CHAPTER 1

School Education in India
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1.0. Introduction

It is often claimed that we are a ‘super power in the making’, today addressing itself in a great measure to intervention of information and communication technology in every field of development, including that of education too. But, be that as it may, in reality, there has been over the years only an ‘explosion of numbers’, with very little happening in terms of academics as well as quality of life in the country. Thus, the urgency of the hour is to provide all citizens with access to quality education to improve in turn, the quality of their life as worthy citizens. However, the face remains that educational practitioners, researchers and even policy makers are still not very clear about ‘how to achieve quality education’ or ‘what really makes an effective school’, or at least, how to go about making school education meet the growing needs of a nation on the move. This, in fact, has been a great a challenge ever since the dawn of independence.

It is, in this context, that institutional assessment of the quality of education is necessitated. Assessment means evaluation of the performance of an institution or programmes as envisaged by the National Assessment Accreditation Council set up in 1994. Since quality in education is a multi-dimensional concept, including, in its fold, teaching and academic programmes, students’ performance, buildings, facilities, equipments, school management academic environment, internal self-evaluation and external review; these aspects require careful attention for enhancing the quality of schooling in educational institutions. Good assessment techniques provide accurate estimates of students’ performance and enable teachers and decision-makers to make appropriate decisions. The quality of education is often assessed in terms of examination results. However, such a method is fraught with great difficulties as the examination system in India is limited in scope and coverage as far as learning is concerned. One useful approach for assessment could be to select a range of educational indicators that are explicit and measurable, representing various facets of quality in education. In the context of schooling, the concept of efficiency is linked to how learning occurs. It is related to the teacher’s knowledge about the subject and pedagogical skills, availability of textbooks and other learning materials and the time spent by pupils in learning their lessons.
The qualities of education and its determinants have remained a topic of interest ever since the beginning of formal education. A review of literature suggests that there are almost as many definitions of quality in education as there are scholars who have attempted to define it. However, it is possible to develop indicators to measure learning along important dimensions by the assessment instruments (Aggrawal, 2000).

In today’s world of scarce resources, as a matter of policy, ‘every organisation has necessarily to be quality conscious (Ghosh, 1995). Education system does not operate in vacuum; it is the part of a larger societal system. Socio-political and economic policy changes like liberalisation and privatisation have their impact on education system (Indiresan, 1996). Also, if globalisation of economy comes, can education be far behind? The transition to ‘one world’ is a painful process, for the vital question is, who gets integrated into whom? Obviously, the weaker gets subsumed into the stronger (Mukhopadhyay, 1997), hence, there is a greater need for introspection. Thus, in order to respond to these challenges today, Indian education can only retain its identity and integrity, if it can provide an excellent quality of education.

The search for quality in school education is of recent origin, especially in India. Since Independence, the focus of educational planning in India has essentially been on expansion and meeting the supply side constraints. Though various five-year plans recognised the need to raise the quality of education, little could be done on sustainable basis. This approach not only affected the internal efficiency of the system but also resulted in a situation where majority of the graduates of the school system did not acquire the basic competencies and skills in numeric, language, arithmetic and other subjects of the study.

Only in the last few years, there has been a succession of important studies of educational assessment and measurement of quality, originating from international organizations, like the World Bank, UNICEF, UNESCO and UNDP.

In India, the National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986, and its 1992 revision again highlighted the urgency to address the quality concerns on priority basis. Several bodies at national and state levels have been created to ensure the standard of quality in education and knowledge imparted to the students at secondary level. The foremost among such agencies are the NCERT (National Council of Educational Research and Training), the SCERT (State Council of Educational Research and Training), the Institute of Advance Studies in Education and the like.
Quality cannot improve by itself. It requires reforms in teacher training, improvements in the facilities and infrastructure in schools, teacher’s motivation and change in the style of teaching to make it attractive to the students. Measures for continuous and comprehensive evaluation also need to be adopted so that relationship between inputs and outcomes of the educational system can be established.

1.1. STRUCTURE OF SCHOOL EDUCATION; INDIAN SCENARIO

The 12 years of school education has been divided into four stages: primary, upper primary, secondary, and senior secondary. Although India adopted a common pattern of 10+2 years of schooling, different states still follows different school structures such as 7+3+2 and 8+2+2. In some states, +2 stages are attached to colleges while school instruction is up to the 10th class.

In December 2002, a fundamental right was added to the Constitution of India. The 86th constitutional amendment, added clause 21A to the right of life, and guaranteed every child between the age of 6-14 years education up to the elementary stage as a fundamental right. Among the Fundamental Rights that a citizen enjoys under the constitution, perhaps the most difficult to assert is the right to free and compulsory school education, which, if rightly implemented, could be the greatest achievement of 21st century.

