CHAPTER III
INTRODUCTION OF TEACHING OF ARABIC LANGUAGE
IN BARAK VALLEY
AND
ITS DEVELOPMENT

It has already been stated that the teaching of Arabic language in India before the advent of the British rule was conducted in two levels: Maktab and Madrasa. 1) The maktab level education of Arabic language was somewhat compulsory for all Muslims. The course contents of this level constituted with the memorisation of some portions (Suras) of the Quran which was taught orally, the knowledge of Arabic alphabet and the reading of the Quran. Knowledge of writing Arabic language, even Arabic alphabet was not necessary. The maktabs were generally attached to the mosques of the villages erected for performing prayers.

2) The Madrasa level of education was not intended for general Muslims, its aim was to train up some experts. In this level instructions were imparted not only on Arabic language and literature, but also on theological subjects. The main stress of the instruction in the madrasas was laid on the teaching of theology which includes good number of voluminous works written in Arabic.

After the advent of Muslim in Barak Valley, it is quite likely that they introduced these two levels of teaching of Arabic in this region. A discussion on the history of chronological development of teaching Arabic language in Barak valley is made in the following passages. For convenience of discussion the whole matter is chronologically divided into four sections.
viz. (A) Turko Afghan Period, (B) the Mughal Period, (C) the Colonial Period and (D) Post Colonial Period.

(A) THE TURKO-AFGHAN PERIOD:

Though the advent of the Muslims and along with it the teaching of Arabic took place in Northern and North Western India in the 8th century A.D. or a bit earlier, the advent of Muslim in Barak Valley was not held before the thirteenth century. In the early fourteenth century Sylhet including modern Karimganj district of Barak Valley went under the sway of the Turko-Afghan rule; but the other two districts of the Valley, viz. Cachar and Hailakandi remained outside the domain of the Turko-Afghan rules. According to tradition Shah Jalal, the famous saint was the guiding spirit of the Turko-Afghan soldiers who were led by Sikandar Ghazi in the conquest of Sylhet. Desciples of Shah Jalal and their desciples spread over the whole region including Bangladesh and few of them went further to the places fell within the boundaries of modern Cachar and Hailakandi. Tradition goes that Shah Jalal himself had come to Bundashill and returned back leaving one of his desciples named Shah Badruddin as his spiritual representative there. The area surrounding Bundashil later assumed the name Badarpur after Shah Badruddin. Another desciple of Shah Jalal named Adam Khaki also made his Khanqa or seat of worship at Deorail near Bundashil. His mausoleum stands by the N.H. 44 about 1 K.M. towards Karimganj from Badarpur Police Station.

The Sultanate period, either the rule of Delhi or the Bengal Sultanate continued in Sylhet including Karimganj upto 1612 A.D. During this period (1303 - 1612) the desciples and desciples’ desaples of Shah Jalal spread not only over whole area now covered by the district of Karimganj, but also the adjoining territories, at present covered by the districts of Cachar and Hailakandi. Thus the seats of the Muslim saints developed at Bundashil, Deorail,
Panch gram, Natanpur etc. Among the disciples of shah Jalal Shah Badruddin, Shah Adam Khaki, Shah Diyauddin and Shah Abdul Maalik made their seats around Bundashil. A saint named Mir-ul Arefin, a disciple of Shah Jalal is said to have passed a part of his life in meditation with severe austerity at a place on the top of a hillock where an ablution house and a mosque were built on the bank of the Dhaleswari which falls to the Barak. This place is situated in the neighbourhood of Panchgram under territorial jurisdiction of the district of Hailakandi. Shah Natan whose dargah is situated at a village named Natanpur, was also a great saint who crossed Barak and made his seat near Jalalpur, Gomrah, in the district of modern Cachar. The village in which the dargah of Shah Natan is situated seems to have assumed its name after the saint.

The history of all these saints are corroborated by Suhl-e-Yamin, the oldest biography of Shah Jalal composed in the early eighteenth century. Leaving aside the possible poetical exaggeration of the book, it is certain that mosques were built at the seats of all these saints. It is also said that a mosque was erected by Shah Sikandar at the Village Garhkapan in the neighbourhood of Bundashil.

Most of these remains contain the traces of mosques built by saints. Besides, there are remains of mosques built by the royal personalities during the Turko-Afghan period. Some epigraphic sources are available in support of these constructions. A short chronological discussion of these epigraphic sources is relevant here to ascertain the antiquity of the teaching of Arabic in Barak Valley.

Of the epigraphic remains belonging to Sultanate period so far discovered in Barak Valley, the inscription found at Hatkhola, a village near Patharkandi of Karimganj district chronologically comes first [PLATE I FIG-1]. It was issued in Arabic language and character in 868 A.H. (1463 A.D.) by the care
taker of royal place of Sultan Ruknuddin Barbak Shah (1459 - 1474). The
inscription is at present installed on the wall of a modern mosque building. This
inscription and some other archaeological remains lying in the site testify
that a mosque was built at the site by the royal servant as described in the
inscription.

Another inscription of the same date issued by the same authority is
said to have been discovered at Anair haor, a vast lowlying tract of land in
between Bhanga and Chargola Railway Stations of the Badarpur - Karimganj
sector of the NF Railways. The inscription has been referred to by Fazhur
Rahman in his Bengali publication entitled 'Sileter Mati Sileter Manush'.
According to Rahman, the inscription on a stone slab refers the construction
of a mosque at the site, and the inscription ends with a name Ulugh Khan,
Khan-e-Jahan. But Rahman, though provides some details about the epi-
graph, does neither refer to his source of information nor does mention the
present state of its preservation. However, presence of heaps of bricks lying
scattered and signs of human habitation like tanks, remains of plinths, raised
places indicating homesteads etc. throughout the whole tract do not negate
the probability of erection of mosques at the site.

The remains of a small mosque including an inscription were unearthed
by local people at a village named Surjadas situated near Kaliganj Basic Training
centre in karimganj district. The inscription written in Arabic language and
character (in Tughra style) was issued in 909 A.H. (1502 A.D.) and is now
preserved in a local mosque at Bagbari [PLATE I FIG-2]. The inscription
states that the mosque was erected under the order of Alauddin Hussain Shah,
the Sultan of Bengal.

An inscription preserved in a Kali temple at a village named Pir nagar
(now pronounced as Pinnagar) about 10 K.M. southward from Karimganj
town is also an important source testifying erection of a mosque. It states that
one of the Generals of Muhammad Shah, son of Hussain Shah built a mosque at this place in 1539 A.D. [PLATE I FIG-2] The epigraphic information of mosque is in extant but the building could not survive the wear and tear of time.

Thus the traces of mosques built by saints and officials are discovered in the west part of the valley. It was quite possible that mosques were erected by Muslim inhabitants themselves in the region. Due to migration of Muslims from west, settlement of Muslim saints and officials, large scale conversion, modern Karimganj district portion of Barak Valley became preponderatingly Muslim majority in the Turko-Afghan period, consequently many mosques were erected in the villages of Karimganj district. But in all possibility, they were not brick-built permanent buildings. So, the traces of the mosques built by general people during the Turko-Afghan period are not available. It has already been stated that the mosques were the centres of imparting preliminary knowledge in Arabic language with a view to meeting the religious obligation. So, it is likely that primary education in Arabic during the period under review was available in the region. But no trace of higher education provided by madarasas belonging to the Turko-Afghan period has been found so far.

B. THE MUGHAL PERIOD :
The Mughal rule was extended to the western part of the region, i.e. the modern Karimganj district in 1612 and virtually lasted upto the third decade of the eighteenth century when Mursid Quli Khan became the independent Nowab of Bengal. Karimganj remained under the independent Nowabs of Bengal upto 1765. But the rest of the valley, i.e., modern Hailakandi and Cachar districts remained outside the spell of the Mughal Emperors or the Bengal Nowabs. However, no epigraphic traces belonging to this period is found in the region to prove that mosques or madrasas were built with royal patronage in the region during the period under review. Some remains of mosques with
undecipherable inscriptions are found at different places of Karimganj including Maizdihi situated on the western proximity of Karimganj town and Uzandihi at about 5 K.M. from Karimganj town etc. may be taken for traces of mosques belonging to the Mughal Period. The movement of Afghan chiefs of Bengal in this region after the occupation of Bengal by the Mughals are well known. Hence, these remains may be the traces of mosques erected by the Pathan Chiefs who later settled in this region. And naturally these were the centres of teaching of Arabic in primary level. Every mosque was attached with a maktab to impart teaching in Arabic language, of course, so far necessary for religious purpose.

During the Mughal period of Indian history, though the region now covered by the district of Cachar and Hailakandi remained outside the Mughal Empire and was ruled by the Dimasas, Muslim villages developed in some parts of the region due to patronisation of the Dimasa rulers. According to historical sources available, the Muslim villages were established in Cachar before Lakshmi Chandra who reigned during the fifth and sixth decades of 18th century. But during the period of his reign, the number of Muslim settlers particularly, from Sylhet was increased to a large extent. Thus Muslim villages developed and as a corollary of this development mosques were built at every village. These mosques were attached with maktabs for imparting instruction in Arabic language only to meet the religious obligation.

However, no trace of madrasa for imparting higher education in Arabic language belonging to the Mughal period has so far been discovered in the Valley.

C. THE COLONIAL PERIOD:

With acquiring of the Dewani of Bengal by the East India Company the district of Sylhet including modern Karimganj went under the virtual rule of the Company. In other words, the British rule was established over modern
Karimganj district in 1765. But the British rule was extended to other parts of Barak Valley which includes Cachar and Hailakandi district in 1830 A.D.

In retrospect, the teaching of Arabic language had developed slowly in the region under review during the pre colonial period, and this development had been a corollary to the Muslim settlement. The centres of teaching Arabic developed along with mosques and *dargahs* and *Khanqahs*. The traces of development of independent institution for teaching Arabic have yet not been discovered. But with the establishment of the British rule over the valley, a trend of conscious development of teaching of Arabic can be observed. To study this trend the whole period, i.e. from 1765 to 1947 may be chronologically divided into two phases: (1) the early colonial period from 1765 to the Revolt of 1857 and (2) the later colonial period from the Queen's Proclamation in 1858 to independence of India in 1947.

**1. The Early Colonial Period:** During the early colonial period the tradition of teaching Arabic in the *maktabs* attached to mosques was mostly followed in the Valley. The system of establishing *Madarasa* had already developed in northern India during the pre colonial period and *Madrasas* at Rampur, Muradabad and other places in northern India were the famous centres of teaching Arabic language in that part of the country. We find that a number of *Madarasas* was established during the early colonial period in the district of Sylhet of which modern Karimganj district had been a part. Among these Phoolbari Alia Madrasa, Taraf Madrasa, Mufti Madrasa, Syedpur Shamsia Madrasa were famous. Scholars completing their education in northern India and/or in these Madrasas of Sylhet would become the *Imams* of the mosques of the region now covered by Barak Valley. They imparted teaching of preliminary knowledge in Arabic language in the *Maktabs* attached to the mosques.

