJECTS AND OTHERS

Bongaigaon district is comparatively rich in the name of various projects. The Kaya Kujia tourism project is the biggest of this district which attracts various people of the distant. Bamungaon social forestry near the town of Abhayapuri is another tourist spot under Bongaigaon district. It is near the hill side of Bamungaon. Every year, in the

month of January many picnic party and other tourist personnel comes to Kaya Kujia and they enjoy the scenery of the project Many students from various educational institutions come for field study and other purposes. The Tamranga Bil is the largest bil in lower Assam, where all kinds of fish is available. The people of the surrounding area earned their livelihood by fishing and selling. From the above project and bil, the Govt. of Assam gets a huge amount of revenue. For golden langur and birds, Kakoijana Reserved Forest is an ideal spot for eco-tourism. Kakoijana is declared as reserve forest in April 1996 located 15 km away from Bongaigaon city towards the East. It has been upgraded as wild life sanctuary covering an area around 20 km.

2.34. PRIMARY EDUCATION IN BONGAIGAON DISTRICT

Bongaigaon district having four educational blocks namely, Manikpur Block, Boitamari Block, Srijangram Block and Bongaigaon Block. District Elementary Education Officer (DEEO) looks after the primary education of the district.The Block Elementary Education Officer (BEEO) of the respective blocks supervise primary education. Blockwise number of primary schools shown in table-2.09.

Table- 2.09: Nos. of school

Management	Category	Boitamari	Bongaigaon	Manikpur	Srijongram	Total
Govt. Provincialised	LPS	160	135	114	287	696
Newly provincialised	LPS	28	37	30	53	148
	Total	188	172	144	340	844

Educational statistics of SSA, Bongaigaon (2013—2014)

Table-2.10 Pupil Teacher Ratio in Government/ Provincialised schools at primary level of Bongaigaon district.

Year	Pupil Teacher Ratio
2010---11	1: 52.85
2011---12	1: 52.85
2012---13	1: 31.26
2013---14	1: 36.92

Source-Educational Statistics of SSA, Bongaigaon (2013-14).

Table-2.11 GER and NER at Primary level by Gender, Social Category of Bongaigaon district.

Primary level	Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)						Net Enrolment Ratio (NER)					
Year	All			SC	ST	Minority	All			SC	ST	Minority
	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL				BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL			
2009-10	112.7	112.3	112.5	96.1	93.4	89	97.3	97.4	97.3	93	95.2	90
2010-11	111.3	110.9	111.1	93.2	97.1	92	97.3	97.2	97.2	96	97	92.2
2011-12	107.4	106.4	106.9	91.7	95.2	91.2	96.9	96.2	96.6	97	98.1	92.1
2012-13	103.2	102.4	102.8	89.2	93.1	92	95.5	95.1	95.3	96	97.2	93.3
2013-14	103.1	102.3	102.7	92.4	94.6	93.5	95.8	96.1	95.9	96.2	96.7	93.5

Source-Educational Statistics of SSA, Bongaigaon (2013—14)

DPEP AND BONGAIGAON DISTRICT

District Primary Education Programme was started in phase-II in Bongaigaon district. The infrastructure and teachers training was started on regular basis. The Cluster Resource Centre was formed locally with 10 or 12 primary school and the Co-Ordinator was appointed from the primary school teacher. Under the CRCC, the cluster was functioning very well. Various activities were performed by the CRC and developmental program was taken for the year. The CRCC of the cluster arrange workshop and part time training to the teachers for upto date their knowledge. Some essential teaching learning materials and equipment was supplied to the primary schools. In the block level ABRCC was appointed and they were arranged various activities at block level. The BEO was the Block Mission Co-ordinator. Under his strong leadership more developmental programmes were taken. The DEO was the DMC at the district level.

SSA AND BONGAIGAON DISTRICT

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was started in Bongaigaon district in 2001-02. The SSA Mission has been strenuously working to achieve the National Goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) with multi-dimensional strategies. Universal Enrolment, Retention and a substantive quality improvement of the children of stipulated age group. To ensure access educational facilities as per norms has to be created considering the circumstances. Similarly efforts are given to ensure universal retention and also to extend quality education to every child in primary education. The Panchayat Raj Institution (PRI) and the community in the various tie are also helping the mission to improve the quality scenario of the existing schooling system to extend schooling facilities to the out of school, physically challenged, working and non working children and to develop community ownership to the schooling system besides extension of better school infrastructure. Free textbook and Mid-Day Meal Scheme are two significant incentives provided to children for strengthening of free and compulsory primary education. SSA tried to develop the infrastructure of the primary school in broad based.