There has been a massive expansion of schooling facilities during the post-independence period. The number of primary schools grew from about 2.10 lakhs in 1950-51 to about 6.42 lakhs in 1999-2000. The upper primary schools increased from 13,596 in 1950-51 to 1.98 lakhs in 1999-2000. There are estimated 1,20,000 secondary and senior secondary schools in India now. The growth rate of secondary schools during 1986 and 1993 was at 25 percent and senior secondary schools 52 percent compared to about 8 per cent growth rate of primary schools, which is rather an early indication of pressures that are likely (NCERT 1996).
Presently, approximately 46% of secondary enrolment is in private aided schools, followed by 45% in Government and about 9% in private unaided schools. The NPE 1986 suggested that all states should follow a uniform educational structure, but it is yet to be implemented. Also, there is a very limited scope for the dropout students. The open school provides facilities for such students though very few opt for it.

The examination system is also different from state to state. There is a public examination at the end of grade X in all the states and the successful candidates are admitted to +2 stage. The +2 stage is divided into two streams namely, academic and vocational.

1.2. Development of Secondary Education in India

The First five-year Plan highlighted the objectives of the secondary education in these words. “In the first place, secondary education must be closely related to the psychological needs of the adolescents for whom it is being designed. Secondly, it should be vitally related to the existing socio-economic situation.... In order to equip the youth adequately for the needs of the existing socio-economic situation, it is necessary to give secondary education a vocational bias... Thirdly, secondary education
should grow from the education that is being given at the primary stage… The planning of the secondary education must also have in view the creation of leadership in the intermediate level, because, for the majority of students, formal education comes to an end at this stage… The standards to be attained should be high enough, on the one hand, to make the majority of students, whose education ends at the secondary stage, to be efficient workers and, on the other, to enable the minority, who proceed to higher education, to profit from the instructions they receive at these institutions. In view of the role it has to play between the basic and the higher stage, the planning of secondary education requires considerable care and attention.”

During the first and second plan period, multipurpose schools were established to realize the plan.

During the Third Plan, therefore, it was proposed to concentrate on the consolidation of the scheme by strengthening the institutions already established during the second plan period. Accordingly, education may be considered the most potent instrument of inequality produced. Efforts were made in independent India to correct these distortions. The principles of equality of opportunities and equity with social justice enshrined in the Constitution of India were intended to remove the historically obtained constraints. To what extent we have succeeded in overcoming the constraints of the inherited system still remains a big question.

The Kothari Commission (1964-66) paid special attention to the importance of work experience at all stages of school education and especially at secondary level.

Based on the recommendations of National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986, various programmes for the development of secondary education were initiated. The establishment of Navodya Vidyalayas, one in each district to serve the objective of excellence, coupled with equity and social justice (with reservation for SCs and STs), to promote national integration by providing opportunities to talented children from rural areas, is one of the major initiatives of the NPE, 1986. The secondary education continues to be essentially teaching and teachers oriented.

The system of education, as it has emerged in India, is the most complex but also one of the largest in the world. According to Census 2001, the number of secondary school age children (14 to 17 years) is 19.7 million.
This is 27.8 million over and above the population of the same age group in 1991. By 2011, the size of secondary age group population will be 89.2 million (Selected Educational Statistics, MHRD, 1998-99). By 2011, the current enrolment of 19.7 million in secondary classes will rise to 14.7 million and with improved efficiency and accelerated rate of growth; enrolment may actually touch the level of 35.6 million. The trend in growth of enrolment in school education is given below:

![Growth of school enrolment in India:1951-2000](image)

**Figure 1.2**

### 1.2.1. SECONDARY EDUCATION: THE CHALLENGES

Secondary Education is the stepping-stone to higher education. It is also the gateway to the labour market. The Kothari Commission recommended that upper primary grades should be viewed as a part of secondary education. Accordingly, many models of school structure are found in India, e.g. 7+3+2, 8+2+2 etc.

According to the 1986 policy, vocational courses should be offered at the +2 stage, apart from the academic courses, aiming at development of appropriate attitudes, skills and knowledge for self-employment or for meeting the demand of the labour market. The policy also emphasized that 10 per cent of +2 stage students would be diverted to vocational
stream by 1990 and this share would increase to 25 per cent by 1995. In reality, the vocational courses offered by secondary schools have failed to evoke interest among the students and parents. The share of enrolment in vocational courses has only stagnated at about 5 per cent. Many other centrally sponsored schemes intended to raise the quality of secondary education also have failed to deliver the desired result. The examination results at secondary and higher secondary level show immense wastage of resources in terms of high failure rate and also due to lack of standardization in the evaluation processes followed by different boards of examination.