However, the mosque attached *Maktabs* played a vital role in originat
ing the idea of Madrasa education and establishing Madrasas in the region under review during the early colonial period. The Imams of mosques who completed their studies in Northern Indian Madrasas were pioneers in establishing primary Madrasas in this region. Initially the mosques were the premises where Madrasas were started.

**Development of Qaumi Madrasa:**

During the colonial period no government initiative was taken to establish any Madrasa in this region. It may be mentioned here that the British Colonial Government run by the East India Company had adopted the policy of introducing Madrasa education system for their own administrative interest. With the British Company’s assumption of power with the acquisition of the Dewani of Bengal following their victory in the Battle of Boxur there started a new dimension in the history of education in India. After the civil administration of the country had come into the hands of the East India Company, every English judge was supposed to be ignorant of the people, their manners and the spirit of law which had so long been administered to them, had a Maulavi in his court to assist in his work. But it was difficult to have an intelligent Maulavi. With a view to meeting this demand, and partly to reconciling the Muslims to the British rule Lord Warren Hastings, the Governor General ordered to establish the Madrasa Alia (Calcutta Madrasa) in 1780 which had been a celebrated institution in the history of education in Indian Sub-continent and has since been not only one of the very few leading institutions in the eastern part of the country, but also the unique distinction of being in addition to being a teaching institution itself, an affiliating body for the various large and small Madrasas for teaching Arabic in the Bengal Presidency which included the districts of Sylhet including Karimganj and Cachar including Hailakandi.

Though the establishment of Calcutta Madrasa was an important milestone in the progress of education in India, the purpose of its establishment...
was doubted by a large section of Muslim learned man called Ulama as the management of it was in the hands of the British scholars. Over and above, when Lord Bentinck adopted the policy of resumption of rent free tenures granted to the Muslim scholars during the Mughal period to run the educational institutions namely Madrasas, the doubt that had germinated in the minds of Muslim scholars during the early years of the colonial rule became firmed. The replacement of Persian by English as court language in 1835 made good number of Muslim scholars jobless which increased the doubt among the Muslims about the attitude of the colonial rules about Madrasa education. The Muslim scholars began to realise that the colonial rulers were planning for abolishing Madrasa education system. So, they came forward to establish Madrasa with the help and assistance from the community. This kind of Madrasas set up by the community was given an appellation “Qaumi Madrasa”. This is an innovation developed in the early phase of the colonial rule. It may be defined in this way: The Qaumi Madrasa is a kind of institution aiming at imparting teaching on theology and Arabic and Persian languages established by the Muslim scholars with social and financial support from the community without taking any help from the Government. Such Madrasas are ventured not only for imparting teaching, but also for social, moral and spiritual development of the Muslim population of the concerned locality.

No trace of Madrasas affiliated to Calcutta Madrasa established in Barak Valley are found. However, traces of Qaumi Madrasas are not lacking. Traces of such Madrasas established before the Revolt of 1857 are detailed below:

1. Madrasa-e-Faiz-e-Aam: It was established in 1843 at a village named Kanakpur in the district of Karimganj which was then a part of the district of Sylhet under the Dacca Division of the Bengal Presidency of the British India.
This Madrasa served the purpose of feeder section to renowned Phoolbari Madrasa in Sylhet and other Northern Indian Madrasas. Many scholars are reported to have begun their primary Madrasa education here at this Madrasa and then proceeded for further studies at Phoolbari near Sylhet or at Rampur in north India.

2. Ashrafui Uloom Ratanpur Madrasa: It was established in Ratanpur near Hailakandi in the then district of Cachar under Dacca Division of the Bengal Presidency of the British India. Now, the place is included in Hailakandi district. This Madrasa was established in 1856. It is said that one Maulana Azraf Ali was an Imam at a local mosque. He had come to this place from Jaintiapur of Sylhet district. He made all arrangements for establishing the Madrasa. During the initial period one Maulana Sadar Ali came back from Rampur Oriental College after completion of his studies there. This Sadar Ali and Imam Maulana Azraf Ali started the Madrasa in the premises of the mosque of village Ratanpur situated on the bank of the river Katakhal 5 km. eastward from Hailakandi town. Then it was decided to shift to permanent house to be built on a piece of land on the bank of the river Katakhal. But a dispute arose between the pro-Madrasa and anti Madrasa groups of people. Then some generous persons came forward to materialize the idea of Imam Azraf Ali and the alumnus of Rampur, Maulana sadar Ali. They including (1) Gholam Yazdasi Choudhury, (2) Irfan Ali Laskar of Nitainagar, (3) Arzad Ali Mazumdar of Bandukmara, (4) Master Asraf Ali and others purchased the land and donated it to the Madrasa and a permanent building was constructed. Then the Madrasa which had been started in the premises of Ratanpur mosque was shifted to its present site. The Madrasa still exists and became a centre of higher education of Islamic studies including Arabic language.
With this back ground in the history of teaching of Arabic language Barak Valley enters the period of highnoon of colonialism started with the Proclamation of the Queen in 1858 after suppression of the Revolt of 1857.

**Later Colonial period**: The later Colonial period of the British rule in the history of India starts with the Proclamation of the Queen abolishing the Company’s rule and extending the rule of the British Crown to India in 1858 after suppression of the Revolt of 1857 called the first war of Indian independence. In fact, 1857 is a turning point in the history of India sofar as the administartive and education systems of India, and trend of Muslim thought and actions are concerned. The later colonial period continued upto achievement of independence in 1947.

It is not necessary to capitulate here the causes, extent and results of the Revolt of 1857, but a brief discussion on background of the change in education system and development of new trend in the Muslim thoughts is necessary to comprehend the development of teaching in Arabic language in India as well as in Barak valley.

When the East India Company was entrusted with the responsibility of education of Indians by the Charter of 1813, three persons were commissioned in three Presidencies of India to report on the states of indigenous education so that on its basis a realistic scheme of education for Indians could be formulated and implemented in the Indian territories under the British rule. Thomas Munro was appointed in Madras (1822-24), M.S. Elphinstone in Bombay (1825-29) and William Adams in Bengal Presidency (1835-38) and the Punjab (1849) to make a detailed survey of indigenous education system prevalent in these regions. All the three made sincere efforts and produced detailed reports on the existing Muslim and Hindu educational institutions in the given regions. Adam, as a matter of fact, was in favour of maintaining the indigenous education system. He believed that it could be improved by
"transfusion into it of those discoveries in Arts and Science and in Philosophy and that distinguish Europe and that will help to awaken the native mind from the sleep of centuries"\textsuperscript{15}. The same view was expressed in the Wood’s Despatch in 1854 where in Sir Charles Wood had recommended that the indigenous elementary educational institutions, viz. \textit{Maktab, Madrasa} and \textit{Pathsala} with some modifications be recognised as the elementary level feeder institutions for the modern system of education. Indian Education Commission of 1882 also had expressed similar views, but it was destined not to happen. For Muslims, traditional institutions like \textit{Maktabs} and \textit{Madrasas} were essentially needed for meeting their religious obligation. But no heed was paid to this necessity of the community.

Again there was a marked change in the trend of Indian Muslim thought in post Revolt period. As a matter of fact, the Revolt of 1857 struck a heavy blow at the aspiration of the upper classes of Indians. It extinguished all their ambitions for the recovery of lost power and domination. The Muslims who became the special target of British hatred after the Revolt naturally suffered most from its consequences. Their leading families in the area where the Revolt had raged most fiercely were uprooted, many lost their lands and property and their bread-winners became paupers. The young men faced a bleak future as the doors of Government patronage were shut upon them. Darkness enveloped the community and a destiny boding nothing but ill threatened them.

In the circumstances, there were only two alternatives before them. Either to face boldly their misfortune, cast out the moral weakness which paralysed their will, build up a clean, God fearing and upright society on the basis of the teachings of the holy Quran, and in co-operation with their countrymen of other faiths, evolved a political order which would guarantee free
exercise of faith, equal opportunities of welfare and advancement, and a self-respecting dignified life for men of all creeds, all races and all colours.

Or, to surrender the dreams of independence for all time, accept the rule of the alien nation and endeavour to enlist their goodwill to obtain Government patronage - a share in the services and in the positions of influence like the municipal councils, legislative bodies and in other places.

The first alternative was adopted largely by the Ulama - the custodians of traditional learning and ideas. They advocated religious reform and political freedom. The school of Ulama traced its affiliation to Shah Wali Ullah who had inspired the leaders of Jehadi Movement initiated by Syed Ahmed of Bareilly. The Ulama participated in the Revolt of 1857 to drive the British out from India. A group of Ulama who had actively participated in the Revolt and had organised a mass movement against British rule with its centre at Shamli in Muzaffarnagar district of Uttar Pradesh evaded the wrath of the Government, and established a Madrasa with title ‘Darul Ulom’ at Deoband in Sheharianpur district, to train religious leaders for the community. Prominent among them were Muhammed Qasim Nanautavi (1831-1880) and Rashid Ahmed Gangohi (1828-1905), both followers of Haji Imdad Ullah who migrated to Makkah in 1857. The Madrasa was opened in 1867. In education, it followed the curriculum prescribed by the Dars-i-Nizami, which concentrated on the traditional sciences. The Madrasa was wholly independent in curricula, finances and administration, and its graduates were trained in theology, Arabic language and patriotism. On the question of co-operation in the matter of national aims with the Hindus, Rashid Ahmed Gangohi gave the opinion that, for the fulfilment of national aspiration, it was permissible according to the Suariat for the Muslims to enter into agreement with the Hindus. Thus Darul Ulum Decoband became a celebrated centre of teaching of Arabic language as well as freedom movement in India. It also became a role model of a
kind of *Qaumni Madrasas* established in other places of India. The establishment of Darul uloom at Deoband, as a matter of fact, is an unsurpassable milestone in the history of *Madrasa* education in the Indian Sub-Continent and in the world at present.

