Chapter III

BEGINNING OF MODERN EDUCATION IN KARBI ANGLONG DISTRICT

(A) THE TRADITIONAL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF THE KARBIS - ITS IMPACT ON SOCIETY

The dissemination, application and the basis of education always depend on the question of the social changes and need of the society. As a consequence, it is necessary that, there should be an outlook on education depending on the changes of the events taking place within an era. There seems to be inexistence a great difference between the ancient learning and that of the present days mode of education. Accordingly the ancient educational background of the Karbis does not coincide with the modern system of education. When we mean learning, we definitely bear in mind that along with the inculcation of the bookish knowledge, the means to earn a living for sustenance and the vast experience gathered for survival under different environments are also to be taken note of. The knowledge and experience acquired spontaneously from the day-to-day activities for survival of the people is their real education. The same maxim is applicable in the case of the primitive Karbis.

Before the advent of the British, the Karbis were pre-literate people, that is, they did not have any written literature. However, every pre-literate people had their own system of socialisation. But as a matter of fact, the system
of socialization may be called as their traditional system of education. Though it did not impart the so-called 3 R's yet their traditional system of education was essentially a system of learning. The essential element of the traditional Karbi system was based on learning by doing or by actual participation. The aim of this system of education was to make an individual a responsible member of the society.

The background of the normal learning of the Karbi was constituted on the basis of the innumerable problems that they confronted in their daily life of hunting, agriculture etc. If we peep into the earlier history of this tribe, we come to know that the traditions, customs and cultures run from mouth to mouth and continue to propagate from one generation to the other. In this way, they acquired these cultures and traditions and preserved them for ever.

The meaning of education to acquire academic knowledge is a new phenomenon. There is no such narrow meaning of education for the illiterate aborigines. For them education is one whole and the experience which a child acquires during his daily life is a total integrated one and it can shape an ignorant child to be a responsible person in the near future.
JIRKEDAM (YOUNG MAN'S CLUB)

On the basis of this wide meaning of education, most of the aboriginals instituted a special informal institution which is known by different names in different tribes like "Dekachang" in Assamese, "Nokpante" in Garo, "Murang" in Nokte and Ao Naga, "Rensi" in Rengma Naga, "Longshim" in Tangkhuls, "Kichuki" among the Angamis, "Champo" among the Luthas, "Dikhachang" among the Semas, "Zawlbuk" among the Mizo, "Samadi" among the Lalungs, "Ghotul" among the Muria, "Looppong" among the Tangsas, "Jirkedam" among the Karbis and so on.

The dormitory system was in existence in almost all the different tribal areas in the world. Mr. Peal drew attention to the fact that "from Bhutan to New Zealand and from the Marquesas to Niger, the system existed." Haddon mentioned the nature of the boy's club and girl's house in New Guinea. It is learnt from the book "The Mothers" by R. Briffault that there were some secret society in which men and women were admitted in the dormitory in Africa and the Upper Congo. There were some special houses for unmarried men in the Communal Houses of Borneo. In this way many prominent writers like Verrier, Elwin, J.P. Mills, T.C. Hodson, Shakespeare, J.H. Hutton, U.G. Bower, S.E. Peal, S.C. Roy, D.N. Mazumder and many

1. Peal, S.E., The Communal Barracks of Primitive Races, vol. XI, p. 21
2. Editor S. Karotemprel, The Tribes of North East India, p. 171
other Indian and foreign writers gave vivid and detailed accounts of the dormitory system which were in existence in different tribal societies of India. The various tribes of North East India were practising this system till recently. An attempt has been made in this part to give an authentic picture of the dying institution from accounts related by a cross section of Karbis who once lived in a Jirkedam and also from the personal experiences of visit to remote and interior places of Karbi Anglong District where still some Jirkedam were seen in a dilapidated and dying conditions consisting of some remnants of this ancient institution.

In the "Karbi Lamtasam" (dictionary) the word "Jirkedam" means a youth organisation of the Mikir (Karbi) tribe generally consisting of a village level. Jirkedam is the name given by the Karbis to their bachelor's house or dormitory institution. The youth of this institution in a body is called "Jirsong" and individually the inmate or youth of this dormitory is named as "Jirpo" or "Risomar". In good old days the girls were also admitted into this Jirkedam and they were known as "Jirpi" or "Marpi".

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4. Terang, Rongbong, "Karbi Lamtasam", p. 106

"Jirsong" - Colleague of the youth organisation.
"Jirpo" - A friend (among boys).
"Jirpi" - A friend (among girls)
"Po" indicates male, "Pi" indicates female.
"Risomar" - "Riso" means boys or youths and "mar" means plural number, i.e., Risomar means youths in group.
"Marpi" - all girls of Jirkedam.
JIRPO (Youth member of JIRIKEDAM)

Drinking style of Harlong
It is organised by the villagers with due permission from their king Ronghang Lyndok and constituted at the time of village annual festival "Rongker" which is held in the month of March, April. The day before the festival the Sarthe (village headman) meets the village adolescents and are called upon to assist the villagers in the observance of the festival. Sarthe selects a boy who is honest and has efficiency in work as "Klengsarpo"* the leader of the Jirkedam and the youth party or all the inmates of the Jirkedam must obey and assist him from that day onwards. Twenty six male office bearers with twenty six girls attached to them as help mate for all occasions, are selected by the Sarthe in consultation with Klengsarpo on the principle that one boy or one girl from each family of the village should be admitted in the Jirkedam. No girls have the opportunity to be a direct office bearer. The girls used to live in the Sarthe's house near the Terang.** No married people are permitted to enter into this institution so, it is known as bachelor's dormitory.

The minimum number of nine may also start a Jirkedam. Besides the fixed number of members of the Jirkedam, other boys and girls of the village may also sleep in the dormitory house but cannot take part in the formal activities of the institutions. No fees for joining the Jirkedam are taken though members have

*"Klengsarpo" - The chief youth leader of the youth club.

**"Terang" - A house specially built for youth organisation.
to take part in any activity. There was no hard and fast rule as to the age at which a boy should get admitted into the dormitory. When he is 7 or 8 years old he was considered fit to sleep in the bachelor's house. It is seen that children and adolescents of in the age group of 8 to 18-20 years stay there. Girls who have their elder brothers in the same dormitory are not permitted to stay there. There is a taboo that a boy should not have his maternal uncle's daughter as his "Marpi" in Jirkedam.

As mentioned earlier the youth party formed on the day of "Rongker" take refuge in the Sarthe's Hongpharla (a place where strangers and guests are lodged) till the Terang (a big thatched house) is built. The "Terang" or the bachelor's house is constructed by the youths with the full co-operation of the villagers. The Terang used to be a house of an entirely different pattern in comparison to the ordinary family residential house. It is a big hall without partition and is built on raised platform of about 2 metres in height. The three main posts of the building and the three beams are beautifully curved. The three sides of the Terang are covered by designed bamboo wall and the remaining side is kept open with a fixed wooden ladder for entrance and exit. Two fireplaces are made on the inside platform. A bamboo fencing around the building is made providing an open space in front of the Terang for various activities. Generally these are constituted in the villages to accommodate the youths of a
THE TERANG
village at night, keeping the sexes separate.

In order to conduct the activities systematically and peacefully a committee is constituted which is known as "Jirsong" with Klengsarpo as the president. Usually the duration of Jirsong is three years. A new Jirsong has constituted at the end of every three years.

