General information:

Cachar, the extreme easterly district of Assam lies between 24°8' and 25°8' North latitude; 92°15' and 93°15' East Longitude. The district is bound on north by the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills district, on the east by the Manipur State, on the west by the Sylhet district of Bangladesh and the State of Tripura and on the south by the Mizo Hills district. The area of this district according to the census of India-1961 is 2,680 Sq. miles with a population of 13,78,476. In the present set up the district has three Sub-divisions viz. Silchar, Hailakandi and Karimganj with the District Headquarter at Silchar. The district of Cachar when it was under the rule of hereditary monarchs was more extensive and it included the present North Cachar and Mikir Hills district. The area of Cachar at that time was 3750 Sq. miles. As a whole, the physical aspect of Cachar is diversified and beautiful. The district is surrounded on three sides by mountains and hills; and within the district itself also there are ranges of hills intersected by the Barak river from East to West. There are two valleys to the south of this river divided by a range of hill. The most part of these valleys remain under water during the

rainy season forming extensive lakes and marshes. The western one is known as the Hailakandi Valley and the eastern one is called the Chatlafen, on the southern side of the district is civil headquarter Silchar. To the extreme south of the district, the land is for the most part forest but day by day the rice cultivation is extending in this direction. North of the Barak river most of the plain lands are cultivated. No sub-division of the district can be considered wholly as a plain region, when the sub-division of Silchar includes the southern section of the Assam range with an average width of six or seven miles having peaks between three and four thousand feet in height. On the Eastern frontier there is the Bhuban range, covering a vast area. The range, in some places rises to over 3,000 feet above the sea level. On the Hailakandi valley the Chhatachura or Sarispur hills stand in a continuous line up to the Barak. Even the most of the plain lands of the district are dotted over; with low ranges or isolated small hills called tills, indicating that the land of Cachar is not level.

"Most of the hills are clothed with dense forest excluding some places where jum cultivation or tea plantation is carried on clearing the jungle. The rich vegetation and beautiful forms of the hills, the great fertility of the cultivated lands, the size and beauty of the bamboo groves and fruit trees that surround the cottages of the people, and even the wild and

primeval appearance of the great marshes give a richness and picturesque variety to the scenery of Cachar which is wanting in the monotonous plains of Eastern Bengal.\textsuperscript{4} The soil of the plain being an alluvial deposit of mixed sand and clay is fit for the cultivation of different kinds of agricultural products.

The climate:\textsuperscript{5}

The climate of Cachar is almost similar to that of the adjoining foreign stage Bangladesh with the exception that the constant evaporation from the forests of the hill-ranges, and from the great marshes keeps the atmosphere highly charged with moisture almost through the year. Therefore, the temperature is usually found to be lower than the neighbouring districts of the West. The year may be broadly classified into two seasons - the cold and rainy seasons. The rainy season starts from the beginning of April and continues till the middle of October. From December to February the weather is generally dry and cold. Haviest rainfall takes place in the months of June and July and in the latter month the temperature reaches up to maximum point. From the end of July to the middle of October, the climate is very unpleasant. During the period the whole district becomes saturated with moisture which evaporates on a sunny day. In this time the nights are hot and oppressive.


\textsuperscript{5} Ibid - P.P. 463-464.
The average mean temperature through the year is about 77°, the range of variation of temperature being 32°. The average annual rainfall as recorded during the five years ending 1876 was 114.41 inches.

Early history:

The Cachar district derives its name from the Kachari tribe. The history of Cachar goes long back before the British took possession of the country in 1830 in accordance with the clause of the treaty of 1826. The 'Kacharies of Cachar are generally believed to be a section of the Great Bodo Horo. This powerful and populous race as said to have had its origin somewhere between the upper waters of the Yang-tse-Kiang and the Hoang-ho, to have spread in successive waves over Assam and to have even penetrated as far south as the Tippera hills."

Captain Fisher, the first Superintendent of Cachar, took great pains to trace out the early history of the Cacharies. In his operation this tribe gradually acquired an improvement over Assam, Sylhet, Maimansingh and the valleys to the east of the Brahmaputra, their original seat being at Kamrup; and their rule embraced everything from Kamrup down to the sea. Captain Fisher is also of the opinion that about a thousand years ago the ruling caste (Cacharies) was forced south by the continued pressure of the Koch race and next settled at Dimapur.

At Dimapur the Cacharies King built a brick city, now buried in jungle of which the ruins are still in existence. Sometime after they were again forced southwards, and made a second stand at Maibong, now a dense forest valley, between the two spurs of Barail Hills. The ruins of the Brick forts, several stone temples made by the Cacharies King at Maibong are still in existence. While at Maibong, the king is said to have married the daughter of the Raja of Tipperah, with whom he received as dower valley of the Barak and its tributaries. This marriage is supposed to have occurred at the beginning or middle of the Seventeenth century. Their new possession over the Barak Valley brought the Cacharies in contact with the Bengalees of Sylhet district. Krishna Chandra, the famous Cachari King was first among the Kacharits to accept Hinduism in 1790 A.D. But opinion differs regarding the spread of Hinduism among the Cacharies. Many persons believe that the Cacharies accepted the Hindu faith from the long past. The image of 'Dashabatara' engraved on stone in 1671 A.D. still bears the evidence that King Birdar was a worshiper of God Bishnu.