When the Darul uloom became role model of the *Qaumni Madrasa* system in India, there had been another *Madrasa* education system prevalent in the country and it had been flourished during the period of the rule of the East India Company. It has already been stated that the Calcutta Madrasa was established by the East India Company in 1780 and its standard was raised to an affiliating institution. Its Principal also acted as Registrar of the Central Madrasa Examination Board which conducted three examinations namely Junior (*Alim*), Senior (*Fadil*) and Title (*Mumtaz*) after six, eight and ten years respectively. As the Sylhet had been a part of Bengal administered Dacca Division the Madrasa education in Sylhet was influenced by the Calcutta Madrasa. The famous Phoolbari Madrasa had been following the syllabi of Calcutta Madrasa. It may be recalled here that in 1874 a separate province including modern Assam, Sylhet division of Bangladesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Mizoram was organised and the education system including the *Madrasa* system that had been in vogue in Bengal was introduced here. The British Government by that point of time could realise the weakness of the Muslims for Arabic language as it was regarded by them (Muslims) as their religious language. To patronage the teaching of Arabic language they adopted the policy of establishing *Madrasas* at some important centres in the pattern of the Calcutta Madrasa. Thus the Sylhet Government Alia Madrasa was established in 1913. The study level of the Madrasa began with Junior and Senior stages. At the same time affiliation was extended to some existing Madrasas situated in that portion of Sylhet district which is now in the territorial jurisdiction of Bangladesh.
These Madrasas included Jhingabari, Gachbari and Naraping. These Madrasas were commonly called Government Madrasas though in actuality, they were Government recognised Madrasas. To attract the moderate Muslims, the system of High Madrasa education was introduced with the establishment of Assam State Madrasa Board at Sylhet on the model of education in Bengal. The High Madrasa education is a parallel system with school education where Arabic and other Islamic religious subjects are compulsarily taught and the system was controlled by the Assam State Madrasa Board.

On the basis of the recommendations of Lord Macaulay in 1835 the colonial Government had adopted a policy of establishing of schools at important places to promote European literature and science amongst Indians. This policy of the colonial Government underwent changes in 1882 on the basis of the recommendation of the Hunter Commission. Upto this point of time Calcutta University had been established and it was entrusted with the control of the secondary education in Assam. Following this the colonial Government took measures of establishing Government High Schools almost at every head quarters of sub-division and encouraged establishment of secondary schools by society with a view to implementing one of the recommendations of the Hunter Commission which had emphasised on the policy of slow and gradual withdrawl of the state support and management of the institution of higher education. So, philanthropists came forward to establish secondary schools and colleges at different places. In the syllabi that followed in secondary level one of the classical languages including Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit was prescribed as a compulsory option for the High School leaving Examination called Entrance or Matriculation conducted by the Universities. The colleges sprang up during the later colonial period generally offered provision for opting Arabic as elective subjects.
Thus during the later colonial period the two system of provision for teaching Arabic language was in vogue in the region under review. These two systems include (1) the Madrasa education system and (2) the secular education system.

**THE MADRASA EDUCATION SYSTEM:**
The Madrasa education system continued again in two distinct sectors viz. (a) the *Qaumi Madrasa* and (b) the Government recognised Madrasas.

It may not the out of place to mention here that the *Qaumi* system was again sharply divided into two categories: the *Madrasas* established to follow the motto and curricullae of Darul Uloom, Deobond and the *Madrasas* established by the society with a view to getting Government recognition and assistance in course of time.

(a) *The Qaumi Madrasas under the influence of Darul Uloom Deobond*:
After the establishment of Darul Uloom at Deoband in Shahranpur district of U.P. in 1867, its influence began to spread throughout the length and breadth of the country. The movement that introduced in the Darul Uloom in the sphere of Islamic education, character building and anti colonial attitude reached Barak Valley also very soon. The following Madrasas were established during the later colonial period which clearly show the influence of Deoband.

(i) **Nayagram Ahmadia Madrasa**: It was established in 1870 at Nayagram, near Tantoo, a village in the present Hailakandi district of Barak Valley. The influential family of the Late Maulana Azizur Rahman, a Sufi of Naqshabandia order, patronised in establishing the Madrasa. The establishment of this Madrasa was the result of the wind of Deoband movement that had reached the region.

(ii) **Madinatul Uloom Bagbari**: This is another Madrasa of Deoband line. It was established in 1873 at a village named Bagbari about 2 km. eastward from Kaliganj Bazar and 15 km. away from Karimganj town. This *Madrasa* was
established by the Late Maulana Najib Ali Choudhury who claimed his descent from a group of people who had entered India from Ghour of Afghanistan during the Mughal period. Late Maulana Najib Ali Choudhury was a disciple of Late Haji Imdad Ullah, a saint of Chistia Naqshbandi order who had migrated to Makkah at the time of the Revolt of 1857. It is said that Maulana Najib Ali Choudhury had also participated in the uprising of Shamli along with others in 1857 and after its suppression migrated to Makkah. It is said that in Makkah he saw a dream at one night when the Prophet Muhammad directed him to return to Hindustan and continue his mission of preaching Islam and spreading Islamic education. Accordingly he came back to India and established the Madrasa at his own house at Bagbari. The Madrasa was named after the founder as Madinatul Uloom Bagbari Najibia Alia Madrasa. The Madrasa continued its functioning at the same place for about a century and was shifted to its present place in 1969 when the late Maulana Ashab Uddin assumed the post of Muhtamim of the Madrasa. For a period of about one century and two decades, the level of study was upto Shar-e-Jami. In 1992 Dawra-e-Hadith was introduced in the Madrasa. This Madrasa played a very prominent role in producing scholars of Arabic language during a period of seven decades in whole of the Sylhet district before independence and still retains its reputation in doing so.

(iii) Cheragia Qaumia Alia Madrasa: This is another Madrasa established to follow the ideals and motto that Darul Uloom Deoband propagated. It was established in 1882 at Sherpur village near Baraigram Railway Junction in the district of Karimganj. The exact place where the Madrasa is situated at present is called Cheraghi or Cheraghi Bazar adjacent to Sherpur village. It is said that late Munshi Sharif Hussain, a prominent person of Arjanpur, a village situated in the neighbourhood of Sherpur once saw in dream that a lamp was
burning at the site where Madrasa is at present situated and people were rushing to it to get themselves benifitted from the burning fire. Next morning he united the prominent persons of the locality, informed them about the dream and sought their suggestions. Finally he himself interpreted the meaning of his dream and opined that light of knowledge should be distributed from the site and as such a Madrasa should be established there so that the purpose would be served. All the persons assembled there agreed to the proposal and thus the Madrasa-e Qaumia Ali came into existence. The Persian rendering of a ‘lamp’ removing darkness is ‘Cheragh’ and so the Madrasa was named as Cheraghia Alian Madrasa. This Madrasa is one of the oldest centres in Barak Valley which has been imparting teaching in Arabic language along with other religious subjects for about one century and three decades since inception.

(iv) Darul Uloom Banshkandi: It is one of the most famous Madrasas of Eastern India established in pursnance of the Darul Uloom Deobond. It was established at its present site in the village Banskandi of Cachar district in the year 1897. One celebrated Hafij Akbar Ali of Banskandi had gone to Makkah for pilgrimage in 1894. After performing Haj, he stayed there for two years and accepted the descipleship of Haji Imdad Ullah, a celebrated Sufi who had migrated to Makkah from India in 1857. The Sufi taught Hafij Akbar Ali lessons in spiritual ideology. After these years Imdad Ullah asked the Hafij to leave for India and to spread Islamic education. With the instruction of his preceptor Hafij Akbar Ali came back to Banskandi and met the prominent persons of the locality including Hafij Ali, Noor Ali and Nenadhan Mia and expressed this desire to establish a Madrasa there. They together started the Madrasa and named it Darul Uloom Banshkandi in clear imitation of Deobond. They also started the Madrasa under a tree to comemorate the initiating
The circumstances of the Darul Uloom, Deoband. Hafij Akbar Ali pioneered the Madrasa as its teacher while Nenadhan Mia assumed the post of president of the Madrasa. Arrangement of imparting teaching upto middle stage in this Madrasa was adopted at the beginning and this level of teaching continued upto 1947.

After 1947, a new trend came to the Madrasa education system followed by the Daul Uloom Deoband. This trend reached Barak Valley also and this Madrasa was upgraded to Alia level in 1950. Then the meetings and conversions of Jamiat-ul-ulama began to be held frequently at the locality and the Madrasa got a new life with the touch of celebrated ulama, especially the All India President of Jamiat Ulama, the famous freedom fighter and celebrated teacher Shaikhul Islam Syed Hussain Ahmed Madani.

After independence, many developments took place in the sphere of Madrasa education. The followers of Deoband movement under the leadership of Maulana Syed Hussain Ahmed Madani firmly opined that Madrasa education should be kept outside the control of the Government. It was firmly decided that the Darul Uloom Banshkandi should remain a Qaumi Madrasa. Maulana Ahmed Ali of Badarpur was one of the discipless of Maulana Madani. He was asked by his preceptor to work as a teacher at Darul Uloom Banshkandi. Accordingly Maulana Ahmed Ali joined the Madrasa as a Muhaddith in 1950. In 1957, the Dawrah-e-Hadith section was formally inaugurated in the Madrasa by Shaikhul Islam Syed Hussain Ahmed Madani during his last visit to Assam. At the time of inauguration the late Shaikhul Islam expressed his wish that the Banshkandi should be the second Darul Uloom or Darul Uloom of Eastern India, the first being that at Deoband in U.P. Haji Miandhan Mia, a famous social worker of the locality remained Muhtamim of the Madrasa for a long period. Maulana Ahmed Ali had been the longtime Shaikhul Hadith of the
Madrasa till his departure for the heavenly abode in 2000 A.D. This Madrasa is a full fledged residential one and only Madrasa of its kind in Assam till date. About two thousand students and around 50 teachers, residing the campus, are provided with free lodging and fooding. At present Maulana Sheikh Abdul Bari and Maulana Yahya are Sheikhul Hadith and Rector of the Madrasa respectively.

(v) Bhanga sharif Markazul Uloom: This Madrasa is also a Qaumi one established in 1942 following the pattern of Deoband. It was established at a place adjacent to Bhanga Motor Stand and at a walking distance from Bhanga Railway Station of the Badarpur Karimganj section of the NF Railways. It is one of the premier Madrasas in Assam.

(b) Madrasas established by the Community aiming at Government's favour: The following Madrasa were established at different times in Barak Valley to impart teaching in Arabic language and Islamic theology by the community with a view to getting Government favour in due course.

(i) Purahuria Alia Madrasa: The Madrasa was established in 1877 at the village Purahuria in the neighbourhood of Fakira Bazar or Fakirer Bazar in the western part of Karimganj district. According to the history orally current from generation to generation among the people of the locality that one Maulana Firoze Ali Choudhury and others took the initiative of establishing the Madrasa. One Abdus Salam Choudhury, a prominent resident of Purahuria who happens to be a descendant of the Late Maulana Firoz Ali Choudhury narrated that the latter had first pursued for higher education at Rampur Alia Madrasa and then he went to Darul Uloom, Deoband. After completion of his studies he returned to his native place and inspired the local people to establish Madrasa for imparting education in Arabic language and Islamic theology. The Madrasa still serves as a premier institute in the western part of Karimganj district. 
Madrasa underwent different changes along with different steps taken by the Government in respect of Madrasa education. The State Madrasa Education Board had extended its affiliation to it, the Government brought it under the Grant-in-Aid of the Deficit System and ultimately provincialised the institution.