FUNCTIONS AND CURRICULUM

Jirkedam is a fine example of the informal agency of education of the Karbi people. This bachelor's dormitory has been considered the main primitive institution for training youths in different aspects of their day-to-day tribal life. The Karbi culture and economy are based upon agriculture. At day break, the office bearers headed by Klengsarpo in order of rank line up for going to the fields with necessary tools and equipments for work followed by two drummers who beat the drums as the party is proceeding to the field. Their field work is mainly related to "Jhum" cultivation. In addition to work in their own field they have to help and work in other's fields also at their request. When the youths and girls are engaged in their cultivation in the field, the entire plot is divided into two parts. In one part "Klengdun" would be incharge, in the other the Klengsarpo. Both the parties work

**"Klengdun" - Assistant leader of Jirkedam.**
in the field competing with each other for early completion of work. After work they return to their Terang in array and systematically. The girls do not stay in the Terang at night.

The income from the joint cultivation are kept for three years and at the end of their Jirsong or Jirkedam the boys and the girls will celebrate "Chaujun" Puja* and bid farewell to the Jirkedam. The farewell function (Harlin-Kejun**) is celebrated with a feast and is attended by songs and dances.

The exact nexus between the dormitory as an institution and shifting cultivation is not known but we find that in North East India bachelor's dormitory is an important aspect of culture of most of the shifting cultivators. It is seen that permanent cultivation involve less communal activities and each house-hold becomes the work unit per excellence in the household land.

Ceremonial hunting is organised by the youth and also the ceremonial fishing through the method of poisoning, at least once in a year in the hilly river is an essential and enjoyable activity for the youths and the girls of the Jirkedam. The adolescents thus perform various activities of adult life in a Jirkedam. They help and share with adult members of the village in some adult activities.

*"Chaujun" — A kind of worship dedicated to God Arnam.
**"Harlin Kejun" — Farewell function of the terms of the Jirkedam.
Besides agriculture, the youths harness themselves in different activities and training relating to cottage industry. They produce bamboo baskets, fans, brooms, mats and such other articles of day-to-day use. They also prepare beautifully designed bamboo sticks which are used for measuring and dividing the plot of land by them, they also make "Nokjir" (a long handled dao), hoes, axe, fishing hooks and spears with the help of village "Hemai" (blacksmith). Ordinary drums and flutes are also made by them.

EDUCATION FOR GIRLS

For the girls, the mother is enough to impart training to her daughters. They are to be trained in weaving, spinning, cooking, cultivation in the field etc. A separate Jirkedam is not constructed for the education of the girls as it is done in the case of boys. An old widow or Basapi (village headman's wife) impart them training for household duties, weaving and spinning etc. Girls are engaged in spinning yarn and weaving colourful clothes which they colour by indigenous herbs. It is traditionally essential that every tribal woman should know how to spin and weave. In the tribal villages even the tiny girls are seen engaging herself busily with little toy looms. It is really one of the major trades or works among Karbi women so the girls give special attention to this work.
The party has an important and responsible position in the cremation of the dead and the ceremonies connected with the "Chamangkan" - the most expensive and colourful festival of Karbis. It is mainly performed by the adolescents. In marriages or other religious festivals too, the youth has to perform dance and music along with their service in the preparation of meal and "Harlang" (rice-beer). Besides they do different types of social works such as clearing up jungle in the village, fixing bamboo pipe with streams to collect water from the spring and streamlets, construct and repair roads and bridges etc. They have to help the different families in bringing harvest from the field, nurse the sick and construct houses for the villagers.

Normal activities of the Jirkedam are never organised, they are spontaneous and members respond naturally. Everything that takes place at the Terang is informal, none is compelled to participate in the Terang's activities. As a matter of fact, no formal training of any kind is imparted in this dormitory. There is no teacher or educator or expert person to impart any training. They learn from each other in the dormitory. Actually they are capable to learn by observation, imitation and actual participation in the activities and accepting the "learning by doing" principle with the supervision and control of the village headman. The Sarbasa (an elderly man) takes care of the inmates properly and he treats them as his own children. The Sarthe and the Sarbasa
give some formal training in the various activities. In the ancient days, the Jirkedam occupied a central position in the village organisation and administration, as an institutionalised mechanism of social control. It used to be a traditional informal school where young people are trained in martial arts, customs and rules of the Karbi society. It is also a fine example of informal education in democratic ways of life which is based upon "work-experience" and "social service".

Jirkedam is indeed one of the best and happiest social gathering for the unmarried people and best mental resort for the sad and distressed. Their folk songs, folk tales, dances etc. are learnt from each other in the Terang. They practise songs and dances at their leisure hours specially in the evening hours. Because it is learnt that singing and dancing is an indispensable accompaniment of all Karbi feasts and festivals. Self expression through dance and songs is at its best in a Jirkedam. It expresses their emotion and dancing supplemented by songs expresses better some myths or to link up with gods. In dance, music and field work, they are the objects of admiration of the opposite sex. Everybody has the liberty and freedom to enjoy life in merry-making like singing, chatting, joking and many other social amusement. However, they are conscious that inspite of all these freedoms every participant is required to observe strict decorum and decency in his behaviour towards others. It is the duty of the wards of the Jirkedam to maintain a complete vigilance and ensure
safety of the village. Jirkedam acts as the centre of all activities during festivals, religious ceremonies and many other social activities. In this way, it has an important function in socializing the boys. This develops the spirit of co-operation in them. So bachelor's dormitory among the Karbi in its traditional form serves an important purpose in socialisation and to a great extent, compensated the lack of formal institutions. To keep every programme in proper order the inmates always kept themselves in touch with the work programme. In the Jirkedam everybody is sincerely busy during her or his duty. Hardly is there any room for idleness.

Terang as a club house gives a refreshing mind through its recreational activities like singing, playing and getting together etc. and it thrills their minds with delight and redeem the monotony of their daily routine.

The Jirkedam as a charitable institution helps the orphans, the weak, the widow, the poor and the needy people. The youths nurse the sick and help the villagers in their difficulties. At the time of construction of any new house in the village all inmates of the Jirkedam use to bring house building material from the jungle whereas the "Marpi" feed the weary workers and refresh them from the tiring and monotonous work of the day.

In an isolated tribal community the bachelor's dormitory renders yeoman's service to the society of which its
inmates are proud members and who deem it to be their sacred duty to serve their society by faithfully living the traditional tribal life. This is also like a council hall for the village where all the village elders used to meet to discuss matters of common interest.

Their communication with the villagers is quite informal in daily life. Sarthe acts as a mediator for all sorts of formal communication with the villager. There is a provision for intercommunication between one institution and another during the festivals. The party with their sincere activities, plays and dances and refresh the whole village atmosphere.