RTE –2009

Right To Education becomes the fundamental right of children up to the age of 14 years after insertion of the Article- 21A in the constitution of India. It becomes mandatory for every conscious citizen of India to look into the matter so that children right is implemented as desired. The provision of RTE-2009 is implementing in Bongaigaon district in the primary school.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CURRICULUM OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN ASSAM (BONGAIGAON)

After independence, Primary Education Act was passed in 1947 to introduce free and universal primary education in graded stages for the children of the age group 6-14 yrs. Subsequently, the said Act was replaced by the Assam Basic Education Act, 1954 following which the Govt. of Assam accepted basic education as the pattern of Elementary Education. After the passage of this Act in September, 1954 a process of conversion of existing primary schools into Junior Basic schools was started. In 1955, the State Board of Basic Education was constituted to advice the government on matters relating to basic education including preparation of curriculum and selection of textbooks. For the preparation of curriculum and syllabus the Board had a committee with the DPI as the chairman. The curriculum included the following subjects—(for class I to III)

1) Vernacular,
2) Arithmetic, accounts, reading of clock,
3) General knowledge and elementary science, hygiene,
4) Geography,
5) Handwork like clay modeling, bamboo work, paper work etc.
6) Drawing,
7) Physical exercise.

The Assam Basic Education Act, 1954 failed to achieve the desired results and as a result the ideal of imparting basic education through crafts as well as the process of conversion of primary and Middle schools into Junior Basic and Senior Basic schools was discontinued. In 1968, the curriculum renewal program was taken up in Assam by the DPI in the light of National Policy of Education, 1968 and instructions from

the centre to states for development of curriculum in respective states. The State Board of Elementary Education instructed State Institute of Education (SIE) Jorhat, Assam to take the responsibility of preparation of a new curriculum for primary education. Accordingly the SIE under took the task of developing the new curriculum for primary level. The four year new curriculum so prepared was implemented from the year 1972 after its approval by the state govt. The subject included in the curriculum were--

a) Mother tongue (reading, writing, dictation, grammar)
b) Arithmetic
c) General knowledge and science
d) Geography (for class II to IV)
e) Arts and handwork
f) Sewage
g) Physical education.

The curriculum was class wise in detail for each subject along with instructions on teaching methods, materials to be used and textbook to be followed. The curriculum was printed by the Assam State Textbook Production and publication Corporation Limited. Though it was developed in 1969, it was implemented in the year 1973 only. The curriculum and syllabus implemented at the time remained unchanged up to 1986. The National Policy of Education, 1986 was adopted in May 1986 and in the light of NPE, the National curriculum for Elementary and Secondary Education, A Framework 1988 was prepared by the NCERT through a series of meetings and seminars. SCERT, Assam developed the new curriculum for primary schools of the state in the light of the guidelines in the National Curriculum Framework. The curriculum subjects were—

1) One Language (mother tongue/regional language)
2) Mathematics.
3) Environmental Studies
4) Health and physical education
5) Art

The duration of school activities is 5 hours per day, out of which 4 hours are for teaching learning and 1 hour for prayer, leisure. The total number of school days is

considered as 200 out of which some hours are to be spent for remedial teaching for slow learners. The new curriculum was introduced in a phase manner from the year 1988 as follows—

1988 -- I & II

1989--- III & IV

This curriculum remained unchanged till 1998.

SCERT, Assam developed a new curriculum in 1998 for primary schools of the state to incorporate new trends in primary education. The curriculum was approved by the state govt. and by UNICEF for all the schools in the state in December, 1998. The new curriculum is fully competency based and child centric and aims at improving the quality as well as reducing the curriculum load in keeping with the concerns expressed by the Yashpal Committee report, 1993. The present curriculum for primary education in Assam comprised-

1) Mother tongue
2) Mathematics.
3) Environmental Studies
4) Art education
5) Physical education

The new curriculum is child centric activity and competency based related to the child's day to day environment and oriented towards the principle of joyful learning. The curriculum is developed for all types of learners. Special importance is given to rural, first generation learners, learners of different communities like tea workers, SC, ST etc. Accordingly textbooks have also been prepared, without any bias in respect of religion, caste or creed. After that SCERT, Assam made revision of curriculum in 2003 and the recent development of curriculum was made in 2010. The new revision made the following changes in the curriculum meant for lower primary stages.

