

## Promoting Education for the Girl Child in Gauhati

I gradually discovered, to my utter dismay, that Gauhati lagged behind much in the area of women's education. In 1926, the present Panbazar Girls' High School was upgraded from an M. E. School to a High school. As I was the only woman graduate in Gauhati, I was offered the job of the Principal. But my husband was not very keen on my working full time. I concurred to his wishes, knowing full well that I would not be able to look after the needs of my small children if I accepted the offer. However, I began to work in an honorary basis as a part time teacher, pitching in with my assistance whenever needed. Quite a few Bengali ladies from outside Assam were appointed as the Principal, but none of them lasted long.

When Shri Hem Chandra Sen retired from Cotton School, he was appointed as the Headmaster of Panbazar Girls' High School. The junior classes in the school hardly had one or two Assamese teachers at the time. The question papers were set in Bengali. From class VII onwards, the medium of instruction changed to English. Very few girls completed their school education before 1931- 32. Most of them dropped out of school after class VII. At that time, people in Gauhati still observed the ritual of *Dharam Biya* for the Brahmin girls, after which their studies were usually discontinued.