However, at Maibong, the new enemy appeared at the scene. The Jaintia Raja on the west became hostile to the Cacharies. He began to do what the Kotchs and Ahoms had formerly done. As a result of these new aggressions the Cachari King.

8. Guha, Upendra Chandra - "Cacharer Itibritha", P.110. (Published by Assam Publication Board in 1971.)
was compelled to move southwards in between 1700 and 1750 and settled at Khashpur. From their arrival at Khashpur the distinct history of Cachar begins.

Here after Gobinda Chandra, the last hereditary king of Cacharies had to take shelter at Sylhet as a result of the Burmese aggression. Then he made a treaty with the British and by the assistance of the British he was reinstated on his throne in 1826, though the North Cachar, a part of his kingdom was still then under the possession of Tularam Senapati who had revolted and succeeded in establishing an independent Chiefship in North Cachar. However, the Kachari King Gobinda Chandra was assassinated in 1830, and as he left no legitimate son, the British took possession of Cachar according to a clause of the treaty of 1826. We have further evidences to believe that the Cacharies followed Hindu religion. Because "the Gods and Goddesses of the Hindu Pantheon were installed and worshipped in different parts of the empire, and the king had intercourse with the rulers of Kamota, Kamapur and Bengal."  

The material condition of the people:

Under the British rule there has been a great expansion of plains and population. This progress is due to the spread of agriculture and the increase of population consequent on the introduction of tea cultivation. The discovery of tea plants growing wild in the jungle of Cachar in 1856 attracted

10. Loc.Cit.
the European enterprise in the district. The tea industry con-
tributed to the wealth and advancement of the civilisation of the people. But the main occupation of almost all the inhabi-
tants is agriculture. The reason is this the soil of the dis-

ctrict is fertile, the rainfall regular and abundant and
the bulk of cultivated land lies above the risk of flood. All
this favours the cultivators to get valuable products at a little expense and minimum labour. And this advantageous po-

sition of agriculture has attracted immigrants from adjoining Sylhet district to come up at the Barak Valley and to settle down there permanently.

Population:

Population growth and educational development act and interact on one another. Therefore, for proper planning of education of a country or any region of it, it is necessary to get information about the population statistics. Population statistics will help the educational planner to know if the schools are properly distributed in the different areas or any particular habitation still remains unserved by education or any habitation in view of large number of population requires further attention or so on. Unfortunately we do not get early statistics of population of the district of Cachar. Untill recently no comprehensive survey operation was made in Cachar. The first Survey operation in Cachar was undertaken in the year 1871-72 by the British administration. The result of the survey disclosed that the district of Cachar comprising an area of 1285 Sq.miles had a total population of 2,05,027
being 160 per Square mile. That survey also revealed the most depressing fact that in one out of the four police circles in which the district was divided not a single person was found to be able to read or write. Out of 2,05,027 (being the total population) 1,10,373 were males, and 94,654 were females. Proportion of males in the total population was 53.8 percent. Population under 12 years of age of all religious was male 40,837 and female 32,873, total being 73,710.12

According to the census of 1961 "The population of Cachar district was 13,78,476 persons of whom 7,22,487 were males and 6,55,989 were females. The sex ratio came to 908 females per 1000 males. The population in 1951 census was 11,15,865 and the increase in percentage during the last decade was 23.53 which was the lowest compared to other districts of the state. The percentage growth of population in the districts of Cachar were 5.32, 6.94, 11.38 and 24.66 for 1921, 31, 41 and 51 respectively. The reason for this growth of population may be attributed to natural increase excepting in between 1941-51 when population increased at a galloping rate due to influx of immigrants from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). In 1961 the position of the district was fifth in regard to population among all the districts of Assam.

The density of population in 1961 per square mile was 514 persons against 416 in 1951. During the decade in between

1951-61 the density has registered an increase of 23.56 percent. Classified in sub-divisionwise the population figure in 1961 in the three sub-divisions of the district, viz., Silchar, Karimganj and Hailakandi were 6,44,351; 4,65,198 and 2,46,927 respectively. Within a decade upto 1961 the three sub-divisions had an increase of population by 18.91; 22.86 and 27.23 percent respectively. The density of population in Silchar, Karimganj and Hailakandi sub-divisions in 1961 were 656, 486 and 455 respectively. 

According to 1971 census "The present district of Cachar with an area of 6,962.0 Sq.K.M. recorded the population figure of 17,13,318 of which 8,91,126 males and 8,22,192 females. Number of villages (inhabited) were found to be 2464 and uninhabited 51. Number of towns altogether 8. Total rural population was 15,77,626 of which 8,16,711 were males and 7,58,915 were females out of total 1,35,692 urban population males were 72,415 and females 63,277.