(ii) Rabbania Madrasa: It was established in 1866 at West Hasanpur village, a part of greater Mahakal, by the Zamindar family of the Hasanpur Estate. The Madrasa was named after its founder Gholam Rabbani Choudhury, the founder of the Hasanpur Estate. It is reported by the President of present managing committee of the Madrasa that the renown Islamic scholar and Sufi Late Maulana Ahmed Ali was an alumnus of the Rabbania Madrasa. Now, this Madrasa got Governments recognition and has been converted to a senior Madrasa.

(iii) Asimia Alia Madrasa: This Madrasa was established in 1895. First, it was established as a Maktab by Asim Shah at the holy shrine of Hasan Shah, a disciple of Hazrat Shah Jalal. Then after a few years it was shifted to a village named Bagarsangan in the neighbourhood of modern Asimganj Bazar. A few years later, it was again shifted to the southern part of present Asimganj Bazar and assumed the name, Asimia Alia Madrasa. In 1942 it was shifted to the permanent building at the present site. According to information collected from the Superintendent of the Madrasa the Government extended its recognition to it in 1943. After independence deficit system of grant-in-aid was extended to it and now it is a provincialised institution. It has attained the position of a premier Islamic institution in southern Assam and Tripura and serves the purpose of teaching of Arabic language and Islamic theology.

(iv) Deorail Alia Madrasa: This Madrasa was established in 1898 at a village named Bundashil in the neighbourhood of Badarpur Railway Junction.
by Maulana Yaqub, popularly known as Hatim Ali Saheb. After a break, it was restarted at the present site by the NH 44 at Deoail in Badarpur township area, in 1930 with a name ‘Deorail Alia Madrasa’. In 1942 this Madrasa was provisionally recognised by the Government and so it was converted into a senior Madrasa. In 1938, Dawra-e-Hadith section had been started where Maulana Mushahid of Jaintiya of present Bangladesh was a Muhaddith. But in 1947 the Dawra-e-Hadith section in the title Madrasa was totally separated from Deorail Alia Madrasa.

(v) W.K. Vitargool Senior Madrasa : West Karimganj Vitargool Senior Madrasa is said to be have been established in 1919. Now it a provincialised Madrasa.

(vi) Idgah Isha’atul Islam Madrasa : It was established in 1920 at village Singaria of Karimganj district, adjacent to a big place of two annual congregations of Muslims called Idgah. Now it is a provincialized Senior Madrasa.

(vii) Kazir Bazar Alia Madrasa : It was established in 1922 at Kazir Bazar, a famous market place in Ratabari Police Station area of Karimganj district. Now it is a provincialised senior Madrasa.

(viii) Hailakandi Senior Madrasa : This Madrasa was established in 1938. Now it is a provincialised Madrasa.

SECULAR INSTITUTIONS :

Secular institutions are those institutions which were established by the Government or ventured by the public aiming to be recognised by the Government for imparting general teaching for attaining perfection in worldly education. Though the word secular has a connotation negating religion, but in India it attained a connotation that means an affair relating to worldly affair and not to a religion but religion is not negated. However, these institutions were given general names like schools for lower education and colleges and universities.
for higher education. In some of these secular institutions provision for teaching Arabic was made. It is to be noted here that during the colonial period no university was established within the boundary of Assam province which was organised in 1874 and of which present Barak Valley was a part. However, the Calcutta university was at the pivot of the secular education imparted in Eastern India including Assam. Though no college or university was established by the Government in Barak Valley during the colonial period, some schools were established by the Government to provide secular education which also made provision for teaching of Arabic language. These Government institutions include Silchar Government High School (now Higher Secondary), Karimganj Government High School (now Higher secondary) and Hailakandi Victoria Memorial Government High School (now Higher Secondary).

The Silchar Government High School was established in 1863, but provision for teaching of Arabic language was made some time after 1888. According to the records available, the provision of teaching of Persian not Arabic was first made in the school which continued upto 1888\textsuperscript{23}.

Karimganj Government High School and Hailakandi V.M. Government High School were established in 1884 and 1903 respectively. Both the schools provided facilities for teaching of Arabic language since inception.

During this period, ie. the later colonial period, some High schools were established in the then district of Cachar and present Karimganj portion of the then district of Sylhet, by local people. Most of these schools offered provision for teaching of Arabic as one of the compulsory elective subjects. These schools were first recognised by the Government, then were taken up for recurring financial grants in aid and ultimately provincialised. In the area now covered by the district of Cachar as many as 9(nine) schools were established most of which provided teaching of Arabic language. The oldest among them is Raja
G.C. memorial High School (at present H.S. School) established at Barkhola in 1901. This establishment was chronologically followed by Earle High School (now H.S., in 1913), Narsingh High School (now H.S.) 1915, Bam Nityananda High School in 1922, (now Multipurpose), S.L. High School in 1928, (now H.S.), Cachar High School (1930), Siddheswar High School, Katigorah (1946), and J.R. High School and Kalain High School (now H.S.) were established in 1947 on the eve of independence.

Similarly some Schools were also established in present Hailakandi district. The oldest among them is Lala High School. It was established in 1903 as a High School and now it has been promoted to the standard of H.S. and Multipurpose School. It was followed by the establishment of Nityanandapur High School (1945), and Purba Kittarband Public High School and Janaki Charan High School established in 1947. All the Schools have been elevated to the status of 12 class H.S. Schools and offer provision of teaching Arabic language.

In establishing schools the present Karimganj district which had been a part of Karimganj sub-division of the district of Sylhet during the period under review, was not lagging behind. The High Schools established by the public during the period include Nilmoni High School (1916), Morjat Kandi Public High School (1930), Srigouri High School (1934), Bipin Chandra High School (1937, now S.V. Vidya Niketan Nilambazar), Model High School, Patherkandi (1939), Narayan Nath High School, Anipur, (1946). Latu High School (1947) and Gandhai High Schools, (1947). All these schools are now provincialised and all except Srigouri High School and Latu High School have been promoted to the standard of Higher Secondary Schools. However, all these Schools have the provision for teaching Arabic in secondary level, in some cases H.S, level too.
During the later colonial period, G.C. College and Karimganj College were established at Silchar and Karimganj respectively. G.C. College was established in 1935 and offered provision for teaching of Persian in Degree level. However, Karimganj College was established in 1946 and made provision for teaching Arabic at the inception. This College was established with affiliation to the Calcutta University, then it came under the jurisdiction of Gauhati University and at present it is under the Assam University Silchar.

**High and ME Madrasa System**: Though the Madrasa education and secular education were the two main systems of education imparting teaching of Arabic established during the later colonial period, a system called High Madrasa education system was also introduced during the period. As a matter of fact, High Madrasa education is a parallel system with school education where Arabic and some Islamic religious subjects are, along with secular subjects like English and Vernacular literature, Mathematics, Geography and History of High School standard were taught. This system was introduced in Assam after establishment of the Assam Madrasa Board at Sylhet which controlled the High Madrasa education system also and conducted High Madrasa Final Examination. The High Madrasa Examination was recognised as equivalent to the Matriculation Examination controlled and conducted by the Calcutta University.

Since the later colonial period a kind of four class (now three class) school education system above the Primary education has been continuing. The syllabi and curricula of such schools are exactly those of the lower classes of the High/Secondary Schools. This system is known as M.E. education system. In this system M.E. Madrasa education in the pattern of lower classes of High Madrasa was introduced where Arabic and some preliminary Islamic religious subjects are compulsory for teaching along with secular subjects.
High Madrasa and M.E. Madrasas established during the later Colonial Period:

Sofar as the High and M.E. Madrasas of Barak Valley are concerned, we find the history of M.E. Madrasa is older than that of High Madrasa. The oldest M.E. Madrasa was established at Batarashi near Karimganj town in 1911. It was followed by the establishment of Deorail M.E. Madrasa in 1920 situated at Deorail village adjacent to Badsarpur town. The town Boys’ M.E. Madrasa was established at Silchar town in 1924. The Karimganj High Madrasa which once became a prominent institution of imparting secondary education among the Muslims in Assam including Sylhet was established as an M.E. Madrasa in 1926 at the heart of Karimganj town. In 1935 it was promoted to a full fledged High Madrasa. An M.E. Madrasa named Bahadurpur M.E. Madrasa was established in 1933 in Hailakandi District. The Purahuria M.E. Madrasa situated near Fakirer Bazar in the west Karimganj area, was established in 1936 in the neighbourhood of Purahuria Senior Madrasas. Katigorah M.E. Madrasa was established in 1940 while Hailakandi Town High Madrasa was established in 1945.

Thus during the later colonial period the High and M.E. Madrasa education system which is a mixture of Madrasa and secular education system was equally active in imparting teaching of Arabic language alongwith Madrasa and secular educational institutions in Barak Valley. It may not be out of place to mention here that Karimganj and Hailakandi district were advance in upholding this system in comparison with the district of Cachar.

(D) POST COLONIAL PERIOD

With independence achieved in 1947 India was divided into two countries named India and Pakistan. The district of Sylhet which had been a part of
Assam for last 7 decades was partitioned following a referendum and a truncated portion of it which now forms the Karimganj district was retained to Assam. With the partition of the district of Sylhet Cachar district was reorganised including the Indian portion of Sylhet district which was made an administrative subdivision named Karimganj. Thus in 1947 Cachar district was reorganised with four subdivisions, viz. Silchar, Hailakandi, North Cachar and Karimganj. In course of time all these subdivisions were promoted to districts and Barak Valley includes the then three subdivisions excepting North Cachar which forms the North Cachar Hills district. In the region forming Barak Valley about 40% of inhabitants are Muslims who regard Arabic as their religious language. So, the importance of teaching of Arabic language in the reorganised Cachar, the forerunner of Barak Valley did not decreased, rather significantly increased for some socio-religious reasons arisen after independence.

The development of teaching of Arabic language in different systems upto the Colonial period and appearance of groups of Arabic learned persons and their successful attempts to establish a firm footing for promotion and continuation of teaching and learning Arabic language in the state of Assam including Barak Valley ushered in a new era in the post colonial period. In the post colonial period a marked change began to appear in the realm of education of this valley. New schools and colleges were established and almost in the same way Madrasas began to be established in Muslim dominated areas. For a systematic study, the educational institutions established for imparting teaching of Arabic after independence may be divided into (1) Madrasa and (2) Other institutions.