DISCIPLINE AND CODE OF CONDUCT

Strict discipline becomes a part of their character. It enables them to sublimate their anti-social elements of personal character. This makes them self-disciplined individuals in their later life. Maintenance of discipline becomes easy due to the division of labour among the office bearers. The village headman as the chief administrative head of the Jirkedam has the right to maintain final authority and control the rules and regulations of the bachelor's house. Klengsarpo is the judicial and executive head of this institution. He supervises all types of works and activities in the field or in the Terang. He fixes the date, decides the
allotment of works to individual members. And if the members violate the rules and regulations of the Terang he has the power to impose physical punishment of suspension from the institution temporarily and can change partners (Marpi) on receipt of complaints. The Klengsarpo also has to work in accordance with rules, if he fails he may be expelled from the institution by the Sarthe. The second or next office bearer acts as an assistant to the Klengsarpo and can administer his subordinates according to the rules of the Jirkedam. Sordar Kethe (Executive Officer) and Sardarso (Asstt. Executive Officer) assist the two leaders Klengsarpo and Klengdun in all affairs and decide small issues and disputes without bringing it to the notice of the Klengsarpo. Sangharai Kethe (Captain), Songharai So (Vice Captain) - the two are responsible for discipline inside the Terang and they are to observe the behaviour of the wards. In this way the other office bearers are to perform their allotted duties sincerely and efficiently. All the members are loyal and respectful to their leader, Sarbasa as well as Sarthe.

The Risomar and the Marpi develop the manifold aspects of their personality in the Jirkedam. The leader Klengsarpo is the father figure, he is the planner, expert, executive, controller of internal relationship, purveyor of reward and punishment, a symbol of the entire group and he is the creator and responsible for the party's individual development and cooperation among the members. It is noteworthy to say that, the
virtue of self-expression, self-reliance, economic independence, self-realisation, enthusiasm for work, dignity of labour, simplicity, hospitality, co-operation, punctuality and discipline, art and culture etc. develop among the wards of the Jirkedam.

The Karbi's Terang serves the purpose of modern school building with provision for class room, meeting hall, auditorium, lecture hall, discussion room, refreshment room, and hostel to sleep at night. It is also the club house for the youths or guest house for the visitors and a temple or shrine for all to perform religious functions.

Superficially we may compare the Jirkedam with the old Brahmonic Gurukula and Buddhist Sangha system. Just as the bachelors are allowed to reside in the Terang of the Jirkedam so also the Brahmacharis (mendicants) only resided in the "Gurukula"* and "Buddha Sangha"**. The disciples of both the Gurukula and Buddha Sangha had to do services for the Guru (Teacher) as well as for the "Gurukula" and "Buddha Sangha". In a similar way the members of Jirkedam also have to work for Sarthe and for the Jirkedam. As the mendicants go out for alms the Frankris (member of office bearer of Jirkedam) have to go

*"Gurukula" - Home of the teacher. In Vedic age wards were sent to Gurukula for education.

**"Buddha Sangha" - Buddha monasteries where educational work was also carried on.
out for collecting midday meals from the parents for the members of the Jirkedam. Generally the age limit is 8 years and they have to receive education for 12 years, but in the Jirkedam there is no hard and fast rule for admission. Yet the age limit should be not less than 8 years and not more than 20 to 25 years. After completion of 3 years they end their Jirkedam life and return to their homes.

If education is the preparation for complete living then this institution of Jirkedam has a great educative value. All the inmates of this institution receive practical education of their day-to-day life as well as community life. Jirkedam helps the Karbi youths to prepare themselves for future life.

The modern bookish and theoretical education hinders in preparing the young generation for self-dependence. This education does not teach us to produce but to depend upon others for livelihood. The modern and formal education is isolated from life and it does not give the students insights into the every day world in which they are living. As a result they feel themselves incongruous to the community when they come out from their schools. The instruction is too much academic and narrow. It fails to develop the entire personality of the pupil. It has ruined the teacher's initiative and led to a lifeless method of teaching and made curriculum stereotyped. The student's willy-nilly are being dragged towards the goal of examination which has become the
sole object of education. This formal type of education does not lay stress on dignity of labour or production. But in Jirkedam, one may find that being an informal type of education it helps the youth to be self-dependent and develops a strong personality in him.

Kothari Commission (1964-1966) now gives stress on work experience and social service in the spread of education. \(^5\) Mahatma Gandhi's Basic Education is linked with the basic needs and urges of human life. It is basic because it is co-related with the basic occupations of community life. Similarities of the principle of education of Jirkedam with that of the basic education system is quite evident just like the basic education system of education prevalent in Jirkedam it develops the self-supporting urge of the students. In these two systems members learn by doing and have interest and respect for manual labour. They know and estimate that self activity or learning by doing is purposeful and productive. Both the Jirkedam and the basic type of education believe that - when work is honoured - there is no parasite in society.

Due to the spread of civilisation and change of age, the Jirkedam is replaced by the modern school among the Karbis. Generally the school fulfils the primary requirements, i.e., intellectual needs, literacy and arithmetic which are sadly

\(^5\) Shukla, U.C., Kothari Commission Report, Chapter IX, p. 64
lacking in a Jirkedam and which are treated to be the gateway of the world of knowledge. Different subjects like literature, history, geography, civics, mathematics and other social and physical sciences are taught in a modern school. The modern schools are very important for keeping abreast with the modern advanced society. Agriculture is the mainstay of the Karbis so the Jirkedam prepares the youth mainly for an agricultural society. The members of the Jirkedam actually do not have the opportunity to gain different academic knowledge, subjects, and science and technology. It is being a non-formal agency of education of the tribal it cannot meet their intellectual and modern academic needs. In this way it is known that though the working pattern of Jirkedam is important in a tribal society it has many shortcomings.

Wherever it may be, the bachelor dormitory was a living institution in most of the areas of Karbi Anglong district till the thirties of this century. It started dying out even before the spread of Christianity and this valuable institution did not die completely during the British period. There is no other institution today to replace it except the formal school system or the youth clubs. But now, as ill luck would have it, like other bachelor dormitories this indigenous traditional type of institution of the Karbis also is dying out day by day. Gradually it lost its vigour of the grand old days. Today it has become an anachronism. Some of these institutions are in a state of dilapidated and dying condition
till some years back in some five interior villages of the western region of Karbi Anglong district, but now it has become a thing of the past. It is acknowledged that still in Gormari area of Sonaipur village and Machkhowa area of Jaluguti village of the Nagaon district have such type of the Karbi's traditional institution (Jirkedam) in a decaying condition. It is believed that many factors have contributed to the decay of this institution such as the following:

In the first place, the decline of the Jirkedam is concomitant with the spread of Christianity. It is apparent that even in the other parts of North East India, the dormitory institutions are declining along with the spread of Christianity. It is apparent that in many cases, where most of all the Karbi people of the village have been converted into Christianity, they use to give up the system of dormitories and their primitive cultures.

Secondly formal education and Christianity acted upon the Karbi culture jointly and simultaneously. At the earlier stages Christianity was propagated through primary education. Boys who have entered the primary school automatically give up the habit of sleeping in the dormitory. They like to attend primary schools which give them academic knowledge instead of

dwelling and harnessing themselves for works in the Jirkedam.

Thirdly, the traditional Karbi culture was attached to shifting cultivation. Probably in the heyday of shifting cultivation, they had large settlements and so they had bachelor dormitories. But when the output from shifting cultivation (Jhum) started to become less and low, the households became scattered and construction of great bachelor's dormitories became impracticable. This may be a cause of the declining number of bachelor's house in the Karbi Anglong district. Permanent plough cultivation entails less of communal activities, so this change in the work schedule also causes the decay of the older institution of Jirkedam.