Sex ratio in the district (number of females per 1000 males) 923 in 1971. Literacy rate (total) persons - 30.57 of which percentage of male literacy was 40.42 and females 19.90. 

The total urban population of the district in 1961 census was 61,376 being 5.30 percent of the total district population. 1961 census report recorded the total urban population of 96,813 being 7.02 percent of the total district popu-

lation. In 1971 the urban population was found to be 1,35,032 which was 7.92 percent of the total district population. The percentage of urban population recorded in 1901, 1911, 1931, 1941 were 2.37, 2.35, 2.26, 2.58 and 3.07 respectively. These figures indicate that the trend of urbanisation in the district of Cachar is very slow, even after Independence the tendency of urbanisation has not shown much improvement. This is mainly due to AGRARIAN nature of the economy of the district. This fact ventilates much scope for selecting the courses of studies in the school curriculum. The Education Commission of 1951-53 also pointed out that the curriculum should be vitally related to community life, the curriculum should include the subjects so as to meet the requirements of the community. Therefore, agriculture should get preference in the school curriculum of the district of Cachar. That the Agricultural Education should be given more emphasis in the district is also justified by the census report of 1971 in which 46.73 percent of the total population were shown to be cultivators and 19.93 percent agricultural labourers and only remaining 33.34 percent other workers.

Percentage of Scheduled Caste to total population in the district was 12.19 and Scheduled Tribes to total population was 0.89 percent up to 1971. 16

BACKGROUND OF EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

In view of the fact that Cachar is a district of the state of Assam which is an integral part of the North Eastern region, here, in this study, it will be perhaps quite relevant to review the present position of education in the Seven constituent units of the North Eastern Region with some elaborate discussion about Assam. This background will bring to sharp focus the spectacular progress made in the field of education in the District of Cachar since Independence.

During the pre-independence period not only Cachar rather the country (India) as a whole was most backward in all respects including education. It was more particularly so in case of the entire North Eastern region. Apart from the political and economic negligence shown to this region by the British administration, the peculiar geographical situation of the region is also largely responsible for comparatively slow progress of education of this part of the country. The position of education in this region during the pre-independence period may be appreciated from the fact that when India was liberated the rate of literacy in the North Eastern region was 13%. 17

A brief review of the progress of education made after independence in the seven constituent units of the North Eastern Region is given below:

1. Assam

The pre-primary schools as the separate institutions of education are of recent origin in Assam. These schools are known by different names such as Nursery, Kindergarten, Little Flowers, Montessori, etc. These schools were firstly started by the Christian missionaries in a few progress parts of the province. During the recent years some private enterprises have also stepped into the field. Pre-primary education is still confined to a few privileged families living in the town areas. Because of its expensive nature the average parents cannot afford to send their children in such a school. This is one of the reasons for the slow progress of pre-primary education in Assam. Upto the year 1965-66, there were in all 82 pre-primary schools in Assam of which 55 were for males and 27 for females against 2 (one for boys and one for girls) in 1950-51.

It is encouraging to note that in Assam classes Ha and Kha (Classes A and B) of the primary schools are treated as the preparatory classes to primary education. Upto March, 1963, 31 such preparatory classes attached to primary schools were started. Recently some women teachers are appointed to look after the preparatory classes attached to the primary schools of the state. These women teachers are designated as 'School-mothers' and a training centre has also been established in Dibrugarh so as to equip them with necessary training.

which will enable them to teach in the preparatory classes of primary schools applying the method which is more psychological rather than traditional. Some Sub-Inspectors of Schools are also appointed for the supervision of such classes.

**Primary education in Assam**

We have already observed that the condition of primary education in the country as a whole was not at all satisfactory during the British rule. Assam was not an exception.

However, the first attempt to provide facilities for the introduction of compulsory primary education in Assam was made in 1926 by passing an act known as the Primary Education act of Assam (1926). The scope of the act was desired to be extended to the whole of Assam. On financial ground the Act could not be enforced. Immediately after Independence another attempt was made to make primary education compulsory and an Act was passed in 1947. The Act was enforced in selected areas only. The Government of Assam accepted Basic Education as the future pattern of education in Assam. To achieve the desired end the Assam Basic Education Act was passed in 1954 and many schools were converted into junior and senior Basic type. But the experiment was not very successful. Therefore, another attempt to introduce Universal Compulsory and Free elementary education up to class VIII in the state was made. With this purpose in view an act known as The Elementary Education Act...
of Assam, 1953 was passed which made the Gaon Panchayats responsible for the management and control of primary education in the state. 20

It must be admitted that in spite of all these measures taken by the State Government it has not yet been possible to enforce compulsion in the field of primary education on a universal basis. The latest act was passed in 1962 but the progress made so far is not very encouraging. Since Independence, of course, there is a rapid stride in the field of primary education including teachers and students. In 1948 there were 7,074 Primary schools in Assam. At the end of the First Five Year Plan the number raised to 13,510. In the year 1963-64 number of primary schools further increased to 22,110. 21 This indicates a rapid growth in the field of primary education.