(1) MADRASA : With attaining independence in 1947, the Madrasa education system in India, and more particularly, in Assam got a new dimension. Prior to independence, Madrasas were dependentent, except a
few Government Madrasas, on the resources derived from the members of the Muslim society who were, mostly economically weak. It is further a fact that no Government Madrasa was situated in the territory now forms the Barak Valley. After Independence, the Government began to encourage Madrasa education system and the influence of Deoband began to spread more effectively in the Muslim society which made the members of the society more active in establishing Madrasas without any assistance from the state.

As mentioned in the discussion of the state of Madrasa education system in the colonial period, it has been mentioned that two systems viz. (a) Qaumia and (b) Government Madrasas were prevalent in those days. These two systems continued in the post independence period also. Development of both categories of Madrasa education system, their expansion, the difference in their syllabi and reason behind their continuation form a very important study along with the study of the historical development of teaching of Arabic in Barak Valley during the later half of the twentieth century.

(a) Qaumi Madrasa: In discussing Madrasa education system imparting teaching of Arabic along with Islamic education in Barak Velley the Qaumi Madrasa is older than that of the Government Madrasa. During the Colonial period the establishment of Qaumi Madrasa was promoted by a thought of training up groups of Muslim youths who would be God fearing and adherents to the principles of the Islamic life envisaged in the Quran and Hadith. Besides, the students of the Madrasas were trained to oppose the Colonial rule with their character and simple way of life.

In the principle of establishing and running Qaumi Madrasas, co-operation with Government and nobility was looked down as hinderous for attaining the goal. In education, the Qaumi Madrasa followed the syllabi of Dars-e-Nizami which includes the traditional sciences. After independence this trend of establishing Madrasa became very popular and persons educated and trained in this
system began to establish *Qaumi Madrasas* at different places with much vigour and supports from the society. The pioneers of *Qaumi Madrasa* assert that these *Madrasas* are the producing centres of good *Ulamas* who are the real descendents of the prophetic knowledge and wisdom. In post colonial period, the Ulama attached with *Qaumi Madrasa*, development the *Maktab*, *Safelas* (junior) and even *Dawra-e-Hadith* in same places. Their target was to spread institutional primary Islamic education to the society in general way. The belief that substance and extracts of Islam are hidden only in Islamic religious education is the main spirit behind establishing new *Madrasa*. Of course, the earning of subsistence for the *Qaumi Madrasa* educated youths is no way less important cause of multiplication of *Qaumi Madrasas*.

The prominent *Qaumi Madrasas* which were established in Barak Velley during the colonial period have already been mentioned. They were being flourished rapidly in one hand, and new *Madrasas* were being established on the other. Though the *Qaumi Madrasas* were being established to impart education in traditional science of Islam and teaching of Arabic language, a marked trend developed in the closing quarter of the twentieth century for including elements of modern science and technology along with the syllabi of the *Qaumi Madrasas*. Another point that deserves mentioning is the attempt of organising Boards for holding examinations of the *Qaumi Madrasas* with uniform syllabi is a new phenomenon in the development of Madrasa education in the Valley and also in the State of Assam during the post independence period. An attempt is being made in the following passages to discuss the development of *Qaumi Madrasas* in the valley during the post independent period and also the development of Boards for formulating syllabi and conducting examinations of different stages.

In establishing Boards or centres for formulating syllabi and conducting
examinations, the Jamiat-Ulama-e-Hind took an initiative in the early forties of the twentieth century, i.e. during the closing years of the colonial rule. This all India organisation of the Islamic scholars launched a programme for common syllabus for all *Qaumi Madrasas* following *Dars-e-Nizami* in the late forties and early fifties of the last century. Jamiat began to act as a guardian of the *Qaumi Madrasas* comprising small and large, i.e. *safila, Alia* and *Dawra-e-Hadith* all over India. Their efforts in establishing *Qaumi Madrasas* with a common syllabus and curriculum was crowned with such success that at the close of the 20th century there were five hundred small and large *Madrasas* in Assam. As the establishment of an autonomous Board for controlling the academic activities of these *Qaumi Madrasas* was felt an extreme necessity, a Board named *Tanjim Madarise Qaumiya* was established in 1955 under the aegis of the Assam Provincial Jamiat-Ulama-e-Hind. But because of no permanent office and lack of infrastructure and above all, lack of co-operation from management of many *Madrasas* the Board could not function properly. However, it had been limping for about three decades till it was reorganised and renamed in 1984 with a permanent office at Nilbagan near Hojai in the district of Nagaon. In 1984 the institution was renamed as “All Assam Tanjim Madaris Quawmiya”. With this change in the organisation of the Tanjim Board the *Qaumi Madrasas* in large number came forward and got themselves registered with the Tanzim Board and began sending their students to appear at the different Examinations of Board conducted at the end of different courses of education. The Tanzim Board prescribed four courses of studies for a full fledged *Qaumi Madrasas*. These courses are as follows:

(1) The Lower Primary level is called *Diniyat*. There are two or three classes in this course which, may in other words, be called preparatory course for learning in a *Qaumi Madrasa* system.
(2) The next higher course is called Sanuviyah. This is a 5 year course consists of 5 classes named as Farsi (Persian) 1st year and second year, and Arbi (Arabic) First, second and third years.

(3) Next higher course is called Alia which consists of 4 classes, viz. Arbi (Arabic) Fourth, Fifth, Sixth and Seventh years.

(4) Highest Course is the Degree course called Fadil. It is an one year course which is commonly known as Dawra-e-Hadith.

The All Assam Tanjim Madaris Quawmiya conducts three examinations at the end three courses viz. (1) Sanuviyah, (2) Alia and (3) Fadil.

The Qaumi Madrasas in Barak Valley and also in Assam imparting teaching of Arabic are of three kinds. Some are fullfledged Madrasas provide teaching in all courses of education prescribed by the Tanjim Board, some provide teaching upto Alia level and some only in Diniat and Sanuviyah level. In the following passages the Qaumi Madrasas of Barak Valley under the Tanjim Board are discussed in classified different categories according to course of studies they offer.

Category I: The Madrasas offer all courses of studies as prescribed by the All Assam Tanjim Madaris Quawmiya commonly called Tanjim Board are classed in category I. In Barak Valley, there are only three Madrasas which may be listed in this catagory. These include Ashraful Uloom Darul Hadith, Ratanpur in the district of Hailakandi, Daml Uloom Banskandi and Jamia Qurania Islamia Khanqah-e-Madami in the district of Cachar. Among these three two were established during the colonial period and Jamia Qurania Islamia Khanqah-e-Madani was established at Purba Govindapur in the district of Cachar during the post independence period. However, Ashraful Uloom Darul Hadith Ratanpur Madrasa though follows the courses, curricula of the Tanjim Board, is not in list of Madrasas affiliated to the Board.26
Category II: The second category includes those Madrasas which impart teaching up to Alia level. In this category there are 8 Madrasas which follow the course, syllabi and curriculae of the Tanjim Board. Among these eight Madrasas three, viz. Markazul Uloom Bhanga Sharif, Madinatul Uloom Bagbari and Charagia Qaumiya Alia Madrasas were established during the colonial period. Faizul Uloom Mohammedia Alia Madrasa Roypur and Boytul Uloom Jorer Bazar in the district Karimganj, Darul Uloom Sahabad and Al Jamia Alia Alia Madrasa of Hailakandi district, and Silchar Alia Madrasa of Cachar district were established during the post independence period. Silchar Alia Madrasa, through follows the syllabus and curriculum of the Tanjim Board, is not affiliated to the Board.

Category III: This category of the Qaumi Madrasas provides teaching of the courses of Diniyat and Sanoviya. There are 35 Madrasas of this category in Barak Valley affiliated to the All Assam Tanjim Madaris Quawmiya or Tanjim Board. In addition, there are some Madrasas of this category which follow the syllabi and curriculae of the Tanjim Board but not affiliated to it. Of these 35 Madrasas affiliated to the Tanjim Board, 18 are situated in Karinganj district. These are Nayergram Qaumi Madrasa, Jannatul Uloom Qaumi Madrasa, Basla, Hadiqatul Uloom Bashail, Imamganj Alia Madrasa, Darul Uloom Tayibia Asadia, Kanaibazar, Asraful Uloom Patharkandi, Qasimul Uloom Husaimia Madrasa, Bandarkuna, Asraful Uloom Jalalia Madrasa, Lakhibazar, Kanakpur Faize Aam Alia and Hafijia Madrasa, Anwarul Uloom Aral Alia Madrasa, Chandkhani Anwarul Uloom Alia and Qaumi Madrasa, Panighat Markaz Rahamatia Alia Madrasa, Katamoni Hussainia Qaumiya Madrasa, Ranirpur Ghuash pur Muhammidia Madrasa, Ghansamarchok Husania Qaumiya Madrasa, Darul Uloom Defalala, Naya-bazar Alia Hafija Qaumiya Madrasa and Imdadia Alia Anipur.
Nine Madrasas of this category affiliated to the Tanjim Board are Situated in the Hailakandi district. These are Anwarul Uloom Krisnapur, Nayagram Ahamdia Madrasa, Ashatul Islam Jamira Madrasa, Bahrul Uloom Balichara Islamia Madrasa, Moinul Uloom Monachara, Moinul Uloom, Nitai Nagar, Dholai Ahmedia Madrasa, Panchgram Qaumiya Alia Madrasa, and Gausia Ahmadia Islamia, Algapur. The rest of the Madrasas belonging to this category are situated in the district of Cachar. The prominent among them are Jamia Islamia Tupkhana Madrasa, Shamsul Uloom Kanakpur, Dakshin Kanchanpur Ahmadia Madrasa, Majahirul Uloom Jaynagar, Darul Faez Rajghat and Darul Islam Didarkush etc.

**Hafijia Madrasa** :- Another category of *Qaumi Madrasa* is called Hafijia Madrasa which provides teaching in correct reading, pronounciation and memorisation of the Holy Quran. Such teaching prerequires the knowledge in Arabic alphabet, their pronounciation and making of words by arranging letter. Almost with every Madrasas of above categories a Hafijia sectiion is attached. Over and above, there are 25 Hafijia Madrasas lying scattered in Barak Valley which are affiliated to the Tanjim Board.

**Madrasatul Banat** :- This category of Madrasa is a new venture in Assam. It provides teaching of Madrasa courses to girl students. Such a Madrasa providing teaching upto *Sanaviya* level is situated at Asimganj.