Almost all the states have established boards of secondary education, which are responsible for organization of common examination after class X and class XII and to award certificates to successful students. The present system suffers from a number of problems, which have accentuated over the years. These are: (a) the examination system promotes reproduction in the examination to secure the highest marks; (b) there is no standardization of the examination to secure secondary education as the ‘lintel of the entire educational edifice’ of a country. Primary education has grown much faster than all other sectors of education and is poised for a bigger gap with success in universal primary education. “Greater the success in universalisation of elementary education, the greater will be the pressure on secondary education” (Mukhopadhyay, 1999).

The importance of secondary education has also been described as: “A careful analysis of educational development in the last two centuries in different parts of the world has revealed that the twentieth century was the century of developing primary education whereas the twenty-first century is going to be the century of developing secondary education and the need to prepare ourselves well for facing the challenges of the twenty-first century assume special significance” (Dave 1993). Therefore, clearly secondary education in India needs to be backed by not only quantitative expansion but also by qualitative improvement of inputs, processes and outcomes, i.e. (a) by capacity creation at secondary stage- the present capacity for secondary education is inadequate and is characterized by vast differentials in access in different regions of the country; (b) by standardizing the examination results of various boards so as to establish common national standards of learning achievement; and (c) by removing the excessive academic bias of the curriculum for the secondary schools and to link it to the needs of the adolescent population and the requirement of the labour market (Aggarwal, 2002).
The country is committed to achieving Universal secondary education by 2015; the statement also included the element of quality (Mukhopadhyay, 2001). One of the major imperatives is the expansion of facilities for secondary education in order to achieve the mission on universal secondary education to as many as 45 million students. From the current to the projected enrolment, the prediction is indeed a quantum jump. Thus, by the end of Xth plan, there will be 4.8 million new students in secondary and about 2.1 million students in senior secondary classes in 2000. This additional 6.9 million students will demand (@50 per class and per teacher), 1,38,000 classrooms and at least an equivalent number of teachers. By implication, @ 200 students per unit will have to be created during the Xth five year plan. Instead of setting up new schools, it may be wiser to upgrade the required number of 8th grade schools and 10th grade schools to 10th and 12th grade schools (Mukhopadhyay, 2002).

Shortage of teachers is just one of the concerns. It will be possible to eventually meet this challenge. Nevertheless, the bigger and a more continuous challenge will be of having properly qualified and good quality teachers and to keep their knowledge and skills updated on a regular basis. If we look at the present situation, as many as 66% teachers at secondary level are educated only up to higher secondary levels. The problem of quality is further compounded by lack of facilities for training by good quality trainers on a continuous basis (Mukhopadhyay, 2003).

Despite all the above facts, history of educational development in India has witnessed that more emphasis is always given on the development of primary and higher education while secondary education has always been neglected in terms of quality infrastructure. In such a scenario, how can we expect the secondary school graduates to contribute fully to social as well as economic development of the country?

1.3. Demographic Profile of New Delhi

Delhi is one of the four largest metros of India. The main city of Delhi covers an area of 1,500 sq. km. at 216 mts. above sea level. The population of the city is 13,782,976 in 2001. The city presents a blend of population from various regions, castes, religions and occupations, which give the city a unique multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic character. The density of population of the city per sq. km. is 9,294 and literacy rate is 81.82%.
Based on population projections of an Expert Committee set up by the Planning Commission, the expected population scenario for Delhi is as follows:

![Population Growth: Delhi, 1901-2011](image)

**Figure 1.3**

It is evident from the Figure that the population is expected to increase by about 1.7 per cent per annum during the first decade of the current millennium.

The characteristics of the climate are extreme dryness with an intensely hot summer and cold winter. The temperature is between 5°C (average in December/January) and 45°C (average in May/June). The rainy season is from July to September.

### 1.3.1. Historical Delhi in Perspective

The city of Delhi was founded in the 11th century AD by a Rajput chieftain of the Tomar clan. The Chauhans obtained possession of the city from the Tomaras. Prithvi Raj, the Chauhan ruler of Ajmer and Delhi, made the city of Delhi famous by his heroic valour and romantic adventures. Delhi under Prithvi Raj and Kanauj under Jai Chand were the principal kingdoms of north India at that time.
The first invasion of India by Mohammad Ghori was beaten back by Prithvi Raj in the first battle of Tarain in 1191. Next year, Ghori came back to avenge his defeat and in the second battle of Tarain (1192), the Rajput army was routed. Prithvi Raj was captured and put to death. Delhi thus passed into the hands of Muslim rulers for the next six centuries. Under the Mughal Emperors, Delhi became a world famous city.