The state of Assam at present has 3 Universities, 22 136 colleges, about 2000 High Schools and as many as 20,000 primary schools. Over 20 lakhs boys and girls students in Assam now attend the primary schools. Number of students in the Middle and Higher Secondary stage of education comes to 6 lakhs and 6,50,000 respectively. In the Degree and Post Graduate levels 1.5 lakhs students now prosecute their studies. Considerable increase in expenditure on education in Assam is also noticed. The annual expenditure of Assam on education was Rs. 1 crore in 1947 which rose to Rs. 6.50 crores in 1961, Rs. 14 crores in 1966-67 and over Rs. 60 crores since 1981.

21. Ibid - P.82.
2. **Arunachal**

There were only 3 L.P. Schools in Arunachal Pradesh in 1951. It had 500 Junior Basic Schools, 9 High Schools, 7 Higher Secondary Schools and 1 college in 1972. The total number of students in the same year was 25,000. Now in Arunachal there are about 1900 primary schools, 50 pre-primary schools, 133 M.E. Schools, 39 High Schools, 19 Higher Secondary Schools and 2 colleges, with a total number over 90,000 students at all levels. Arunachal Pradesh now spends nearly Rs.9 crores on education every year.

3. **Nagaland**

Nagaland has made tremendous progress in the field of education over the years after Independence. There were only a few primary schools and half a dozen of M.E. Schools in Nagaland prior to Independence. Number of primary schools increased to 1100, M.E.Schools to 17 and college to 12 in the year 1972. At present the state has 1200 primary schools, 300 M.E. Schools and 110 High Schools. About 2 lakhs students are receiving education in the different schools and colleges of the state.

4. **Manipur**

The progress of Manipur in the field of education

23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
after the freedom is also very much significant. The progress achieved in the field of education during the last 3 decades is evident from the rate of progress in literacy. The percentage of literacy which was about 12 in 1951 rose to about 55 at present. The State had 14 Arts and Science colleges, over 500 Secondary Schools and 2138 primary schools in 1972 against 1 college, 82 Secondary Schools and 455 primary schools in 1951. At present there are 23 colleges, 11 Higher Secondary Schools, 290 High Schools, 459 M.E. Schools and 2321 primary schools in the state of Manipur. The total number of students from primary to college level at present is 3.25 lakhs total annual budget on general education being about Rs. 20 crores.

5. Meghalaya

The State of Meghalaya which is constituted by the hill districts of Assam has made significant progress in the field of education over the years after Independence. Prior to Independence (1947), Meghalaya had 1000 L.P. Schools, 11 High Schools, 35 M.E. Schools and 4 colleges. At present Meghalaya has a fullfledged university, 14 colleges, 175 High and Higher Secondary schools and 3600 primary schools with a total number of over 3,50,000 students at all levels.

6. Tripura

The territory of Tripura has also made a rapid progress

26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
in the field of education after independence. Prior to Independence there were 123 primary schools and 1 college in Tripura. In 1972 it had 1500 primary/Junior Basic schools, 40 high schools and 12 colleges. Now there are about 1600 primary schools, 300 M.E.Schools, 102 High Schools and 13 colleges within the territory with total strength of over 3.5 lakhs of students at levels.

7. **Mizoram**

Mizoram has also achieved significant progress in education over the last three decades. Mizoram did not have any college prior to Independence. Now it has 7 colleges, 1150 High Schools, 240 M.E. Schools, 530 primary schools and a total number of over 1,20,000 students at all levels. At present the literacy rate within the whole of the North Eastern Region is 36.7% against 13% in 1947. Mizoram has the highest rate of literacy in the whole region while Arunachal Pradesh has the lowest rate of literacy. The literacy rate in the different units of the North Eastern Region runs as follows:

- Meghalaya 33.22%, Manipur 41.99%, Tripura 41.58%,
- Nagaland 49.99%, and Assam 36%. The figure indicating the number of primary schools seems to be smaller than that of the Secondary Schools. Perhaps only the independent primary schools are shown here and the primary schools attached to Secondary schools are not shown in the above list.

---

28. Ibid.
In the background of the above educational development in the whole North Eastern Region, let us review the progress of pre-primary and primary education made in Cachar during the post-independence period with particular reference to the plan era.

The present district of Cachar had been under the rule of the hereditary Katchary Kings for a long time before the British took the possession of the land in 1830 A.D. Practically the systematic history of Cachar began from that time. Early history of the region is not available. So far it is learnt from the available sources the present district of Cachar, while it was a native state, was most backward in all respects including education. Such state of affairs continued quite sometime even after the assumption of the administrative power of Cachar by the British. The most depressing fact in the field of education was revealed in the survey report of the British Government. The first survey operation in Cachar was undertaken by the British administration in 1870-71. That survey brought to light that in one out of 4 police circles in which the district was divided, not a single person was found to be able to read or write. 29 The population of the district at the time under reference was 2,03,037 of which 1,18,373 were males and 94,654 were females. Population under 12 years age of all religions was male

40,837, and females 32,873, total being 73,710. The position did not improve much till the freedom of the country.