There is another Board of Qaumi Madrasas which conducts the examinations of the institutions affiliated to it. This Board developed centring Mirabari Jamial Uloom Furqania Madrasa, a prominent institution imparting teaching in Arabic language and Islamic theology situated in Karimganj district. So, discussion on development of this Madrasa logically precedes that on the development of the Board.

**Mirabari Jamial Uloom Furqania Madrasa** : One of the prominent *Qaumi*
Madrasas of Barak Valley is Mirabari Jamiul Uloom Furqania Madrasa which was established in 1973 at Mirabari, a village situated about 1 K.M. northeast of Nilambazar in the district of Karimganj. The foundation stone of the Madrasa was laid down by Maulana Ojihuddin Khan of Rampur Furqania Madrasa. Though the establishment of the Madrasa was ceremonially performed in the later part of the twentieth century it came through a long process which actually had started in the 19th century. There is an oral history cherished by the present management of the Madrasa that one Syed Mahmud had come from Baniachng of modern Sunamganj district of Sylhet division of Bangladesh in the later part of the 19th century and settled at a place named Mirzapur near Nilambazar. After a few years he shifted his residence to the present place in the village of Alamkhani. His son Syed Hasan started a Maktab where children from the surrounding area would come to learn Quran. He was succeeded by his son Syed Anjab Ali who continued the Maktab till 1940. In the meantime, his son Syed Mudaris Ali came home back after completing his studies at Rampur Oriental College. After performing Imamat at several mosques Syed Mudaris Ali came home and decided to continue the Maktab founded by his ancestors. The Maktab gradually got the shape of a Madrasa under the shadow of a Khanqah. Syed Mudaris Ali’s son Maulana Abdun Nur is the present Principal (Muhtamin) of the Madrasa. It started a girls’ senior Madrasa under its banner. It started a computer Education Center with its own resource to train the girl students of the Madrasa in computer education.

At present this Madrasa has a network of Madrasas in the state of Assam. By centring this Madrasa an autonomous Board for formulating syllabi for different standards and conducting examinations was set up. The name of the Board is Assam Edara-e-Madaris Islamia. This Board or Edara was registered under Societies Registration Act 1860 in the year 1995-96.
This Edara has formulated syllabi starting from *Maktab* level up to *Dawrah-e-Hadith* (Primary to Degree level). The syllabi that formulated by this Edara or Board are somewhat a mixture or composition of *Dars-e-Nizami* and that of the New scheme of Madrasa Education Board controlled and run by Government of Assam. The various levels of studies designed by the Edara include 5 standards.

1. *Maktab* (Primary Stage) - 4 classes
2. *Dakhil* (Secondary Stage) - 6 classes
3. *Alim* (Higher Secondary stage) - 2 classes
4. *Fadil* (Graduation) - 2 classes
5. *Kamil* (Post Graduation) - 2 classes

In lower levels Arabic is taught as a language and in higher levels subjects prescribed for studies are in Arabic.

Besides Jamiul Uloom Mirabari, there are 3 Madrasas permanently affiliated to this Edara, out which two are in Barak Valley. The remaining one is in the Darrang district of Brahmaputra Valley. The permanently affiliated Madrasa in Barak Valley are:

1. Jamiul Ullom Nizamia Madrasa, Dalugang, P.O. Bidyanagar, Ramkrishna Nagar Dist. Karimganj.
2. Shah Chhattawala Darus Sunnah Madrasa, Bishingcha, P.O. and Dist Hailakandi.

There are 9(nine) temporarily affiliated Madrasas under the Edara out of which 8 are in Barak Valley and the remaining one is in the Bongaigaon district of Brahmaputra Valley. The temporarily affiliated Madrasas in Barak Valley include the followings:

6. Mohonpur Ahmadia Qaumi Madrasa, Ratanpur P.O. Bazartilla. Dist Hailakandi.

Apart from above mentioned Madrasas there are 37 Maktabs under the Edara. All these Maktabs are in Karimganj district of Barak Valley. The Principal of Jamiul Uloom Furqania Madrasa, Mirabari acts as the Registrar of the Edara-e-Madaris Islamia or the Board. So, including the parent Madrasa, there are altogether 50 Madrasas and Maktabs which are affiliated to the Edara.

Besides the Madrasas affiliated to these two Board existence of some Qaumi Madrasas in Barak Valley is not negligible. But such Madrasas are not functioning properly.

GOVERNMENT MADRASAS: The term ‘Government Madrasas’ does not strictly mean only those Madrasas which are established and run by the State Government or Central Government. This term has a loose connotation. In the State of Assam ‘Government Madrasa’ includes those Madrasas of the State which follow the course, syllabi and curricula of the Assam State Madrasas Education Board. The development of such Madrasas after independence has a brief history to tell. This history deserves reference in discussion of the teaching of Arabic in the Government Madrasas in Barak Valley vis-a-vis in the state of Assam.

It has already been stated along with the development of teaching of Arabic in Colonial Period that the Government had established a Madrasa
Board in Assam with its head quarters at Sylhet. The partition of the country in 1947 was a major stumbling block to the functioning of the Government recognized Madrasas of Assam including those of Barak Valley. The partition of the country in 1947 brought a sever setback to the on going development of Madrasa education in Assam. Though Sylhet was pushed to Pakistan following the result of the Referendum, three and a half thanas of Karimganj subdivision of the district of Sylhet remained with the state of Assam of Indian Union under the provision of the Red Cliffe Award. These three and a half thanas constituted the Karimganj subdivision and was attached to the district of Cachar. Three Madrasas, already recognised by the Government of Assam and affiliated to the Assam State Madrasa Board, Sylhet were situated within the territorial boundary of the reorganised Karimganj subdivision of Assam. These are (I) Asimia Senior Madrasa (Recognised in 1943), (II) Deorail Senior Madrasa (Recognised in 1944) and Deorail Title Madrasa (Recognised in 1946 and permanently recognised in 1948). Because of partition of the country some of the Islamic scholars who had been the members of the teaching community and belonging to the places pushed to Pakistan left reorganised Karimganj subdivision and went back to their original homes in Pakistan. One of such scholars was Maulana Mushahid who had been the Principal (Muhtamim and Sheikul Hadith) of Deoail Title Madrasa, left for his home at Biompur in the district of Sylhet pushed to Pakistan. With such setback, there was another difficulty. The Madrasas were in India and the head quarters of the State Madrasa Board was in Pakistan. So, the Government had to take very quick decision to solve the problem which was not full proof. With these setbacks the Government Madrasas in Assam, particularly those of Barak Valley began their life in independent India.

At this juncture Maulana Abdul Jalil Choudhury, a Congres activist and
General Security of Jamiat-Ulama-e-Hind, Assam Provincial Committee and a reputed freedom fighter migrated from his native village Turk Khola in Sylhet to India and settled at Badarpur and took over the change of Muhaddith and Shaikhul Hadith of Deorail Title Madrasa. With this incident the Government recognized Madarasas got a new lease of life as the Government of Assam constituted the State Madrasa Board at the initiative of the Maulana. The State Madrasa Board was entrusted with the duty of conducting examinations and of formulating curricula and syllabi. After constitution of the State Madrasa Board. Government recognition was again extended to the Deorail Senior Madrasa, Asimia Senior Madrasa and Deorail Title Madrasa. The Deonail Title Madrasa got permanent recognition in 1948. In 1961 the Government of Assam extened recognition to six new Madrasas of Assam among which three were in Barak Valley which include Hailakandi senior Madrasa, Sonai senior Madrasa and Shingari senior Madrasa. Upto 1961, Deorail Title Madrasa remained as the only Title Madrasa in Assam and produced many celebrated Muslim religious scholars as well as graduates in Arabic language who served and have been serving as teachers of Arabic not only in Madrasas, but also in schools and colleges. As many as fifty seven persons passed the Assam Madrasa Title Examination and graduated themselves as M.M. (Mumtaz-ul-Muhaddithin) from Deoril Title Madrasa upto 1961.

In 1965, nine Madrasas of Assam including six form Barak Valley were extended full Deficit Grant in Aid by the Government of Assam. The six Madrasas in Barak Valley were Deorail Senior Madrasa, Asimia senior Madrasa, Deorail Title Madrasa, Shingari senior Madrasa, Hailakandi senior Madrasa and Sonai Senior Madrasa. Such step from the Government side towards Madrasa education served as an impetus for establishing new Madrasas.
with a hope for getting deficit grant in aid from the Government and a trend of venturing senior Madrasas developed.

Upto 1968, the curriculum of the Senior Madrasas remained the same as that of the Assam State Madrasa Board, Sylhet constituted under the aegis of the British Government formulated with the creation of Sylhet Madrasa in 1913. In 1952, the Small Committee for Madrasa Education was constituted with Mr. Abdul Mutlib Mazumdar M.A. LLB, M.L.A. as Member and chairman and Md. Shahabuddin, M.A. Secretary, State Madrasa Board Assam as Member Secretary. The Committee’s task was to reorganize the Madrasa education course and syllabus for senior Madrasas in Assam. The Committee invited suggestions of the Muslim scholars, Muslim organisations specially Jammiat Ulama-e-Hind, Assam Provincial unit. The Assam Provincial Jammiat Ulama-e-Hind convened meetings, seminars to mobilize a clear opinion of the Muslim scholars, particularly Ulama about the reorganisation and restructuring of the Madrasa education system in Assam.

There was such varieties of proposals in favour of introduction of a new system that the Committee had to take a decade to finalise its decision. In spite of oppositions, the Madrasa Education Board formulated new syllabus for introducing in the Government Senior Madrasas in Assam. The new syllabus included the course of XI standard of school curriculum and course of eight year duration. This curriculum and course were formulated in 1962 and introduced in 1968-69 session. After two years of simultaneous running of both old and new courses, the new one was abandoned as the people stopped sending their children to senior Madrasas because they were not satisfied with the course of action taken by of the state Madrasa Education Board. The old course continued till 1979 with a slight modification. In 1979, when Mr. Habibul Hoque became the secretary of the State Madrasa Education Board he introduced
a new syllabus adopting High School course only beginning from Sr. 1st year to Sr. 7th year classes. In 1987, Mr. Shafiqur Rahaman, then Secretary of the State Madrasa Education Board made a slight change in general subjects. Again, in 1996, Mr. Habibul Hoque, the then Secretary of the State Madrasa Education Board introduced a new syllabus with a vigorous change in structure and contents introducing modern literary topics and restructuring examination system. He introduced 3 public examinations in Senior Madrasa course, viz. *Dakhil* at the end of three years, *Alim* at the end of 5 years and *Fadil* at the end of 7 years. Now, the Fadil Examination has been recognised as equivalent to H.S.L.C Examination and student after passing Fadil can get themself admitted to Highed Secondary Course of a H.S. School or College.