In 1857, following the mutiny of Indian troops, the British deposed the titular Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar and formally annexed Delhi. In 1912, the capital of British India was transferred from Calcutta to Delhi, the side of the old city of Delhi the British Government laid out a new city - New Delhi - of imposing dimensions. Independent India retained this historic city as its Capital.
(Source: Delhi Diary, December 2003 and Manorama Year Book 2002).

At the time of independence, 10 urban local bodies, served Delhi, namely,

a) Delhi Municipal Committee (Constituted in 1863)
b) Najafgarh Notified Area Committee (Constituted in 1886)
c) Mehrauli Notified Area Committee (Constituted 1886)
d) Civil Lines Notified Area Committee (Constituted in 1913)
e) Shahadara Notified Area Committee (Constituted in 1916, raised to Municipal Committee status in 1951)
f) New Delhi Municipal Committee (Constituted in 1916)
g) Narela Notified Area Committee (Constituted in 1919)
h) Delhi Fort Notified Area Committee (Constituted in 1924)
i) Delhi Cantonment Board (Constituted in 1938)
j) West Delhi Notified Area Committee (Constituted in 1943)

In addition to the above Committees, there was a District Board to serve the rural areas. In order to streamline the administration, Delhi Municipal Corporation Act, 1957 was passed by the Parliament and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi was constituted in 1958. The Corporation absorbed all the existing municipal committees with the exception of New Delhi Municipal Committee and the notified area committees and the District Board.

The Master Plan of Delhi as developed by Delhi Development Authority, specifies the provision of education in the urban areas. These provisions have generally been made in colonies that are developed according to the master plan. However, a parallel mushroom growth of unauthorized
colonies has resulted in a situation where allocation of land for schools could not be made according to the prescribed norms.

Many of the schools were sanctioned long back could not be started for want of land at suitable places.

1.3.2. Educational Scenario in Delhi

According to the very recent statistics of the Government of NCT of Delhi, there are 4874 schools and 31.55 lakhs children attending formal education in Delhi.

In general, the schools in Delhi are normally classified into the following categories by levels:

- Primary Schools
- Middle Schools
- Secondary Schools
- Senior Secondary Schools

The following Tables represent the year-wise growth rate of educational institutions in Delhi as well as student enrolment in Delhi Schools.

Table 1.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>Sec./Sr.Secondary</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1971-72</td>
<td>1414</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>2330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>1726</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>704</td>
<td>2756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-92</td>
<td>2029</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>1178</td>
<td>3709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-01</td>
<td>2400</td>
<td>679</td>
<td>1563</td>
<td>4642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>2406</td>
<td>666</td>
<td>1576</td>
<td>4648</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>2532</td>
<td>675</td>
<td>1663</td>
<td>4870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>2535</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>1689</td>
<td>4874</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The promise of ‘Education for All’ has attracted the attention of development planners for a long time. Delhi Primary Education Act,
1960, provided the enabling provisions for enforcing compulsory education for all children in Delhi.

Table 1.2
Student Enrolment in Delhi Schools
(In Lakh)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>Sec./Sr. Secondary</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1971-72</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>8.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>6.68</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>12.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-92</td>
<td>9.64</td>
<td>5.35</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>19.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-2001</td>
<td>14.32</td>
<td>7.55</td>
<td>5.43</td>
<td>27.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-2002</td>
<td>14.34</td>
<td>7.81</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>27.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>15.18</td>
<td>8.44</td>
<td>6.58</td>
<td>30.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>15.31</td>
<td>8.99</td>
<td>7.25</td>
<td>31.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Growth of Enrolment in Delhi Schools

Figure 1.4

According to the statistics of 2003-04 of the government of NCT of Delhi, the capital has 5 universities, 10 Deemed universities, 144
National colleges, 3870 technical education Institutions under Delhi government.

At present, school education in Delhi is controlled by the following agencies:

- Delhi Administration
- Municipal Corporation of Delhi
- Delhi Cantonment Board
- New Delhi Municipal Corporation
- Departments of the Central Government and other agencies like Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS), Indian Army etc.