However, things started to be changed with the advent of freedom and more particularly with the launching of the Five Year Plans. In view of the obligatory provision contained in the Constitution of the country actions started to be taken to provide free and compulsory primary education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years, all over the country. As a result, education in all levels from primary to higher stages began to expand in Cachar like other parts of India. But for the first few years of Independence the progress was very slow. Pre-primary education was practically non-existent. Upto the year 1960-61 there was only 1 Nursery School within the entire district with an enrolment strength of 36. Practically, pre-primary school as a separate institution of education is of recent origin in Assam. Within the entire Assam province there were all total 74 pre-primary schools in 1963-64. Cachar being a constituent district of Assam we cannot expect more development in the field of pre-school education in Cachar up to the year under reference. Information collected from the Inspector of Schools, Cachar district reveals that until now there are only 4 pre-primary schools within the entire district with total enrolment of 146 children of which 78 are boys and 68 girls. The pre-primary schools run by the

31. History of Education in India, P-78 - Saikia Sidheswar, Department of Education and B.T., Gauhati University.
private enterprises are not included in this list. It is found by field study that classes Ka and Kha (A and B classes) which were attached to the primary schools as preparatory classes of primary education were abolished long before. Of course, the Christian missionaries have started some pre-primary schools in the different parts of the district under different names such as Nursery, Montessory etc. Those schools are situated in the town areas. Education of these institutions being costly is confined to the children of the privileged section of the society. Naturally, they cannot meet the educational needs of the vast majority of the children in the age group 6 - 11 years. On discussions with the parents/guardians and persons interested in education of the different localities it is learnt that everywhere in the district there is a growing demand for pre-primary education to be provided to children before they join primary schools. But this popular demand still remains to be fulfilled.

Let us now review the progress of primary education made in Cachar during the post independence period. We have already stated in the foregoing discussion that the whole of Assam including Cachar was most backward in education before the freedom of the country. At the time of liberation of India rate of literacy in the entire North Eastern Region was 13%. To improve the

position of primary education an attempt was made in 1926 when the first primary Education Act was passed to make primary education compulsory to the whole of Assam including Cachar. That act could not be enforced in any area on ground of financial difficulty. Another Primary Education Act was passed in Assam in 1947 with a view to providing free, compulsory primary education in Assam in gradual stages. Like other parts of Assam, in Cachar too this act failed to bring a radical change in the field of primary education.

The next primary Education Act known as The Basic Education Act of Assam was passed in 1954 before the closure of the first Five Year Plan. The scope of the act was extended to the whole of Assam and actions were started to be taken in Cachar too for the conversion of traditional schools into Junior and Senior Basic pattern. But the experiment was not ultimately successful in any part of Assam. Another Act known as the Assam Elementary Education Act was passed in 1962 to provide free and compulsory elementary education in Assam in gradual steps. This act made the Gaon Panchayata responsible for the management and control of primary education in the district of Cachar too like other districts of Assam.

Under the above context let us proceed to assess the progress of primary education in Cachar during the post-independence period. The statistics furnished in the following table will enable us to understand the magnitude of progress made in the field of primary education in the district of Cachar
upto the year 1960-61, that is, upto the Second Five Year Plan period.

Table 1. Showing the number of different types of educational institutions with the corresponding number of students in each type in 1959-60 and 1960-61 in the district of Cachar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Type of Institution</th>
<th>1959-60</th>
<th>1960-61</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No. of Institutions</td>
<td>No. of Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>College for general education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2,777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>School for general education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) Higher Secondary</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2,226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) High</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>30,639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Senior Basic</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3,007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d) Middle</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>17,076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e) Junior Basic</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>30,475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f) Primary</td>
<td>1,231</td>
<td>84,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>g) Nursery</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>School for professional education</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1,229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) Industrial and technical Arts and Crafts</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Commerce</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Polytechnique</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d) Basic training Schools</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e) Non-basic training schools</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Schools for special education</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>3,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) Music and dancing</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Oriental studies</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1,281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) For Adults</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>2,332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d) Others</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table it appears that there has been considerable expansion of different types of education in Cachar in general and primary education in particular after Independence and the momentum for progress is still continuing. It will be evident from the fact that in 1959-60 there were altogether 1619 schools for general education in the district of which 3 were Higher Secondary, 72 high, 18 Senior Basic Schools and 184 Middle Schools and only 1 Nursery school but the remainings (1231+310) were primary/junior basic schools. It indicates that expansion of primary/junior basic institutions was higher than that of other types. Again in 1959-60 there were 310 junior basic schools and 1231 primary schools with the number of students 30,475 and 84,000 respectively. But within one year, that is, in 1960-61 the number of Junior Basic schools increased to 316 with an enrolment of 31,323, and primary schools rose to 1346 with the enrolment of 90,956. During the period under review the education of the teachers was not lost of sight. In the year 1960-61 there were 4 training institutes of which 2 were for the training of the teachers of the basic schools and 2 for the training of the teachers working in non-basic schools.