Fourthly, development of modern or formal education hinders the growth and institution of old traditional Jirkedam system, which fulfil the primary requirements of human life. The introduction of formal education through the establishment of schools brought a great change to the Jirkedam way of socialization. The school attracts the children more than this old type of informal institution. Thus the Jirkedam appeared to have lost its relevance in the modern context.

Fifthly, most of the educated persons of the village today do not stay in their village as they enter Government services and some other trades and business for livelihood after their formal education. This may be a cause.
Sixthly, the old order of life at the Jirkedam waned at the advent of modern way of life which is though complex and problem-ridden, yet more challenging and promising. So the Karbis have lost their interest in the indigenous institution of Jirkedam and this attitude brings a fast withering away of the Jirkedam life.

Seventhly, to pursue higher education many boys leave their villages and as such the unifying force cannot be maintained and accepted in the Jirkedam organisation.

Eightly, the old fashioned primitive technology cannot compete and face the challenge of modern technology of weaving, bamboo, wood, cane and metal work and many other trades.

But it is neither possible nor desirable to keep them isolated from the modern advanced world which is changing rapidly day by day through science and technology. They must be given scope for integration with the larger society. At present, the Karbis are conscious of this fact, and accept the modern school with great enthusiasm. This is surely a good sign of progress.

But it should not be forgotten that the traditional system of education has some useful qualities also which could be integrated into the present so as to accelerate the healthy progress of the society. In this regard we may quote Dr. Elwin who opined regarding the tribes of North East Frontier Agency
"I am anxious that they should advance but I am even more anxious that they should not lose their artistry and joy of life and the culture that distinguishes them in many ways." The same may be said with regard to the Karbis also, actually though the working pattern of Jirkedam is important in a tribal society it has many shortcomings which are more important for the social, political, economic and technological development of the country. So we hope and think that some salient features of this traditional institutions should be preserved and utilized in the modern school for education and training of Karbi youths so that they can acquire knowledge of their traditional pattern of learning along with the modern knowledge side by side - which will fulfil their primary requirements of modern living and progress of civilization as well as the past culture and traditions.

The burning problem of education among the rural Karbi population is lack of proper guidance and supervision of studies by the parents. This is because to a great extent, the parents and guardians are themselves illiterate. So we can utilise the dormitory spirit to solve the problem of education and the educational spirit among the rural Karbi. It may be suggested that in villages where there are primary schools they should have dormitories attached to the teacher's

7. Dr. Elwin, A Philosophy of N.E.F.A., Shillong, 1923, p. 56
residence. Then the boys will come after the evening meal. And there should be provision of some sort of entertainment for the village boys who usually spend their time after evening meal in gossiping. If this is done then they will be able to enjoy their evening hours in these dormitories. So to attract the boys, instruments, games and sports articles, radio and television should be provided in this institution. And then they will be able to utilise their evenings in a more meaningful and purposeful way.

It is a fact that in Karbi Anglong district the High schools are situated in a scattered way and not always within the easy reach of all surrounding villages. The students have to come to high schools from far-flung areas. It may be recommended that the problem of such outstation students coming from a distance will be solved if the dormitory system is provided along with modern high school. But it should systematise the whole thing to prepare it as a traditional bachelor's house and should give it a modern touch and should have link with the past. Whatever it may be, it should be made, of course, in a modified way, to suit the need and requirement of the changing time.

From the foregoing discussion of the Jirkedara system, it is clear that the institution exercised a great impact on the Karbi society. It played a vital role in preparing the younger generation for the village council. The Jirkedam is
a club, a public school, a military training centre, the hostel for boys and a meeting place of the village elders. It was as well the centre for social, religious and political activities. In short, it was the fulcrum of the village democracies. In the Jirkedam, indigenous Karbi education was learned by the younger generation by direct observation, attempted imitation, and by continued practice. The child was gradually introduced to undertake the responsibility of the increasing areas of the society and finally initiated to the mature life of an adult. Everything that a child learnt, it is learnt by imitation, observation and repetition. Education in such a society was bound to be concrete and non-verbal. It was solely concerned with practical activity and not abstract generalisation. Thus education was primarily concerned with transmitting the culture of the race to the generation in the making. The child learnt everything mainly from their elders who were obeyed with great respect and honour. The knowledge that the child acquired from such an education helped him largely to adjust himself to the society and he was never regarded as a parasite, but an active and helping member of the society in which he lived happily and peacefully.
In the foregoing part an attempt has been made to show how informal education was acquired by the Karbi people which made them fit to adapt themselves in the society and life. In this part the beginning of formal education in the Karbi Anglong district will be discussed.

Tribal education generally aims directly at preparation for life in the tribal society. By and large, the educational activities are conducted within the family and social circles. Knowledge is imparted through actual participation and child's involvement in direct learning process. Even as a boy he has to participate in the village life, tribal rites and customs and Government. He follows his father to sow, to weed and to reap the harvest of the "Jhum" (shifting cultivation) with the tribal implements. The girl has to learn cooking, weaving and cultivation before she is mature. The tribal child as a rule, acquire all the needed knowledge before he starts life of his own.

Formal education on the other hand means the education of the child within the four walls of the school. There is fixed place and fixed time for imparting information and a person or persons (teachers) are specially entrusted with the task of educating the child. "In formal education, therefore, the learner has to be induced to learn what is being offered
to him in the school and that constitutes one of the major problems of formal education. The task of school teacher is to get the pupil as much interested as possible in matters about which he naturally feels little or no interest.\(^8\)

The population that came under the British rule with the occupation of Assam, comprised individuals where it was difficult to find a person who could read and write.\(^9\)

Education was practically neglected by the royalty since the end of the 18th century due to internal anarchy, civil wars and recurring invasions of the Burmese. The apathy of the ruler and the ruled for education deteriorated the social and economic condition of the state. The general aversion of the natives towards learning was further aggravated by their poverty and ignorance. The agricultural class in their complete unawareness of the progressive methods of husbandry, requires the labour of the whole family including the children in the field. Instead of sending their offsprings to the school which was time consuming with no immediate benefit, the parents preferred to keep them at home as their helping hands. The then Commissioner Francis Jenkins was interested in the importation of scientific manual and literary education in Assam which was according to him, the only way to comply

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8. Kar, Prof. B.C., Education - A Study of its Principle and Psychology, pp. 9, 10

9. F.P., P.C., 10 June 1831, No. 50, Scott to the Secretary to the Government of India, 18th May, 1831, Para 48
with the policy that education should embrace all sections of people. 10

After the Charter Act of 1833 India was opened to all the Missionaries to extend their activities, so they, with their own interest for spreading Christianity came down to India. In 1834 Bruce persuaded the Commissioner, Capt. Jenkins and the Company officials in Calcutta to invite Missionaries to Sadiya for the purpose of opening schools for the tribals. 11

It was through Jenkins efforts that the Trio, Rev. Nathan Brown, Oliver Gutter and Miles Bronson came to Assam to take up Missionary work and they established themselves and begun their activities at Sadiya from 23rd March, 1836. 12 Immediately after their arrival diffusion of civilisation commenced. With an attempt to deflect the general course of life of the hill tribes, Brown and Cutter established a school at Sadiya in June 1836. 13 In 1846 three years after their settlement at Sibsagar, the American Baptist Missionaries started the publication of a native monthly newspaper "Arunodoi Sambad Patra"* from the Sibsagar Baptist Mission Press. It was

10. Barkotaki, Mina Sharma, British Administration in North-East India (1826-74), p. 31
11. Ibid., p. 88
13. Sherring, Smith, Budley Reports, History of Christianity in India, p. 31

*Though irregular sometimes, the publication of Arunodoi was continued till 1882 - Gazetteer of India, Assam State, Sibsagar District, p. 387
the first vernacular newspaper in Assamese and Rev. O.T. Cutter was its first editor. In 1851 it was renamed as "Arunodoi".