Some schools are run by agencies like Air Force, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan and other Trusts/NGOs/Societies. While some schools receive grant-in-aid from the government, others fall under the category of unaided schools and generate their own resources to run the schools. The Delhi Text book Bureau publishes/procures the books for various mediums of instruction. Some schools follow the NCERT books. The private schools prescribe books published by private publishers. However, the teaching methodologies and classroom transactions vary considerably between the government and private schools.

The rules for recruitment of teachers are the same for the government and the aided schools, educational attainment of the teachers in private and aided schools is higher than at in the government-managed schools.

There are five function DIETs and two additional DIETS are getting established. The main function of DIETs is to impart pre-service teacher training. In-service training programmes for the teachers are also conducted at the SCERT/DIETs (Source – Aggarwal, 2000)

1.4. Demography of Silchar

14,42,141 lakhs persons populate the sub-division of Silchar in Cachar district of Assam.

Barak Valley was incorporated into the territory of political boundary of Assam in 1874, mainly for administrative convenience of the British colonies. The land however does not have common history and the socio-cultural life of the valley is a bit different from the rest of Assam. Ethnically, linguistically and culturally, Barak Valley is more close to
Bengal than to Assam. According to the historian N.R. Roy, Barak Valley is an extension of the Gangetic Bengal. The Barail range, as a matter of fact, stands as a barrier between Brahmaputra Valley and Barak Valley. This is one of the reasons, and the history of Barak Valley is more interlinked with that of Bengal, especially with Sylhet rather than with Brahmaputra Valley.

### 1.4.1. History of Silchar

After the partition of India in 1947, the erstwhile Surma Valley was renamed as Barak Valley as a result of transfer of the Divisional Head Quarter of the Indian part of the area (from Sylhet) to Silchar. Barak Valley comes under the administrative unit of Cachar District with its headquarter at Silchar. Cachar district’s geographical demarcation has undergone changes several times in colonial and post-colonial India. Thus it is felt that a brief historical analysis of the valley with respect to its land, people, social, cultural perspective is essential.

### 1.4.2. Physical Feature

The sub-division of Silchar is situated between longitude 92.15° and 95.15° east and latitude 24.08° and 25.08° north and is bounded on the north by North Cachar Hills Districts and the state of Meghalaya, on the east by Manipur state, on the south by the union territory of Mizoram and on the west by the two sister-districts of Karimganj and Hailakandi.

The climate of the sub-division is marked by excessive humidity. The mean daily minimum temperature and the mean daily maximum temperatures do not fall below and rise above 11.6° C and 32.5° C respectively.

The sub-division is composed of high hills, low lands and level plains, it depicts a heterogeneous landscape. It includes vast area of the southern Assam range and the Bhuban range, which guards its custom frontier. There are hilly areas with peaks reaching above 3,000 ft. from the sea level.

The Barak is the main river traversing the sub-division from the east to the west and on its course it receives a number of tributaries mainly like the Jiri, Chiri, the Madhura, the Sonai, the Jatinga of the Barak and they together with the Ghagra and Rukni drain the sub-division.
1.4.3. Culture of the People

Due to the partition of India in 1947, a large number of people migrated to India and a large chunk of Bengali-speaking population from Sylhet region of the erstwhile East Pakistan settled in Silchar. So, in this locality in course of time, a mixed culture was formed due to different traditional heritage of migrated population and aborigines of this locality.

1.4.4. Beginning of Formal Education In Silchar, i.e., in Barak valley and its development upto the present time

The District of Cachar was annexed to British dominion by a proclamation on 14th August 1832, after the assassination of the last legitimate Cachari Raja Govinda Chandra in 1830. The district came under the administration of a Superintendent controlled by the Commissioner of Assam, when Captain Fisher was appointed as the first superintendent of Cachar district.

The Commissioner or the agent to the Governor General of Assam asked all the district officers to report on the general education in their respective districts. In his report the superintendent of Cachar, Mr. Fisher wrote:

“There does not exist any provision either public or private in any part of Cachar for the instruction of the people nor does it appear that anything of the kind ever did, at least in any permanent way. The Raja sometimes allowed small sums to a few Brahmins and Kayasthas, while they were absent from the country pursuing their studies in Bengal and for a short while he entertained a few pundits who gave instruction in Bengali and Sanskrit to some of their caste only. The little learning extent in Cachar is strictly confined to the Brahmins, for though the Mohammedan portion of the population is the most numerous, it is in a state of as complete ignorance as the bulk of the same persuasion in Sylhet, while I am not aware that it includes (which the latter unquestionably does) even few individuals who possess a moderate knowledge of the oriental classic tongue”. (D. Dutta: Cachar District Records)