Let us now examine the growth of education that has taken place in Cachar in the subsequent years. The following table will give us an idea of the educational development made in the next decade from 1961.
Table-2. Showing the police stationwise abstract of educational institutions. (Figure indicates number of educational institutions.) in Cachar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>St. Name of Police Stations</th>
<th>No. of villages having primary schools</th>
<th>No. of villages having Middle schools</th>
<th>No. of villages having Higher primary schools</th>
<th>No. of villages having Secondary schools</th>
<th>No. of villages having Higher secondary schools</th>
<th>No. of villages having Colleges</th>
<th>No. of villages having Other educational institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Badarpur</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Borkhora</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Hailakandi</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Karimganj</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Katigora</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Katlichara</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Lakhipur</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Patharkandi</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Ratabari</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Silchar</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Sonai</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Udaband</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total for the District:</strong></td>
<td><strong>1450</strong></td>
<td><strong>1928</strong></td>
<td><strong>248</strong></td>
<td><strong>278</strong></td>
<td><strong>102</strong></td>
<td><strong>104</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


---

The statistics provided in the table give us a picture of the development of different types of educational institutions in the different police stations of Cachar and as such in the district as a whole within the period from 1961 - 71. It appears that Udarbond Police Station has got lowest number of primary schools (nos.80), and in the Police Station of Hailakandi there are maximum number of primary schools (nos.240) within the district. The table further reveals that among the police stations Hailakandi comes in the first rank so far as development of different types of educational institutions is concerned. Next comes the position of Silchar in the list. Third position is marked in the table by the Police Station of Karimganj. Udarbond Police Station is lagging behind particularly in the field of primary education. The position of other police stations are more or less similar. Within the decade from 1961-71 Cachar has made tremendous progress especially in the field of primary education due to the introduction of the provisions of the different Five Year Plans. The number of primary schools has been increased to 1928 in 1971 against 1541 (as mentioned earlier) in 1961. During the same period percentage of literacy has increased to 40.42 (male 30.57, female 19.90) against 28.6 in 1961.

The percentage of literacy in Cachar (40.42) compared to that of All Assam 36%, Tripura - 41.58%, Meghalaya - 33.29%, Manipur - 41.99% is undoubtedly satisfactory. But compared to

that of Nagaland (percentage of literacy 49.93%)

Within the decade from 1971-81 the progress of education in Cachar is more satisfactory. In the year 1981-82 only in Silchar Subdivision number of primary/Junior basic schools increased to 1184 with an enrolment of 1,02,996 against 464 primary/Junior basic schools with an enrolment of 22,091 in 1949-50. Number of teachers in elementary stage of education rose to 2623 (trained - 1964, untrained - 659) in 1981-82 against 853 in 1949-50. In the same year total expenditure (direct and indirect) on Primary education was Rs.3,34,82,382 against Rs. 2,08,568 incurred on primary education (direct expenditure only) in 1949-50. Teacher-student ratio in 1981-82 rose to 1:40 for rural schools and 1:25 for schools in urban areas.

The position of education in the whole district of Cachar upto the year 1981-82 runs as follows:

The number of primary/Junior basic schools rose to 2655 (in 1981-82) against 1926 in 1971. Students in the primary stage increased to 175040 (boys 1,03,861; girls 71,179). The teachers for primary/Junior basic schools have been increased to 6145 (Men 4158, women 1987). Number of trained teachers in the primary stage in 1981-82 were 3647 and untrained 1498. Out of 2655 total primary/Junior basic schools, 91 were for girls and the rest 2564 for boys or co-educational. Rs.7(Seven) crores approximately were spent on primary education (total

36.Materials are collected from the Office of the Deputy Inspector of Schools, Silchar Subdivision, Silchar.
37.Materials are collected from the Inspector of Schools for Cachar district, Silchar.
direct and indirect expenditure), in the year 1981-82, for the whole district.

In the year under reference there were altogether 583 Middle schools (Basic and non-basic) in Cachar of which 334 were government and 189 were aided but under private management. There were 143 High Schools in Cachar in 1981-82 of which 54 were Government and 89 were aided non-government. All of the (10+2) classes schools (nos. 11) in Cachar were under direct management of the government and there was no non-government Twelve-class school in the district. Old pattern Higher Secondary schools for the whole district were 116 of which 135 were for boys and 8 for girls. Students in this staged schools were 34,082 (boys 20,965; girls 13,117) and number of teachers were 1534.