Class I & II

1) Scholastic Area
    a) Language + Environmental Studies
    b) English
    c) Mathematics

2) Co-scholastic Area-
    a) Art Education
    b) Physical Education
    c) Cleaning
    d) Annual sports
    e) Summer/winter camp

Class –III, IV &V

1) Scholastic Area
    a) Language
    b) English
    c) Mathematics
    d) Environmental Studies
2) Co-Scholastic Area
    a) Art Education
    b) Physical Education
    c) Cleaning
    d) Annual Sports
    e) Cub Bulbul
    f) Picnic
    g) Gardening and Plantation
    h) Observation of Days
    i) Value Education
    j) Camp

EDUCATION GUARANTEE SCHEME AND ALTERNATIVE AND INNOVATIVE EDUCATION (EGS & AIE)

Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education are an important component of SSA in Bongaigaon district to bring out of school children in the formal Primary Education. The scheme envisages that child wise planning is undertaken for each out of school children. EGS addresses the inaccessible habitation where there is no formal school within the radius of 1 km. and at least 15-25 children of 6-14 years age group, who are not going to school are available. In exceptional

cases in remote habitations in hilly areas even for 10 children an EGS school can be opened. Alternative Education interventions for specific categories of very deprived children, e g child labor, street children, migrating children, working children, children living in difficult circumstances and older children in the 9+ age group especially adolescents girls are being supported under EGS and AIE all over the country. A sizable number of out of school children are in the habitations where schooling facility is available but these children either did not join the school or dropped out before completing their schooling. These children may not fit into the rigid formal system. To bring such children back to school, back to school camp and bridge courses strategies have been implemented. Bridge courses and back to school camps can be residential or non residential depending upon the need of children.

Under Sarva Siksha Abhijan there are 60 (65.93%) cluster under Bongaigaon District. The total Nos of panchayat is 69 under Bongaigaon District. The number of village in Bongaigaon District is 595. The habitation falls under Bongaigaon is 1534.

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN BONGAIGAON DISTRICT OF ASSAM.

Education Minister

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Commissioner/ Secretary of Education

↓

Director of Elementary Education ,Assam

↓

District Elementary Education Officer

↓

Deputy Inspector of Schools

↓

Block Elementary Education Officer

CLUSTER RESOURCE CENTRE CO-ORDINATOR (CRCC)

There are 67 clusters in 4 educational block of Bongaigaon District. The CRC are the real centre of learning for teachers by sharing the experiences inside and outside the

classroom atmosphere. The Co-ordinator of respective centre provides training to the teachers. These cluster resource centers are the core organizations of the various programs at local level. They serve as the new centers of our system delivering the programmes of primary education and evaluating etc. These centers provide with wisdom to cope up with the local and regional problems. In the monthly meeting held at CRC, the teachers are given opportunities to express their difficulties in teaching and learning process. Also the innovative methods are introduced. The CRC inculcates the zeal in the educators and provided more access to the learners. The periodical meetings conducted every month in CRC enables the teachers in solving their difficulties and in improving their teaching learning process. The CRC are serving as a tool for exposing individual caliber, trial and error methods to find solutions of the classroom teaching – learning problems. Each CRC consists of 32 to 40 teachers of 10 to 12 nearby schools. Honorarium, refreshment, contingencies, TLM expenses etc. will be granted as per the training norms. The Co-ordinator of the CRC gets a fixed amount as honorarium.

BLOCK RESOURCE PERSON (BRP)

The position of Block Resource Person in Bongaigaon district is 3 and all the 3 BRP is functioning in their own way. The basic principle of teacher training under SSA is that in-service training is a continuous ongoing process, rather than a single intervention or a series of one-off interventions. The end point is the establishment of teachers centers at which they discuss problems, seeks solution learn from each other and from resource persons such as BRP, staff from DIET etc. will enrich the professional development of teachers. In-service education of teachers is one of the most important strategies to improve the quality of education. Researchers have very often emphasized the importance of the link between the quality of education and the adequacy of opportunities for the professional development of teachers. However recent reviews of research on in-service education converge in their findings with regard to ineffectiveness of in-service education available to teachers. There are a number of instances where training content is generally decided by people other than the teachers for whom in-service education is meant. As a result, in-service education program rarely address their individual needs and concerns. Further, in the planning and implementation of in- service training program, sound conceptual basis is very

often absent which is essential to ensure their effectiveness. In-service education and training to teachers, to be effective, therefore needs to be designed appropriately. For the proper functioning of the above, the BRP has been appointed by the SSA.

ROLE OF BLOCK RESOURCE PERSON

The block resource person is a most experienced and trained teacher conducting the various training program for the teachers. The BRP provides training to the teachers like faculty members of DIET. BRC building at the respective blockhead quarter in which various training program are being imparted. The training program are planned to satisfy the urgent and perennial needs of the classroom teaching to enrich this technological aspect. BRC is to be equipped with the modern technical and scientific instruments along with adequate furniture. The BRP trains the teachers and build their capacity in pedagogic methodologies.