Urging the government to make arrangements for imparting education to the natives without any delay, Fisher suggested that in the curriculum of public instruction, provision must be made for religious education as a check against the baneful effects of the purely secular education. He, however, warned the Christian Government not to be inclined to teach
only its own religion. Christian instruction alone could not be proposed without incurring the most “alarm ing risques” (risks). Fisher proposed that the scholars should receive instruction in their own faith. He suggested that the boys should not be sent to the missionary schools, he wrote “...I think it would at the same time be desirable to furnish a portion of the pupils with the means of prosecuting their studies under more advantageous circumstances either at Calcutta or Serampore where they might enlarge their minds...” About the medium of instruction, Fisher wrote, “The entire instruction is to be conveyed in Bengali language”.

Though in 1832, Fisher strongly urged the Government to adopt steps in order to impart education to the people of Cachar, for many years nothing was actually done in this regard. There were only discussions on the subject of education but there was no effective action. In a letter dated 22nd September 1837, J.G. Burns, the then superintendent, suggested that there were three thanas suitable for schools in Cachar, viz; Silchar (the Sadar), Hailakandi and Kathigarha. Regarding teachers he suggested that as there were none in Cachar capable of teaching, a pundit of Sylhet who was a competent man could be appointed with a salary of Rs. 20 per month.

It appears that in the decade of 1840, a school was established and it was maintained by the voluntary subscription of the superintendent and the Indian employees of the Government (the Amlahs). But with the subscription failing, the school was closed down.

From Hunter’s statistical accounts, we know that in the year 1856-57 there was not a single school in the district. In 1860-61, there was one school, attended by only thirteen pupils, which did not receive any assistance from the Government.

We get further details about these schools from the letter dated the 17th July 1862 addressed by the Superintendent P. Stewart to R. L. Martin, Inspector of Schools.

The letter throws light on certain facts:

Firstly, the schools which are referred to in Hunter’s account existed for five years, and that these schools did not receive any assistance from the government. Secondly, at one time the number of pupils in the school rose to 128 and by the time Hunter wrote his report, the number came down to 13.
By 1862, the district authorities were convinced that no school would develop in Silchar on private initiative and therefore, the superintendent of the district urged the Inspector of schools in his letter dated 17th July 1862 and also in his letter dated 16th September 1862 to start a school here, granting the same allowances that are accorded to the lowest class of Zilla (District) Schools in the regulation provinces. It is also interesting to note that before 1862, two junior schools had grown up - one at Katigarha and the other at Hailakandi, and these two outstation schools continued to exist even after the abolition of the Saddar School in 1862.

Pryse came to Silchar and in December 1863, started his High Grammar School in a dilapidated house. This laid the foundation of the Silchar Government High School. Since 1958, this has been called the “Government Higher Secondary School, Silchar”.

Thus, it appears that there was practically no institutionalised education worth the name before the advent of the Britishers here. The education that was present at the time was of a religious character. There were only a few pundits who had some learning in the centres of Sanskrit culture in Bengal or other western provinces of the country. The Muslims would receive purely religious education at Maktabs, conducted by the Maulvis. A few years after the British had annexed Cachar to their Indian Empire, they felt the need of imparting secular education to the local people and in 1853, the superintendent of Cachar wrote to higher authorities with proposals for establishment of schools in the area. Three schools were then started, one each at Silchar, Katigarha and Hailakandi. But the local people did not attend these schools and subsequently these schools died down in a short time.

In 1862, too, the superintendent of Cachar submitted a proposal to the Government for establishment of some Government schools here. He opined that the revenue and resources of the district were such as to justify some expenditure on education of the local people. He submitted a proposal for sanction of some amount for construction of a schoolhouse at Silchar. He also proposed for the grant of the same allowances as given to Zilla Schools of regulation provinces.

The scenario began to improve slowly and by 1865-66, seven schools were in existence.
Table 1.3 shows the progress made in Cachar district during 1874-75 to 1904:

Table No.-1.3
The progress made since 1874-75 to 1904 in Cachar district

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Secondary Schools</th>
<th>Pupils</th>
<th>No. of Primary Schools</th>
<th>Pupils</th>
<th>Total No. of Pupils</th>
<th>No. of persons in districts to each pupil</th>
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<th>Female</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1874-75</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>2119</td>
<td>2492</td>
<td>94</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880-81</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>2565</td>
<td>3011</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890-91</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>4708</td>
<td>5121</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-01</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>7188</td>
<td>7842</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A. Secondary Schools/High Schools
- No. of Schools: 1900-01 1901-02 1903 1904
- No. of Boys reading in High School classes: 77 96 65 74
- No. of Boys reading in Middle School class: 41 48 61 103
- No. of Boys reading in Primary classes: 194 193 163 261