The legal permission of the home authority to do Missionary work naturally influenced the administration of Mr. David Scott, the first Commissioner of Assam and agent to the Governor General in the North East Frontier. The agent favoured evangelical work among the hill tribes rather than the natives of the plains. In October 1826 accordingly Scott established eleven public schools in Guwahati, Jorhat and Darrang and obtained a sanction from the Government of India to promote indigenous system of education by assignments of lands. The Brahmins, the traditional teachers continued as the instructors of these schools. Each teacher had to undertake to teach 30 (thirty) scholars.

All endeavours were made by the Missionaries to open new schools in the villages and the most promising boys were appointed the masters in these schools or in those having vacancies. Care was taken to appoint the masters near their own villages where they could succeed to attract large number

14. Gazetteer of India, Assam State, Sibsagar District, p. 387
15. Arunodoi, January 1851, No. 1
18. Ibid., Jenkins to Deputy Secretary to Government, 21 June, 1834, Para III
of students to the schools by application of their local influence. The pupils of those schools were the sons of the ryots and small cultivators. The small school houses were repaired by the pupils and they were required to purchase their own school materials. The primary schools of this period were mostly co-educational and the medium of instruction was the mother tongue of the students. Bengali was generally the medium of instruction though sometimes, the books of the course were translated into Assamese. The reading and writing of the alphabets, preliminary knowledge of grammar and spelling, simple arithmetic, simple crafts for boys and needle works for girls, simple English, word meaning, elementary hygiene, music and religious instruction were included in the course of study in the primary level. The entire period of primary education was divided into five classes (first to fifth). Robinson also suggested to the Government to publish a few elementary books in the language of the tribes. He hoped that once these scrupulous people began to taste the pleasure

19. Educational Progress, October 1871, No. 18, Report on the Govt. Aided Kachari Schools, Darrang, Para 1

20. Sherring, Smith, Badley and Reports - History of Christianity in India, p. 41


22. Ibid., pp. 338, 377

23. Ibid., pp. 338, 377

24. Barkatoki, Meena Sharma, British Administration in North-East India (1826-1874), Chapter II, p. 47
of learning in their own language, the prejudice of losing their own identity by learning a foreign language (Bengali or English) would disappear. This measure however was never materialised. A clear token of the British policy to spread education to the whole society was significantly indicated by the enrolment of a few lads of the neighbouring hill tribes into some of the schools in the plains. This subsequent closure of intercourses between the people of the hills and the plains was accepted as an achievement and for its further encouragement.

There was a handicap in the inculcation of "self-interest" among the tribes in education that the language taught in these schools was Assamese which was almost foreign to the tribal people for whom the entire scheme was intended. There was a growing enthusiasm among them that an acquaintance with those two languages (English and Assamese) was essential not only for the Hindus but also for the Hilly people. The same reason originated a pursuit of knowledge among some section of the Mikirs and Naga hills and they were ready to acquire it anywhere indifferent to the administration of the school, Missionary or Government.

25. Ibid., p. 47
Despite disappointments the Missionaries carried on their work. Mrs Brown and Mrs Cutter were running a small school for the Assamese speaking people. Mr. Cutter also became involved in educational work such as opening several small schools in nearby villages. Though they were limited, no teachers, no books and persons having very best knowledge of the language were available.

*In 1863 Rev. Bronson and E.P. Scott of the Nagaon Mission applied to the Government for financial assistance to establish a circle of schools in the populous villages surrounding the Sadar station and also for the support of a stipendary normal class of Kachari, Lalung, Mikir and Naga boys*¹⁷* willing to be educated and return as teachers to their ignorant tribes man.*²⁸

The beginning of formal education in the Karbi Anglong district has been made by the Missionaries who came solely with the purpose of proselytization.

The Karbis did not have a written language and possessed no books. The primary object of the Missionaries as

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²⁷. Educational Progress, July, 1869 Nov. 23 Agnew to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, General Department, 27th May 1869, Para 31

*The Mission school was mostly comprised of pupils of these tribes. Elementary knowledge in Assamese and English were imparted to them.*

²⁸. Letters issued to the Govt. of Vol. 30 Letter No. 14 Agnew to the Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal, 16th May, 1863, Para 5
already stated was to spread the teachings of Christian religion among the ignorant Karbi people, but along with it, they had a strong desire to bring the same people to the enlightenment of knowledge through education. When we make a careful study of the activities of the Missionaries, one is compelled to infer that Missionaries used education as a tool of proselytization. The Missionaries from their practical experience learnt that their religious activities could not bear much fruit nor could it take a deep root in the minds of the people unless the people are first educated. Educational activities undertaken by the Christian Missionaries helped them largely to get an access to the people and rendered better opportunities for preaching them.

Alexander Lish, the first Missionary to serve in the region was to establish a school.\textsuperscript{29} And the first Missionary work in the Assam plains consisted of the school started by the Srerampur Mission at Guwahati. They also soon established a school at Sadiya and a number of schools were also set up in nearby villages, even though their knowledge of the local language was severely limited, in fact almost non-existent at that point and there were no qualified teachers available.\textsuperscript{30} The Welsh Missionary also similarly got into school work as

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{29} Downs, F.S., Christianity in North East India, p. 26\textsuperscript{a}

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., p. 26\textsuperscript{a}
\end{footnotesize}
soon as they possibly could at Cherapunji* and neighbouring villages. During the year 1844-45, fourteen schools were set up in the Sibsagar district, five in Guwahati and one in Nagaon town by the Missionaries.

In 1871, the present Karbi Anglong district was a part and parcel of Nagaon district. There were eleven schools (Mission) in existence during that year in Nagaon and the entire eleven schools were situated within the present boundary of the Karbi Anglong district, most of those schools received aid from the Government. 31 In 1878, when the Assam Government entrusted to the Baptist Missionaries the responsibility of imparting education to the Garos and simultaneously did not lay down any condition on the religious discourse and gave assurance in financial matters, the entire subject took a new turn and became more and more vigorous. As a sequel to these measures, the numbers of Missionary schools in the Garo Hills rose to one hundred in 1892. 32 In Naga Hills too, till 1867, the village schools were under the control of the authorities of the Missionaries. 33 The achievements of the preacher of Christian religion in the Hill areas among the fair sex was a notable feature. The number of school attending girls was

*In Khasi Hills


only 16\% in the hill areas of Assam during 1907, and 25\% in Garo hills.\(^{34}\)

Those tribals who settled near the Assamese people and who could express their feelings and thoughts through the medium of Assamese, considered that preaching of Christianity could be done in the Assamese language. In the case of the Mikirs (Karbis), Miris (Missing), Kacharis and the Nagas instructions were imparted through the religious tenets of the Assamese language, in as much as these tribals of the ethnic group of Tibeto-Burmans had no alphabets and written literature of their own.\(^{35}\) It was decided in 1864 by the Governor General in Council that the tribes belonging to the then State of Assam would be imparted education through the medium of Roman script, and if there was any demand from the public, Assamese or Bengali language would also continue side by side.\(^{36}\)

The Missionaries never put the hill people out of their minds. They simply thought that work among them was not practicable at that time. As years passed by, they "lifted their eyes unto the hills". In the hill areas the Christian

\(^{34}\) Orange, H.W., Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India, 1902-7, Calcutta, 1909

\(^{35}\) Borpujari, H.K., American Missionary Aru Unabingsha Satikar Asam, Part III, p. 40

\(^{36}\) Ibid., p. 41
educational activity was much more extensive and the impact was much greater. That was the year in which Mills visited Assam and recommended that the Government should provide financial support for Missionary educational work in the hill areas.