In this connection we may review some of the important conditions which are responsible for the proper growth and development of education in a region. One of the basic requirements for the growth of education in an area is the availability of the school properly staffed and equipped. In 1961 50% of the selected primary schools (nos. 10) in Cachar were found to be single teacher-schools and remaining 50% were two-teacher schools. Number of schools in the selected villages has been increased from 4 in 1947 to 10 in 1961. The number of teachers working in those schools has been increased from 4 to 15 in the same period. The average number of teachers per school has been increased from 1.0 in 1947 to 1.5 in 1961.

development of education also depends to a great extent on the educational qualifications of the teachers. In the year 1961, out of 15 teachers working in the sample schools 86.6% of them were found to have possessed middle standard educational qualifications, 6.7% were Matriculates and another 3.7% were above Matric. Another factor which deserves consideration for the proper improvement of primary education is the availability of the sufficient number of trained teachers in the schools. In the other parts of the country in Cachar too, the rapid expansion of primary education has necessitated employment of untrained teachers on a large scale; and although they have been in service from many years, majority of them had not undergone any regular training. Upto 1961, only 46.7 percent of the total 15 teachers working in selected schools were found to be trained. The extent of coverage of villages by the schools is another important factor on which the rapid expansion of education depends considerably. Upto 1961 out of 184 villages in a selected circle, 73 villages were found without schools; percentage of villages without school was 39.7.

Administration of education:

In each of the states there is a state-level officer who is the head of the Education Department. He is usually in-charge of all types of education in the state including primary education. This officer is known by different designations.

---

33.Ibid - P.78.
40.Ibid - P.81.
41.Ibid - P.33.
in different states. In Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Kerala, M.P., Mysore, Madras, Orissa, Punjab and West Bengal he bears the designation of Director of Public Instruction (DPI); but in some other states like Gujrat, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Tripura he is known as the Director of Education. In Assam the state-level officer who is the head of the Education Department is known as the D.F.I. He is directly assisted by a Joint Director in matters of primary education. Besides, there is also a State Advisory Board. The Minister of Education is the Chairman of the Board.

The School Board at the divisional level is composed of both official and non-official members. It has one member each representing Municipal Board, Managing Committees of the basic, primary and vernacular middle schools recognised by the Government or local authorities and Presidents of the Panchayats in the area. Three to four non-official members of whom at least one should be woman, are nominated by the Government. The Deputy Inspector of Schools is the ex-officio Assistant Secretary of the Board. The term of this Board is for a period of five years. The School Board is responsible for opening non-basic schools and their recognition, control and expansion.

In Assam formerly there was no district level unit for the administration of education. The subdivision which is

a smaller unit of a division is under the charge of a Deputy Inspector of Schools. This office is responsible for supervision of primary education in the subdivision. In some subdivisions, an Additional Deputy Inspector of Schools is also posted to assist the Deputy Inspector of Schools. As soon as the Elementary Education Act of Assam (1962) has come into force the management of elementary education is transferred to local authorities. In the areas where the Assam Panchayat Act of 1959 is introduced, the Block Development Officer with the help of the officers of the Education Department acts as the Co-ordinating agency between the Gaon Panchayat and the State Board. The duties and functions of the local authorities which include a Municipal Board or a Town Committee or a Gaon Panchayat are the followings:

1. Construction, expansion, improvement and maintenance of school buildings.
2. Supply of necessary equipments to elementary schools.
3. Arrangement of playgrounds, mid-day-meals, drinking water and medical inspection of the students.
4. Preparation and maintenance of register of children in the area.
5. Arrangement for stocking and marketing and disposal of products of the school crafts and arrange periodic exhibition of these products; and
6. Supervision of attendance and such other duties as may be prescribed by the State Board for the purpose of effective implementation of the provisions of the act.

Funds of a local authority:

The local authority constitutes its fund by the grants and allotments from the State board, fees and fines realised from the students and any sum received from other sources.

The fund is applied for the maintenance, construction and expansion of school buildings, payment of salaries of teachers and other employees, payment of stipends and scholarships to students, and also for supplying equipments and mid-day-meals to the schools.

It will perhaps be relevant to mention here that the old system of administration of elementary education in Assam by the local authorities has been abolished after the provincialisation of elementary schools in 1975. I visited as many as 40 elementary schools in Silchar and Karimganj subdivisions of Cachar district for collection of information in connection with the research project at hand and found not a single school under the management and control of local authorities like Municipality, Town Committee or Gaon Panchayat. It is further confirmed by the discussion with the D.I.'s and Inspector of Schools of the Cachar district that the provision of the Elementary Education Act of 1959 which transferred the management and control of elementary education to the local bodies is no longer in force. The control, management and administration of elementary education are now the direct responsibility of the education department and the district level education officer, in Cachar, is the Inspector of Schools stationed at Silchar, the civil headquarter of the
district. The district or educational division is divided into three smaller units or educational subdivisions. Each subdivision is put under the charge of a Deputy Inspector of Schools. This office is responsible for administration and supervision of primary education in the subdivision and to assist the Inspector of Schools of the district in different works particularly in matters of execution of different schemes of education. The Deputy Inspector (D.I.) is assisted by sufficient number of Sub-Inspectors and by his office having sufficient number of office staff.