The action part of the Government and the State Madrasa Education Board regarding course and syllabus for senior Madrasas in Assam and syllabus formulated 1962, and introduced later in 1968-69, was not liked by many Islamic scholars who felt that all was not well with the way in which Arabic was going to be taught in Government Madrasas from then onwards. Maulana Abdul Jalil Choudhury was the most distinguished scholar who took an unprecedented stand and curved out his own ways and means to face the challenge that hurled at by the State Madrasa Education Board. With support from a few other like minded scholars he initiated the possibility of launching of a suitable curriculum based on the well known “*Dars-e-Nizami*”. As a result “Edara-e-Talim wa Tazkir” was set up at Badarpur centering round the Deorail Title Madrasa in the year 1962, which contained Primary Islamic education. In the year 1964, it was renamed as Edara-e-Talim wa Tanif” which was later came to be Known as “Assam Nadwatut Ta’mir in 1972.

The Assam Nadwatut Ta’mir introduced a syllabi of 5 tier structure which has been continuing in Deorail Title Madrasa alternatively called by the
name as “Al Jamiat ul Arabia”. The course and curriculum of this five tier structure are as follows:

1. Sabahi Maktab ............................ 5 years duration
2. Title Part I ................................. 3 years duration
3. Title Part II ................................. 3 years duration
4. Title Part III ............................... 2 years duration
5. Title Part IV ................................. 1 year duration

Thus Maulana Abdul Jalil Choudhury was successful in introducing a unique scheme under aegis of Assam Nadwatut Ta’amir establishing a separate Madrasa attached with the Deoril Title Madrasa. He introduced his scheme of studies based on the ‘Dars-e-Nizami’ in the line of the leading Madrasas of India. But though his efforts were crowned with success but Maulana’s fight was not over. The Government of Assam, though it recognised Nadwa’s syllabus, refused to give its Fadil Examination the equivalent status of the F.M. Examination of the Senior Madrasas. Maulana Abdul Jalil did not give up his mission. He approached the Government of India and obtained Education Minister’s order in his favour. Finally, the State Government approved the syllabus of Nadwa and accorded its Fadil Examination of the State Madrasa Education Board. Ultimately the Government accorded its permission to the Nadwa to conduct the final examination of the scheme introduced by Maulana Abdul Jalil Choudhury. So, Nadwa has its own Examination Board approved by the Government and the State Madrasa Education Board. Moreover, the Government also entitled the Nadwa to affiliate any other institutions that should come up within the purview of the syllabi of the Nadwa.

Thus, Maulana Abdul Jalil Choudhury’s aim to elevate the status of Deorail Title Madrasa at par with the leading Madrasas of India that had been enjoying international reputation since long past, and that of a University with
affiliating character was partially fulfilled. Deorail Title Madrasa was given a new nomenclature as "Al Jamiatul Arbiatul Islamia" (Islamic Arabic University). The success is partial as new institutions have not been sprung up to be affiliated with the Al Janitul Arabiatul Islamia.

PRE SENIOR MADRASA: In 1983 the existing senior Madrasas of Assam opened a 3 years Pre senior course as preparatory classes for admission to senior Madrasa course. The Government of Assam came forward with recognition and financial sanctions to these pre senior sections attached to the senior Madrasas in 1984. The curriculum and syllabus of this pre senior course are that of an M.E School with compulsory Arabic literature and grammar, and an Urdu subject. In 1996, the Government of Assam allowed establishment of Pre-senior Madrasas independently and a good number of such Madrasa sprang in villages of Barak valley. They serve the purpose of feeder institutions to the senior Madrasas.

Thus there are three categories of Government Madrasas existed in Barak Valley, viz. Pre-senior, Senior, and Title Madrasas all of which impart teaching of Arabic language and literature. In the mid twentieth century a trend of establishing Senior and Title Madrasas and in the last quarter of the twentieth century a trend of establishing Pre-senior Madrasas were seen. These Madrasas were established with an aim of getting recognition from the Government, financial aid and ultimately provincialisation.

On the basis of recognition, extension of Government grant and provincialisation to the existed Government Madrasas imparting teaching following the course and curriculum of the State Madrasa Eriatm Board in Barak Valley may be divided into two classes: viz. (1) Provincialised Madrasas and (2) Ventured and Government recognised Madrasas. The Provincialised Madrasas are as good as the Government institutions so far as
the scale of pay of teachers and control of Government on the management are concerned, while the ventured and recognised Madrasas being established by public, follow the course, curriculum and syllabus of the Assam State Madrasa Education Board and are accorded recognition of the Board and are exerting their last efforts to be Provincialised by the Government. The Government Madrasas were multiplied in Barak Valley in post independent period. A district wise list of provincialised and recognised Madrasas in Barak Valley is given below for reference:

1. KARIMGANJ DISTRICT

**Provincialised Madrasas**

**A. Title Madrasa**

(1) Deorail Title Madrasa. Badarpur.
(2) Asimia Title Madrasa. Asimganj.

**B. Senior Madrasas.**

(1) Deorail Senior Madrasas. Badarpur.
(2) Asimia Senior Madrasas. Asimganj.
(3) Idgah Senior Madrasas, Singaria, Mullaganj.
(4) Ghulchera Senior Madrasas. Ghulchera.
(5) Kazir Bazar Senior Madrasas. Ratabari.
(6) Purahuria Senior Madrasas. Fakirer Bazar.
(7) W. K. Vitargool Senior Madrasa. Vitargool.
(8) Ahmedia Senior Madrasas. Shanibari Bazar.
(9) Raghurtook senior Madrasas. Raghurtook.

**Recognised Madrasas.**

(1) Rabbania Senior Madrasas. Mahakal
(2) Rahimpur Senior Madrasas. Rahimpur
(3) Taltala Senior Madrasas. Janakalyan Bazar
(4) South Kaliganj Faize Jalalia Senior Madrasas. Khagail
(5) Nilambazar Senior Madrasas. Nilambazar
(6) Jafargarh M.U. Senior Madrasas. Maina
(7) South Karimganj Faize Jalil Senior Madrasas. Dallurband.
(8) Akbarpur D.S. Senior Madrasas. Akbarpur
(9) Eraligool Senior Madrasas. Eraligool
(10) Kathaltali Senior Madrasas. Kathaltali.
(11) Asia Khatum Memorial Senior Madrasas. Chadkhira
(12) Hussania Senior Madrasas. Katamoni.
(13) Ratabari Senior Madrasas. Ratabari.
(14) Bazarghat Madani Nagar Senior Madrasas. Bazarghat.

It may be mentioned here that at the time of independence there were only one Title Madrasa and two senior Madrasas which were imparting teaching of Arabic in Assam. At the close of the twentieth century the number of Title Madrasas and senior Madrasas stands as two and 23 respectively only in Karimganj district. Over and above, there are 32 recognised pre senior Madrasas in Karimganj district in addition to the pre senior Madrasas attached with all senior Madrasas.

2. HAILAKANDI DISTRICT

Provincialised Madrasas.

A. Title Madrasas
1. Hailakandi Title Madrasas. Hailakandi

B. Senior Madrasas.
1. Hailakandi Senior Madrasas. Hailakandi
4. Bashertila Senior Madrasas.
5. Bhatirkupa senior Madrasas.

**Recognised Madrasas**

**A. Title Madrasas**

1. Jamira Title Madrasa.

**B. Senior Madrasas.**

1. Bar Hailakandi senior Madrasa.
3. Muhammadia Senior Madrasa.
4. Uttar Hailakandi Senior Madrasa.
5. Polarpar Girls’ Senior Madrasa.

A three year Pre senior Course is attached with every senior Madrasa of the district of Hailakandi. In addition, there are 45 pre senior Madrasas established during the period from 1996 to 1998 which are recognised by the Government of Assam and have been engaged in imparting teaching of Arabic language at the primary level.

**3. CACHAR DISTRICT.**

**Provincialised Madrasas.**

**A. Title Madrasas - Nil.**

**B. Senior Madrasa.**

1. Kalain Senior Madrasa.
2. Ganirgram Senior Madrasa.
4. Sonai Senior Madrasa.
5. Bam Senior Madrasa.
6. Phoolobari Senior Madrasa.
Recognised Madrasas.

A. Title Madrasas
1. Cachar Title Madrasa Ganirgram.

B. Senior Madrasas.
2. Silchar Senior Madrasa.

In addition to the Pre senior course attached with all Senior Madrasas, there are 22 senior Madrasas established at different places of the district during the period from 1996 to 1998 which have been extended recognition from the Government of Assam and playing the roles of feeder institutions to the senior Madrasas.

It may be noted here that at the time of independence there was only one Government recognized Title Madrasa, the highest institution for imparting teaching of Arabic in Barak Valley, now, the number has been increased to 5 in the Valley.

The number of Senior Madrasas at the time of independence in Barak Valley was only two and at the close of twentieth century it has been multiplied and reached at 39.

with the introduction of pre-senior courses, 99 independent Pre senior Madrasas have been established in Barak Valley which have been imparting teaching of Arabic language.

OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Here, other institutions means secular institutions providing teaching of general education and institutions imparting teaching of Arabic as one of the core subjects. These are the secular institutions and institutions for Muslims with course of school i.e. High and M E Madrasas.

(1) The Secular institutions: There are three kind of secular institutions
providing teaching of general education in three levels, viz. (1) Schools, (2) Colleges and (3) Universities.

During the period beginning with the country’s independence up to the end of the twentieth century, a tremendous change has been found to be taken place in the field of education both in structure and contents. Over and above, a collective consciousness developed among the mass irrespective of their religions, castes and identities in establishing educational institutions for making their children educated. Government also came forward to establish schools and colleges at some important places. For a period of more than a decade after independence the structure, course contents and curriculum of the school and college levels remained the same as that of the colonial period. Then came the all India pattern of 10+2+3 system of education. For easy understanding of the condition of teaching and learning of Arabic in schools, college and University in Barak Valley, a discussion is being made in the following passages in three heads: (1) School, (2) College and (3) University.

(1) SCHOOL: In the school curriculum it is found that there were three stages existed during the early period of the post independence period; viz. the Primary, Middle and High School. The primary school had five classes, Middle school three classes and High school four classes, however, a full-fledged High School had seven classes from class IV to class X after completion of which a student was to appear at the Matriculation Examination conducted by a University. Arabic was taught as one of the compulsory electives in the level of the classes from VII to X. In lower levels that is in Primary and Middle (from class IV to VI) provision of teaching Arabic was not available. Arabic was began to be taught as one of the compulsory electives from class VII. In the late fifties of the twentieth century a change was introduced in the stages of school curriculum and some High Schools were converted to Higher secondary schools.
of seven classes from class V to XI. But most of the High Schools of the state remained unchanged and followed the curriculum and course contents of the previous period. In new Higher secondary system Arabic became an elective subject in Arts stream.