Practically no attempt was made during the British period to educate the Karbi people. The British extended their administration to the Mikir Hills in the year 1835. In the late 1850s the Missionary work had begun among the Mikirs (Karbis) a tribal people living in the hills near Nagaon district but the response was minimal. The Christian preaching among the Karbis in the beginning was not direct. The Tikapahar school run by the Missionaries was the only school of some importance. A number of Karbis who came in contact with the Christian Missionaries in the plains were converted to Christianity. The Missionaries working in the Tikapahar belong to the Council of Baptist Churches for North-East India. Cyrus F. Tolman and his wife Mary (Bronson) Talman were the first Missionaries sent to work among the Karbis in 1859. Unfortunately he could do little work for the Karbis because he was also in-charge of the Nagaon American

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37. Thakur, Pankaj (Editor), *India's North-East*, p. 130
38. Downs, F.S., *Christianity in North-East India*, p. 107
Mission. The first Karbi Christian, Rongbong a Government
Mauzadar was baptised at Nagaon by Bronson in October, 1863.
After Tolman, E.P. Scott entered Karbi Anglong district to
take up the Talman's half done work. But due to unhealthy
climate of this district Scott fell ill and died of Cholera
in 1868. In 1871 a Missionary Rev. R.E. Neighbour came down
to Karbi Anglong district and was able to do some translation
work and established several schools. In 1878 he also wrote
a vocabulary or dictionary, and in the same year, he had to
give up his service due to ill health. After him, Sardoka,
a Karbi, who took up education under the supervision of the
Missionary, wrote another dictionary. As the Assamese
language had bloomed in the hands of the Missionaries so also
the Karbi language began to glow by the mercy of the
Missionary publishing book, for the first time, written and
printed in Karbi language. In 1886 there were only 41 Karbi
Christians in the Nagaon Church and 2 in the Guwahati Church.
The American Baptist Missionary led by P.E. Moore and J.M.
Carwell in 1889 entered into the Mikir Hills district (Karbi
Anglong district) and they learned Karbi language and started
their work in this region in 1891.

40. Rongpi, Jayanta (Editor), "Natun Banhi" (in Assamese),
2nd Year, No. 2, April 1982, p. 13
41. Ibid., p. 13
42. Gohain, B.K., The Hill Karbis, p. 69
43. Neog, Maheswar (Ed.), Pabitra Asam, p. 88
In 1894, Moore, though spent much of the cold season at Kolonga in the areas of Karbi Anglong district, did not choose it as a permanent centre of his work. After extensive tours and observations Carwell decided in 1896 to locate the centre at Tika Anglong (situated within the present Hamren Sub-division and 14 K.M. away from Hamren) a hill nearby the Baithalangsu market place, by the side of the river Barapani. On the eve of the Missionaries annexation of the Tika Anglong (Hill) it was the seat of Tika Arnam - the God of the giant rocks. Gradually the place became inhabited. As soon as Carwell took up the responsibility of the work, he began to construct buildings. Deobar a Karbi Christian assisted the Missionaries to establish the new centre with its school. In 1906, the Tika Church had 27 members, most of them were the school students. Moore served until 1919 and Carwell served until he died in 1925. With the death of Carwell Tika centre was abandoned.

The Missionary, establishing Church and primary schools, endeavoured to attract and teach the Karbi children. The first Karbi newspaper "Birta" was published and printed by the Missionary. "Bitusu", "Asomar", "Akitap" etc. books

44. Ibid., p. 69
45. Ibid., p. 70
46. Gohain, B.K., The Hill Karbis, p. 70
were written in Karbi language for the school children. They had a small printing press in which they printed "Flifli" (butterfly), "Kalakhs" (arithmetics), the "Pratham Mikir Path", "Ditio Mikir Path", "Tritiyo Mikir Path", "Chaturtha Mikir Path", "Ning Arjan", "Chinning Parthemi", "Birejkeme", "Thang Tam" (monthly magazine). Though at the inception Assamese script was used, afterwards they preferred to use the Roman script for those books. In this way the American Baptist Mission published many books and leaflets in Karbi and those were mostly meant for spreading Christianity among the Karbi people.

Mr. J.M. Karwel and P.J. Moore started a primary school at the Tika Pahar with Shri Thenkur Singh Engti as its first headmaster, and this was the only school of importance. According to Missionary Conference report of William R. Hutton (1927) that village Churches and schools in the Tika Pahar area were most badly in need of trained, earnest teachers who would also be leaders in the Church. "The short course of training that was inaugurated at Jorhat for village teachers should prove of great value when it could adjust itself to meet the needs of the teachers. The Pandit who attended the training course and returned to the Tika Pahar side had shown

47. Neog, Maheswar (Ed.), Pabitra Asam, p. 89
48. Ibid., pp. 88, 89
49. Ibid., p. 89
that he received some good achievement and knowledge from his attendance. The purpose of education was spiritual. Methods of intellectual training follow a simple pattern of demonstration and memorization. The teacher demonstrated how to read, write and draw pictures. There was memorization and recitation of songs, poems and stories. Most of the students could not afford to own a text book and memorization for the particular instance was imperative. Other methods included dictation and composition of sentences. Most of the pandit did not have the slightest idea how to teach the pupils to read. They took from six months to a year to teach the children the A,B,C's and even then the boys and girls did not understand words and ideas. Sir Comfort Goldsmith also considered that Rs. 20/- is a minimum requirement for a village school to begin with. According to him, no school in the Mikir Hills (Karbi Anglong) had such a magnificent equipment. Only four schools of Tika Pahar area purchased black-boards during the year. It was known that a little school for Mikir (Karbi) at Farkating was closed due to lack of funds. There were night schools with an enrolment of sixtyfour (64) boys and twentyseven (27) girls in the Tika Pahar area. In the Farkating area there were two Government schools and other eleven schools where the enrolment was ninetyfive (95) boys and seventeen (17) girls, total was hundred twelve (112). The villages were small and attempts to recruit pupils, by going

51. Ibid., p. 56
from one village to another had so far not met with any success. The Missionary report showed the picture of Farkating area (near Golaghat) as following: 52

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The report of that literature (in 1926) of Male</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-do-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-do-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of Female-</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys attending village schools</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money given by the Churches</td>
<td>Rs. 178.00/-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The work in Karbi Anglong had been restricted to the fringe areas adjoining the plains of Assam. Due to lack of trained personnel and the influence of Hinduism on this tribe, the work had progressed very slowly. Though at first the condition and standard of schools of Tika Pahar was not satisfactory yet the attendance in the four Government schools and two other schools was satisfactory. The children were attending more constantly than ever before and were seen to have a better idea of what a school should accomplish. In the beginning, this school had enrolled seventy-four (74) pupils of whom twenty-five were girls. 53 The girls did not attend regularly but some of them, at least having begun to learn, continued the study. Of the fifteen pupils in attendance,