Summary of the progress:

The whole of Assam including Cachar was most backward in education before the freedom of the country. At the time of liberation of India rate of literacy in the entire North Eastern Region was 13%. However, things started to be changed with the advent of freedom and more particularly with the launching of the Five Year Plans. For the first few years of Independence the progress was very slow. Pre-primary education was practically non-existent. Upto the year 1960-61 there was only 1 Nursery school for the whole of Cachar district and that too with an enrolment of 36 children only. In the year 1961-62 the number of pre-primary schools within the entire district of Cachar rose to 4 only with the number of children 146 (boys 78, girls 68) against 1 Nursery school in 1960-61. At present, there are some other pre-primary educational institutions known by different names such as Nursery, Montessori, etc.

44. Information has been collected from the Headmasters of the different schools, Cachar district and from the D.I. and the Inspector of Schools, Silchar, Cachar.
run by the missionary and other private enterprises in the different parts of the district. Inspite of this the picture of pre-primary education in Cachar is most depressing.

However, Cachar has made a tremendous progress in the field of other stages of education including the primary stage after the freedom of the country. In 1949-50 there were all total 464 primary/junior basic schools only for the Sultip subdivision of the Cachar District with an enrolment of 89,121. Teachers in the primary stage of education were 853 of which 692 were males and 161 were females. Total direct expenditure on primary education for the year 1949-50 was Rs.2,68,368. The number of primary/junior basic schools in the Silihur Subdivision rose to 1184 in the year 1981-82 with an enrolment strength of 1,02,930, and with total number of teachers 353 (trained 1964, untrained 659). Total expenditure (direct and indirect) on primary education in the year under reference was Rs.3,34,82,382.

For the whole district of Cachar, in 1989-60 there were altogether 1819 schools for general education of which 3 were Higher Secondary, 72 High, 18 Senior Basic and 184 Middle Schools and only 1 Nursery school (as mentioned in foregoing pages), 1231 primary schools and 310 Junior Basic schools. In the year 1960-61 the number of Junior Basic and primary schools increased to 316 and 1346 respectively with the corresponding enrolments of 31,323 and 90,256. In the year under reference there were 4 teachers' training institutes in the district of
which 2 institutes were for the training of the teachers of the basic schools and 2 for the training of the teachers of the non-basic schools. In the year 1971 number of primary/junior basic schools increased to 1928 against 1541 (1241 + 310) in 1961. Percentage of literacy increased to 40.42 against 28.6 in 1961. Qualitative development of primary education was also not lost of sight. The average number of teachers per school increased from 1 in 1947 to 1.5 in 1961. In 1961 percentage of trained teachers in the primary schools was found to be 46.7. The extent of coverage of the villages by the schools in a selected circle was not satisfactory. Out of 184 villages in the selected circle, 73 villages were found without school. Percentage of villages without schools was 39.7 in 1961.

The progress of education in Cachar within the decade from 1971-81 is all the more remarkable. In the year 1981-82 number of Junior Basic/Primary Schools increased to 2655 with the enrolment strength of 1,75,040 (boys 1,63,861; girls 11,179) against 1928 Junior Basic/Primary schools in 1971. The number of teachers in the primary stages of education in the year 1981-82 rose to 5145 (for the whole district) of which 3047 were trained and 1498 were untrained. Out of 2655 Primary/Junior Basic schools 91 were for girls and the rest 2564 were for boys or co-educational. Expenditure on primary education (direct and indirect) for the year 1981-82 was 7 crores approximately for the whole district.
In the year under reference (1981-82) there were 583 middle schools (basic and non-basic) of which 394 were government managed and 189 were aided but managed by private enterprises. There were 143 High Schools in the district of which 54 were government and 89 non-government aided schools. All of the Eleven Higher Secondary schools (10+2) classes in Cachar were under the direct management of the government and there was no (10+2) classes school under private management.

In the year 1981-82 there were 143 old pattern Higher Secondary Schools with 34,082 students (boys 20,965; girls 13,117) with the total number of teachers 1534.

Like many other states in India, in Assam too the state level controlling officer of education is known as D.P.I. He is directly assisted by a Joint Director in matters of primary education. There is also a State Advisory Board with the Minister of Education as the Chairman of the Board. State Advisory Board advises D.P.I. for smooth running of education in the state including Cachar.

To strengthen the administration of education at the district level the post of Inspector of Schools (which did not exist formerly) has been created in Cachar like other districts of Assam. The old system of administration of education by the local authorities like Municipality, Town Committee and Gram Panchayat is now abolished. The management and administration of elementary education is now the direct responsibility of the Inspector of Schools being the representative of the
education department and the district level administrative office of education. The Inspector of Schools is assisted by the Deputy Inspectors of Schools for Silchar, Karimganj and Hailakandi Subdivisions. The Deputy Inspectors of Schools are responsible for supervision and administration of elementary education of their respective educational administrative units (sub-divisions). Deputy Inspectors of Schools are assisted in their works by the Sub-Inspectors of Schools and requisite number of office staff.