B. Middle English School
- No. of Schools: 1 1 1
- No. of Boys reading in Middle classes: 7 8 7
- No. of Boys reading in Primary classes: 26 65 55

C. Primary Schools
Upper Primary Schools
- No. of boys reading in upper primary classes: 12 11 11 11
- No. of Boys reading in Lower Primary class: 116 118 288 278

D. Lower Primary Schools
- No. of Schools: 227 232 235 230
- No. of boys reading in three upper classes: 6248 6543 4317 2194
- No. of Boys reading in three lower classes: 6 68 66 60

E. Female Education
- No. of Girls' Schools: 9 8 6 4
- No. of girls in Upper Primary schools: 64 68 66 60
- No. of girls in Lower Primary Schools: 400 427 404 238
High schools were those institutions, which are recognised by Calcutta University as capable of affording suitable preparation for the Entrance Examination. The boys were taught from the earliest stage of their education up to the entrance course, as prescribed by the University of Calcutta. The course of instruction at Middle English and middle vernacular schools was the same, with the exception that English was taught in the former and not in the latter.

The period following 1905 had witnessed emergence of more schools: primary, middle and high schools in various parts of the district. New schools emerged in Cachar District (Barak Valley), i.e; Borkhola, Lakhipur, Udharband, Sonai Villages and also in Karimganj, Hailakandi sub-division. This way a social regeneration had started throughout the valley. The literacy rate was rising steadily and Barak Valley found various cultural and educational avenues.

The number of Educational Institution in Silchar town from 1905 to 1911 were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary level</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School level</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the meantime, freedom movements made its impact in this land. Following this, Barak Valley had witnessed cultural regeneration that resulted in educational upliftment. At the same time, the trend of boycotting government schools and embracing swadeshi ideology resulted in gradual decline in the number of attendance in the schools. In Silchar, Swadeshi School, Cachar High School, Narsingh School and a number of pathshalas came into existence at the local initiative and the students diverted to these schools. In the process, the number of dropouts also increased, resulting in stagnation for some time.

In 1947, the numbers of primary schools was 17 and have High Schools as 7 in the Silchar town.

1.4.5. Development of Education in Cachar/Barak Valley since Independence

Promotion of education has been the concern of various governments since Independence. Various committees were set up by the government for suggesting measures for spreading education in the country. These include Durgabhai Deshmukh Committee (1958), Mehta Committee
(1962-64), Kothari Commission (1966), etc. These Committees and commissions made various recommendations like free tuition, free uniforms, scholarship, etc. Keeping in tune with these recommendations, the Government of Assam also took various steps for enlistment of education in the state. As a result, the number of schools, number of teachers and the total number of enrolment in these schools gradually increased.

Table 1.4 presents the number of educational institutions in 1957-58 to 2001. Table 1.5 presents the percentage of male and female literacy rate during 1951-2001 in different census years in Barak Valley.

### Table 1.4.
No. of Primary, Middle, High and Higher Secondary Schools in Cachar District from 1956-57 to 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>High/Higher Secondary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1957-58</td>
<td>1355</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-72</td>
<td>2093</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972-73</td>
<td>2336</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973-74</td>
<td>2537</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-76</td>
<td>2536</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976-77</td>
<td>2372</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977-78</td>
<td>3510</td>
<td>858</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984-85</td>
<td>1454</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-87</td>
<td>1611</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-97</td>
<td>102</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above Table shows that the number of schools decreased in the year 1991. The reason behind it is the division of the District. In 1984, a separate district of Karimganj was formed and in 1989, another district of Hailakandi was carved out and the reformatted district of Cachar now comprised only two sub-divisions of Silchar and Lakhipur.

### Table 1.5.
Male and Female Literacy Rate in Different Census years In Barak Valley (1951-2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Year</th>
<th>Male (%)</th>
<th>Female (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>37.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>76.51</td>
<td>59.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In spite of all these developments in the sphere of education, the number of dropouts was also very high in rural and urban areas of Cachar district.
Poverty, non-availability of schooling facilities, irregularity of teachers, single teacher schools are some of the retarding factors in this valley. The present number of educational institutions in primary, middle and high or higher secondary schools is healthier in comparison to the earlier position. Particularly, the number of primary schools and middle schools has increased to a large extent. There were 2093 primary schools in 1971-72, which increased to 2372 in 1984-85. But it actually decreased in number during the period 1976-77 to 1984-85. In 1976-77, there were 2536 primary schools.