52. Ibid., Jorhat Conference Report, 1926, p. 46
only three lived in the boarding house. The children came from the hills, four were Gaonbura's (village headman) sons. Gradually in October, 1916 seven girls were again on the roll but in December, there were none. Of the eighty five reported under instruction in this field during the last year, more than twenty were girls, but they did not attend regularly as the boys did. In three outside schools, at least twelve girls reported. Mr. Hutton observed thus— "The Association had started a Middle English School but is having a hard time to pay the teacher. Though the people had not asked for the Mission's help they may need it as they wanted a strictly Christian school. There were three other village schools with 130 boys and only 30 girls." Mrs. P.E. Moore reported about the Tika Kindergarten School in 1913 that— "At first, attendance of children was not satisfactory in the Tika Primary School. After some time perhaps in the 1913, the Baptist Missionary tried their best to start a Kindergarten School with 30 students." The station school pupils had asked to be allowed to attend the Kindergarten. However, children were attending more regularly than ever before. They were

55. Ibid., p. 36
56. Assam Missionary Conference Report, 42nd Session, Jorhat, Assam, 1945
57. Moore, Mrs. P.E., Assam Baptist Missionary Conference Report, 1913, 12th Session
interested in learning and happy in doing it. The last was not the least asset, the Baptists hoped that the school might serve as a training school for the older boys who wish to teach. In addition to it, there were five Mikir schools in the Mikir villages. The Mikir's on the Sibsagar side felt, they had lost considerably in a spiritual way because of the closing of the Mission School in Golaghat. They had another project to open, a M.E. School at Deithor (in Golaghat Sub-division) as a branch of the Jorhat Christian school. They had started to raise Rs. 5,000/- for the school but whether it materialised or not, it was a fine thing to have them planning something and trying to stand on their own feet (1944).\(^{58}\) Gradually it was learnt that in 1965 the Puta Baptist Association had one special project in hand. They were running one Christian High School located at Tika, the old Mission Compound for which an amount of Rs. 7,200/- was incurred annually.\(^{59}\)

The introduction of education into the society of the hill tribe was a big step towards a change of their centuary long special structure. The confusion and hesitance born out of their habituated social behaviour could not make them fit into the framework of a new routined life easily. In

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58. Assam Baptist Missionary Conference Report, 41 Session, Nagaon, Assam, November 9-17, 1944

spite of it, it is significant to note that the Missionaries were successful in inculcating a feeling among these backward communities that race and creed would not deprive them from getting a job or a comfortable life under new Government like the other Aryan races, if they could meet the required educational qualifications.

In the Assamese speaking plains areas Christianity made important contributions in the field of education, literature and medicine, but very few non-tribals became Christian. In the hill areas where Sanskritization was well advanced before the advent of the British as among the Mikirs, response to Christian evangelistic activities was very limited. Most of the Nagas, Khasis and Mizos, who profess Christianity are more literate and educated and they have been Westernised in their dress and education, whereas Mikirs (Karbi), Kacharis, Bodos and Miris have adopted Hindu rituals and customs and have been Sanskritized. In these tribes the percentage of literacy is comparatively low than the previous tribes and their way of life, economy and occupational structures are more traditional.

Mikir Hills could not progress much in case of education before Independence. Under the British Rule the area of Karbi Anglong was completely neglected as it was a part of Nagaon and Sibsagar district. During the whole course of British rule Karbi Anglong area was inaccessible and
unsought. The British only established some revenue Mouza* under Mouzadars** for revenue collections and the Mouzadars were the real guide and elite in his area. Due to the highly unhealthy and unhygienic climate and the frequent outbreak of epidemics in the district the Missionary actively could not progress as expected to be. Almost the whole population was outside the orbit of formal education yet it is a wonder that that area of darkness gave birth to some brilliant and prominent persons like Bonilee Khongman.

However after the creation of the Mikir Hills District in 1951, the State Government of Assam very functionarily took up the question of giving the benefits of education to this area. It is stated by some elderly people*** that during 1946-47 the Satradhikar of Kamalabari Satra established fourteen schools in different parts of the Mikir Hills with a view to introducing the education for the natives of the district.

Practically no earnest endeavour was made by the Government in this field until a separate district (Karbi Anglong) was created in 1951. Till 1951 there were very few schools which probably did not exceed 21. 60 A great, rather

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*Mouza * A division of a district in Assam under a
** Mouzadar ** fiscal officer called Mouzadar.

*** Village headman Kehay bay of Samelangso, B. Borua, office assistant of District Council and Rajen Takbi of Deothat (Golaghat Sub-division) Area.

60. Source - Annual Return, 1951 to 1952 (Mikir Hills), obtained from the office of the Inspector of Schools of Nagaon.
remarkable headway, was made in this respect virtually after creation of an Autonomous District Council under the provision of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India, took serious and effective steps for the expansion of primary education. District Council started to establish more and more schools from their own resources and the State Government also came up to establish more at their own initiative. Actually the educational work was spread in the Karbi Anglong district only after 1951. Since then the District Council took scheme to open all the Primary schools as Basic schools in every area.

Before the taking up of the Primary education by the Government the schools in Karbi Anglong were managed by the respective School Boards of Nagaon and Golaghat. But as soon as a separate hill district (United Mikir and North Cachar Hills) was formed about 175 schools including 6 Basic schools were taken up for management from the School Board and also free schools from Khasi Jayantia hills by the Government under one Deputy Inspector of Schools with his Headquarter at Diphu. Side by side the District Council also established some primary schools to cater to the needs of the local people as a certain amount was earmarked for education in their budget.

Gradually when the number of schools increased and it was found difficult to manage all the schools due to lack of communication etc. another office under a separate Deputy Inspector was established at Haflong and some schools were
finally transferred to him.

The total number of schools of different categories in Karbi Anglong (1960) with number of teachers in each (1960-61)\(^61\) were as shown in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of school</th>
<th>No. of schools</th>
<th>No. of teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Govt. L.P. School</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Govt. Aided L.P. School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic School</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aided Basic School</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;C&quot; Class School</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project L.P. School</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>248</strong></td>
<td><strong>310</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Besides the above schools the District Council established 97 Primary schools with 127 teachers during the period from 1953 to 1960 with its own resources and managed them by their own Inspectorate.\(^62\) To put more efforts for

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improvement of primary education and to lookafter the functioning of the schools, the District Council has constituted a District Primary Education Board in 1961-62. The total number of teachers serving in both Government Primary and Basic Schools are 281 in all out of which 24 (Guru Training and Basic) trained in Government primary schools and 47 (Basic trained) in pure Basic Schools. Besides there are 9 teachers in Government Aided Basic and 2 Government Aided Primary Schools. Most of the teachers are drawn from plains since the introduction of primary education and it is obviously a fact that there is a dearth of tribal candidates and the difficulties still continue. It also cannot be denied that the difficulty of communication and the troublesome mode of living in hills is also responsible for not getting qualified teachers.