Again, in the last quarter of the twentieth century the 10+2+3 system of education was introduced in Assam and as such at the close of the twentieth century in school curriculum there developed four stages or levels, viz. Primary, Middle, Secondary and Higher Secondary. In Primary level there are 4 classes, viz. I to IV, in Middle level, there are three classes viz. V to VII, in Secondary level three classes viz. VIII to X and above it the Higher Secondary stage viz. XI to XII. Leaving apart the Primary stage, there are three kinds of school found in existence. These are M.E., High, and Higher secondary. The term secondary education generally include all these categories of schools. An M.E. School imparts teaching of the course and syllabus that is taught in the lower classes of High school. A full fledged High School means a school having classes from V to X. There of course, three class High schools having VIII to X are also in existence. Some High school have been elevated to Higher secondary schools extending them upto class XII. In Secondary stage two public examination are held annually conducted by two state based organisations viz. Assam Secondary Education Board (SEBA) which conducts the High School Leaving Certificate Examination at the end of class X and the Assam Higher Secondary Education Council (AHEC) which conducts the Higher Secondary Examination at the end of class XII. Mention may be made here that the Higher secondary stage of teaching and learning is also independently run by some institutions called Junior College and also attached with all of the Degree Colleges established before 1990. In both H.S.L.C. and H.S. courses Arabic is taught as an elective subjects. The following High
Schools and Higher secondary schools of Barak Valley established during the period from independence to the close of the twentieth century have provision for teaching Arabic.

**Karimganj District**

5. Kushiarkul H.S. School, Sadarashi, Karimganj.
7. Uttar Karimganj H.S. School, Dharakuna.
8. Al Falah Collegiate Academy, Gandhai
10. Sahartali High School, Mubarakpur.
11. Indira Memorial Girls’ H.S. School, Mubarakpur.
13. Karnamadhu High School, Karnamadhu
15. Shah Badar uddin High School, Badarpur.
17. Malua Public High School, Malua.
18. Samabay High School, Rupashibari.
19. Al Ameen Academy, Badurpur.
22. Salgoi High School, Salgoi.
23. Isabeel H.S. School, Isabeel.
40. Tuker Bazar High School.
41. M.A. Choudhury Memorial H.S. School.
42. Hazi Kasim Ali High School.

**Hailakandi District**

43. Algapur Public High School.
44. Chalmers Memorial H.S. School. Katlichera
46. S.A.M. High School.
47. Suresh Chandra Venture High School
51. Iswar Chandra M.C. High School.
52. A.K. Azad Vidyapith.
54. Chiporsangarh public High School.
55. Harakishore High School.
56. Annada Charan Girls High School.
57. S.A.M.N.A. Mazumdar High School.
58. Prem Lochan High School.
60. Panchgram Public High School.
61. Panchgram Town H.S. School.
63. Polly Mangal High School.
64. N.B. Paul Venture High School.
65. Kalibari High School.
69. Ayodhya Raj Memorial High School.
70. Bonapally High School.
71. Indramoni Public High School.
74. G.S. Memorial Girls’ High School.
75. Joy Mangal High School.
76. Monachera High School.
77. N.T. Model H.S. Katlichara.
78. Nimaichand pur H.S. School.
79. G. Roy Memorial High School.

Cachar District

80. Morley High School.
81. Madhura SS High School.
82. Jarma Sirngha High School.
83. Chhota Dudhpatil High School.
84. Rongpur High School.
85. Masughat High School.
86. Hilara High School.
88. Janata High School.
89. Jalalpur High School.
90. Saidpur Janata High School.
91. Jarailtala High School.
95. Rajatilla H.S. School.
96. Digorkhal High School.
97. M.H.C. H.S. School., Sonabarighat
98. Nehru High School. Singari
100. Al Sirat Mission High School.
103. Union High School Fulertal.
104. Banskandi N.M.H.S. School.
106. Fulertal Public High School.
107. Bam Vidyapith High School.
108. Lakshhi Charan High School.
110. Ram Chandra Barman Public High School.
111. Bhorakhai High School.
114. Y.S. Memorial High School.
115. Hamid Raja Memorial High School.
117. Nikama H.S. School.
118. Bikrampur High School.

If a comparison is made with the number of schools providing teaching of Arabic in Barak Valley established before 1947 we shall see that there were only 26 High Schools in the Valley including three schools established by the Government before independence and after independence 118 High and Higher secondary schools were established which offer provision of teaching Arabic. In other words, at present there are 144 High and H.S. Schools in the Barak Valley which offer provision of teaching Arabic. A district wise picture is as follows:

Cachar - 48.
Hailakandi - 47.
Karimganj - 49.
COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES:

During the Pre independence period there was only one college in Barak Valley named Karimganj College, affiliated to the University of Calcutta had the Provision of imparting teaching of Arabic language and literature in Intermediate and Degree levels. In 1950 due to some social tension of communal nature the number of students offering Arabic and professor teaching Arabic became almost nil and the authority withdrew the provision. However, it was resumed in 1979 and now it is one of the premier Colleges of Assam in producing graduates with Arabic and Arabic Honours every years.

Cachar College was established in 1960 and it introduced Arabic as an elective subject in Arts stream in 1976.

N.C. College Baradpur was established in 1966 and Arabic was introduced in it as an elective subject in 1991.

Patharkandi College and Nilambazar College were established in 1992 and 1994 respectively and Arabic was included as one of the elective subjects in the Arts stream since establishment.

In Cachar District, Arabic was introduced in the following Colleges as one of the elective subjects since their establishment

i) West Silchar College, Jatrapur in 1985,

ii) S. R. College, Kalain in 1994 and


Thus at present there are at least in eight colleges in Barak Valley which offer provisions for teaching of Arabic language and literature in Degree level.

At the close of the last century Post-graduate studies in Arabic occupied one of the prominent places in Barak Valley after the establishment of Assam University at Silchar in 1994. It is a Central University which introduced
Post-graduate studies in Arabic in 1997. The University also provides facilities of research in the fields of development of Arabic language and literature.

It can be said without least wavering that the facilities of teaching, studies and researches in Arabic language and literature are available in Barak Valley from primary level to Post-graduate level in addition to religious education provided in Madrasas.

**High Madrasas and M.E. Madrasas:** High Madrasas and M.E. Madrasas are a kind of institutions which are parallel to High Schools and M.E. Schools with a difference that Arabic is taught in these institutions as a core subject. In 1964, the Board of Secondary Education Assam (SEBA) came into existence to formulate the Syllabi of school education and to conduct the High School Leaving Certificate Examination (Formerly Entrance and subsequently Matriculation conducted by the University of Calcutta and then Gauhati).

But the High Madrasa, which was in all practical purpose equivalent to High School, was brought under the control of the (SEBA) in 1967. Prior to this the High Madrasas Examination had been conducted by the State Madrasas Education Board and its syllabi and curriculum were also formulated by that Board. It has already been mentioned that during the period ending with the independence of India there were only two High Madrasas in the region now covered by the area of Barak Valley. After independence, the following High Madrasas were established at different places of the Valley which impart teaching of Arabic compulsorily in secondary level.

1. Lamajuar High Madrasa in Karimganj District.
2. Lakshirband High Madrasa in Hailakandi District.
3. Shahabad High Madrasa in Hailakandi District.
4. T.A. High Madrasa in Hailakandi District.
5. Dudhpur Girls’ High Madrasa in Hailakandi District.
6. Kalain High Madrasa in Cachar District.
8. Shib Narayanpur High Madrasa in Cachar District.

At present there are 10 High Madrasa including those established in pre independence period in Barak Valley which have provision for compulsory teaching of Arabic in secondary level.

As for the M.E. Madrasas which provide compulsory teaching of Arabic in three classes viz. V to VII (Formerly IV to VI), there were 7 M.E. Madrasas established in the region now covered by Barak Valley during the pre independence period. A district wise enumeration reveals that out of these 7 M.E. Madrasas 3 are in Karimganj district, 2 in Cachar and 2 in Hailakandi district.

After independence a trend of establishing M.E. Madrasas in Muslim dominated villares was increased. But after the introduction of the pre senior system during the eighty-nighties of the last century, this trend was subsided. However, a district wise number of M.E. Madrasas established after independence in Barak Valley is given below:

2. Hailakandi District - 81.

From the above discussion it is clear that in Barak Valley provision for teaching of Arabic language in Secondary, Degree and Post Graduate levels is available.

The aforesaid discussion reveals that the provision of teaching of Arabic language was initiated in a humble way during the Turko-Afghan period in the Maktabs established by the people to cater the need of acquiring preliminary knowledge of the religion i.e. Islam by it followers. In course of of time, trend
of introducing teaching of Arabic in higher level was increasing among the followers of Islam living in Barak Valley. During the post independence period this trend was tremendously increased both in religious and secular sectors due to craving of people and patronage of the State.

References and Notes

1. The name of Badarpur was a later appellation.


3. Ibid.

4. Ibid. P. 89.

5. Kamaluddin Ahmed - *Sources of the History of Medieval Sylhet* -


7. Fazlur Rahman - *Sileter Mati Sileter Manush (Bengali)*

8. Kamaluddin Ahmed - *Sources of the History of Medieval Sylhet* -
   Sylhet - History and Heritage - P. 22.


11. Fazlur Rahman - *Sileter Mati Sileter Manush* (Bengali) P. 153


13. Collected through field survey from the local people.

14. The history of establishment of the Madrasa has been collected from present
Sheikhul Hadith Maulana Ziauddin, who is known as ‘Bara Huzur in the locality.


16. This history of founding the Madrasa has been very fondly cherished by the descendants of the Late Maulana including Mr. Shakir Hussain Choudhury, Lecturer Department of History Karimganj College and is corroborated by Dr. Kamaluddin Ahmed Rtd. Principal, Karimganj College, who is the present President of the Madrasa.

17. As reported by the present Muhtamisn (Principal) Maulana Abdul Mannan.

18. This story has been fondly cherished by the people of the locality from generation to generation.

19. A booklet preserved in the Madrasa. pp. 4-3.

20. Reported by Maulana Abdul Bari, the Shakhul Hadith.

21. Field work.


24. Information has been collected from Maulana Abdur Rashid Qasimi, General Secretary Assam State Jamiat-Ulama-e-Hind.

25. Introduction to the List of Madrasas affiliated to All Assam Tanjim Madaris Quawmiya. Published by the Board. P.O Nilbagan. Dist. Nagaon Assam.

26. Ibid.

27. The Muhtamin of Jamiul Uloom Furqania Madrasa, Mirabari has kindly provided me this information.