The middle schools show a continuous progress in this specific area. In 1971-72, the number of middle schools was 339, which gradually increased to 539 in 1984-85.

It is observed that no hindrance came in spreading the middle schools because the number of these schools continuously increasing.

But the data in respect of high and higher secondary schools show stagnation. Though the number of these schools increased from 152 to 169 (1971-72 to 1976-77), it again decreased to 168 in 1984-85. It can be said that the progress in the high and higher secondary sections of education is very slow.

The agitation in Assam in 1979 caused a serious set-back to the entire northeast India and development of education in the region almost came to a standstill. But in spite of all odds, the agitation had its positive contribution for Barak Valley, in the form of establishment of Assam University in 1994.

During the period 1996-97, in Silchar the number of primary schools was 60, middle schools 17, secondary schools 16, higher secondary schools 9 and ad-hoc high schools three. No doubt there is a sharp increase in the number of schools from 1947 to 1997 with 11 to 60 at primary level and 7 to 16 at secondary level. According to the census report of 2001, in Silchar, the numbers of primary schools was 1611, secondary schools 75 and higher secondary schools 28. However, in the perspective of educational requirement at grass-root level, there is nothing to be complacent about.
1.5. Rationale of the Study

School Education in India is simultaneously challenged by expansion and quality. It needs to be backed by qualitative improvements of inputs, process and outcomes. In order to achieve these objectives, the targets of quantitative expansion have to be matched with qualitative improvement.

It is estimated that of the 100 children enrolled in grade I, not more than 26 reach grade X. With pass percentage in the board examination being less than 50, a bare 13% qualify for higher education. According to the available data, only 11% join higher secondary classes; and just about 50% again succeed. Thus, less than 6% of those who began their journey at grade I complete school grades to be qualified for collegiate education. The loss in the form of dropout is almost 90%. The estimated annual cost of failure is as high as Rs. 9,000 cores annually (Mukhopadhyay, 2003). If this huge amount of Rs. 9,000 cores were used properly, the rate of success in the public examination and also their performance in terms of excellence would go up. At a micro level of school as an institution, the statement of Navaratnam (1997), “Quality education is managed education” is almost appropriate. More than 92% of the budget in secondary education is spent on salary. Hence, quality of secondary education is essentially dependent upon the quality of competence, commitment and performance of teachers. It is estimated that the unit cost of actual teaching per hour is double the unit cost per hour of a teacher (Mukhopadhyay, 2000). This implies that 50% of the teachers’ salary is meant for preparation for teaching, student assessment etc. Navaratnam’s (1997) and Mukhopadhyay’s (2000) contention of managed education includes optimizing the investment on preparation for teaching. Hence, there is a tremendous scope for improvement, even within the given situation.

One of the most common assumptions is that private schools are growing rapidly because their quality is so superior. However, the same source suggests that teachers in government and private schools are similar in qualification and training. Even the student-teacher ratios in the two types of schools are very comparable. It is also seen that government schools employ more teachers on a temporary basis. But when the question of quality comes, in most cases, private schools are more superior to government schools. This is applicable both in New Delhi and Silchar.

In the context of the emerging global competitiveness, there is a very little choice but for improvement in quality of education. However, the
pre-requisite to quality improvement and management is quality assessment with respect to a well-defined set of indicators of quality. Indian research both on quality assessment and quality management is in its infancy as indicated by the five sequential surveys of research in education. (Buch 1974, 78, 83, 88 and NCERT 1997). This study is proposed to develop a methodology and an instrument of quality assessment at the institutional level. This will fill the void in research in education as well as provide a handy useable mechanism for quality assessment as a basis for quality management in school education. The researcher had chosen for this study two cities: one is the metropolitan capital city of India and other one from remotest part of the country because she wanted to test whether the instrument for quality assessment, which she has proposed to identify and develop, suited both the settings.

1.6. Title of the Study

The work in hand is titled: “A Study on Assessment of School Quality in New Delhi and Silchar”

1.7. The objectives of the study are:

- To develop a theoretical construct for quality assessment;
- To identify/develop a set of instrument for quality assessment that can be applied to selected schools;
- To carry out institutional quality assessment; and
- To develop a methodology of quality assessment in secondary schools.

In order to realize the objectives of the study, intensive case studies of respective schools were undertaken as part of this work.

1.8. Scope and Delimitation of the Study

- The study covers secondary schools.
- The present study is confined and limited within New Delhi and Silchar.