Literacy is one of the main problems of the Karbi people. According to the 1951 Census the percentage of literacy was only about 5. The average percentage of literacy of the district was 16.12 in 1961. The percentage increased to 19.17 in the next decade. The number of literate persons in the district is the lowest among the districts of Assam. The

63. Source - Annual Return 1961-62 (Mikir Hills) obtained from the Office of the Dy. Inspector of Schools, Karbi Anglong, Diphu
64. Ibid.
66. Census of India 1971 (Assam Part I A), Table No. VI.7, p. 83
average percentage of literacy in Assam was 28.1%. According to the 1971 Census report this district had 72,697 educated persons of whom only 18,213 were female. This picture shows that the rate of female literacy is not encouraging. Educational facilities are also inadequate and meagre in the district. Lack of educational facilities, indifference on the part of the tribal people towards education and difficult transport and communication system are the causes of low percentage of education among the natives of the district. Though, now gradually the rate of literacy is increasing day by day, yet this district is lagging behind in comparison with the other districts of Assam.

The variation in literate population of the decade of the district may be made clear from the following Table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>4644</td>
<td>4146</td>
<td>498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>38144</td>
<td>30971</td>
<td>7175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>72697</td>
<td>54484</td>
<td>18213</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

67. Ibid., Table No. VI.8, p. 84
68. Census of India 1971 (Assam Part II), Table No. VI.8, p. 84
It is learnt that there are 872 females per thousand of males. The position of percentage of literacy in the Karbi Anglong district in 1971 is as follows: 69

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>General</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.51</td>
<td>9.46</td>
<td>69.28</td>
<td>49.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1961, there were only 214 Government Lower Primary Schools and 98 Primary Schools of the District Council and it has now 925 primary schools and 1637 teachers for these schools. 70

A brief analytical discussion of the educational progress has been made here in order to focus the achievement so far made in the field of elementary education since 1975. The number of schools are increasing quite steadily. The number of students is also increasing convincingly. This can be ascertained from the following table. 71

69. Census of India (Assam Part IA), Table No. I.13, p. 23
70. "New Star", the Daily English Newspaper, 23rd June, 1983
Table 4
Decadewise Progress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Primary schools</th>
<th>No. of teachers</th>
<th>Total amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>4592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>566</td>
<td>14627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>954</td>
<td>32486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>1394</td>
<td>35500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If a comparative study of the above figures is made the quantum of development achieved since 1951-52 can be ascertained. The percentage of increase with regard to institutions and enrolment over 1951-52 are as follows:72

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>P.C. increase in schools over 1953</th>
<th>P.C. increase in enrolment over 1953</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>839</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the face of various difficulties, achievements made during the last 25 years is not a mean performance. The District

72. Ibid., p. 4
Council authority as well as the agency of the State Government should be proud of its performance in the matter of spreading education, specially at the primary level. One is the District Council's own subject as conferred by the sixth schedule of the Constitution. In relation to the District the ratio number of educational institutions and space coverage thereof is given below to have an idea of the distribution of schools.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Area in square miles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A primary school now covers an area of 14.4 sq. K.M. on an average.

With the increase of the number of educational institutions and students the number of teachers also proportionately increases. A picture of the ratio of increase in number of teachers against schools and pupils is given below.  

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73. Ibid., p. 5  
74. Ibid., p. 5
Since there is a dearth of qualified local teachers, the schools in all levels have been filled up mostly by teachers from outside the district. However, recently, a new effort has been made by the authority of the District Council to provide the schools with the local teachers particularly in the primary school level with slight relaxation of educational qualification in respect of tribal teachers of the district. The position of employment of teachers is as in 1975 as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Mikir</th>
<th>Other tribal</th>
<th>S.C. &amp; O.B.C.</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>618</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>1779</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the majority of the teachers are brought from outside, there is the problem of accommodation of teachers which

75. Ibid., p. 6
has been however managed with the co-operation of the local public. But under Fifth Five Year Plan there were proposals for construction of teacher's quarters in different levels. In the primary school level 20 quarters of teachers were constructed or under construction from the provision made in the plan budget 1974-75 and 1975-76.

Of late, since 1974-75, a scheme for establishing model residential school in Mikir Hills (Karbi Anglong district) has been undertaken by the District Council with financial assistance from the Government during 1974-75. Rs. 10,00,000 (Rupees ten lakhs) were provided for establishment of 5 model primary schools and during 1975-76 a sum of Rs. 19,00,000 (Rupees nineteen lakhs) is earmarked for the purpose of establishment of 5 model schools and the schemes are now being implemented. The site selected for the new 5 model schools are - (i) Parkup Pahar, (ii) Rongkut Pahar, (iii) Number Adarsha, (iv) Dentaghat, and (v) Namren. These schools have attached hostels for boarders and quarters for teachers. Further, the Government sanctioned Rs. 1,00,000 (Rupees one lakh) in 1982 for the establishment of one Ashram type residential school at Dilaji 4 K.M. from Diphu town has been provided.

76. Ibid., p. 6
77. Ibid., p. 8
78. Source - Office of the Elementary Education Board, District Council, Diphu
The primary education in the district is under the control of the District Council which is shouldering the burden of the primary schools. There were only 740 primary schools in the District in 1975. Now (1981-82) the total number of primary schools is 951, of them 5 are Tea garden schools and financed by Tea garden authority. In every 13.21 sq.K.M. there is only one primary school. Out of the total inhabited village of 1451, only 744 villages have primary schools. The number of villages without primary school is 707. Of course, each of the worthmentioning 707 villages are unable to set up school as most of these villages do not have the population in conformity with the establishment of elementary schools. At present there are 200 venture primary schools with 215 teachers in the district. The following table shows the total enrolment of the students in the primary schools of the district:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Total enrolment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>14627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>32486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>33540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>951</td>
<td>52646 (Boys- 31565, Girls-21081)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

79. Source - Data obtained from the Office of the Dy. Inspector of Schools, Diphu, Karbi Anglong
At present the total number of teachers is 1645 (Male - 1319, Female - 326) of them 86 (Male - 78, Female - 8) Scheduled Caste and 998 (Male - 810, Female - 188) Scheduled Tribe teachers for the primary school of the district. It may be noted that, the 45% of primary schools are of single teacher institutions. And 348 villages of the district have this single teacher schools. There are at present as many as 32 numbers of teachers gathering centres in the district, where the teachers generally discuss matters of educational importance and also focus their different problems relating to primary education. Already non-formal education centres have been established in 70 centres in Karbi Anglong district in all circles except Kheroni and Baithalanso. These centres are opened for the children of the age group of 9-11 who have never attended any formal education centre or who have already dropped out of a school.

From what has been discussed above, it has become quite clear that progress of primary education was very slow in Karbi Anglong District because it was a solitary part of the plain district and it is a hill area. Much attention was not given for having proper communication. Since the primary education is the subject of the District Council the authority has been

shouldering their responsibilities with a earnest for the progress of primary education in spite of various discouraging factors like parents' indifference towards education, backwardness, poverty and lack of proper communication etc. The Government and people have now become more conscious of the importance of educating the children in the Urban and Rural areas of the Karbi Anglong District. According to the recommendation of the Kothari Commission, it is proposed to provide one primary school within a radius of 1.5 K.M.

The achievement of a student in his high school or in college career is largely dependent on the education that he received in his primary stage, therefore, primary education may be regarded as the foundation stone of a child's academic life. Therefore, planning and development of primary education should be of utmost importance to the administrators and education Department of a country.