ASSAM

Geography and Location

Assam is located in the central part of North Eastern State of India with the total area of 78,438 sq. km. The state has Arunachal Pradesh in the east, West Bengal, Meghalaya, Bangladesh in the west; Arunachal Pradesh, Bhutan in the north and Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura in the south. The whole Assam can be classified into 2 regions namely- The Brahmaputra Valley and the Barak Valley depending on the names of the two rivers Brahmaputra and Barak respectively and hilly area made up of North Cachar and Karbi Anglong districts. The Brahmaputra Valley, comprising eighteen plains districts and two hill districts, has a total area of 71,516 sq. km. and the Barak valley, comprising three plains districts, has a total area of 6,922 sq. km. Assam covers 35.48 % of forest of the total land area of the state. The main seasons of Assam are monsoon, winter and pre-monsoon.

Population

According to 31st March 2011 census report, Assam has a total population of 31, 169,272 out of which male comprise of 15,954,927 and female comprise of 15, 954,927 which accounts only 2.58% of India’s population. Assam ranks 14th position amongst all the states of India in terms of density of population. It comprises of people from various religion, caste and creed. Based on religion we find Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Buddhist, Jain and Sikhs. Therefore Hindus are the majority. Most of the population of Assam lives in rural areas. The Sex-ratio per thousand male in the state is 954 compared to all India 940 which has increased dramatically to 7% (933 in 2001). (Census 2001, HRD 2003)

Table: 1.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Assam (%)</th>
<th>India (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1941-1951</td>
<td>19.93</td>
<td>13.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951-1961</td>
<td>34.98</td>
<td>21.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961-1971</td>
<td>34.95</td>
<td>24.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-1981</td>
<td>23.36</td>
<td>24.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-2001</td>
<td>18.85</td>
<td>21.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-2011</td>
<td>16.93</td>
<td>17.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table clearly shows that the decadal increase in population of Assam has always been higher than India, but in the year 1991 to 2001 and 2011 the decadal growth rate is slightly lower which a good sign.

Administrative setup

Assam has a single chamber legislative assembly with 126 members. The state sends 21 members to the Indian National Parliament, 7 to the Rajya Sabha (upper house) and 14 to the Lok Sabha (Lower house). Local government is based on 27 administrative districts which include newly created Bodoland Territorial Council’s Baksa, Chirag, Udalguri and Kamrup renamed as rural and metropolitan. The state have been divided into 49 Sub-divisions, has 219 Blocks, 2489 Panchayats and 26312 villages. For maintenance of law and order 206 police stations or thanas are made accessible. The capital of this State is Dispur and is located in the city of Guwahati.

History

V.R. Trivedi states that the word Assam is taken from the word ‘Asama’ meaning peerless or unequal. The modern name Assam is a recent one. It is linked to the Shan invaders, who entered the Brahmaputra valley in the 13\(^{th}\) Century AD, better known as Ahoms.

According to H.K. Borpujari & J.M. Choudhury Assam was a part of the ancient country known as Pragjyotisha, which included Assam, parts of North and East Bengal (at present Bangladesh) and also the hill tracks up to the border of China. In the mediaeval times, Pragjyotisha came to be known as Kamarupa. B.M. Das documents that in the 10\(^{th}\) Century
A.D, soon after Naraka of Mithila ascended the throne, the name Pragjyotisha was changed to Kamarup.

It is true that the political boundary of ancient Pragjyotishpur and Kamrup has changed at various times and especially after independence when partition lead to losing some area of Assam which went to East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) namely Sylhet.

**Economy**

Assam is predominantly an agrarian economy where majority of the rural labor force is engaged in agriculture and allied activities directly or indirectly. The paddy cultivation covers 93.0% of the total area under food grains production in 2008-09 according to the Economic Survey, Assam 2009-10 report. The report also suggests that in terms of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) at factor cost is expected to grow at the rate of 6.35% as per Advanced Estimates for 2009-10 in sectors like Electricity, Gas & Water supply, Transport, Storage and Communication, Trade, Hotel & Restaurants, Banking & Insurance and Public Administration. At current prices State Income is estimated at Rs. 78822.48 crores in 2009-10.

The main industry of Assam is Tea which is about 170 years old. it is cultivated in 301000 hectares of land in Assam. There are 49102 numbers of tea gardens in Assam. Assam tea is has a significant reputation in the global economy which constitutes of 505 of the total production of the country. The government is earning substantial amount of foreign exchange from the Tea production. Sericulture is a major industry of the state and it is identified by ‘Muga Silk’or ‘Golden thread’ worldwide with 99% of the Muga Silk produced in Assam. Assam has 4 oil refineries situated in Noonmati, Bogaigoan, Numaligarh and Duliajaan. This sector plays an important role in the total economy of India.

The Bamboo is found in large quantity in Assam which comprises of around 60% of the total Bamboo of the country. The Bamboo industry is thus given ample importance by the government in recent years. The milk production of the state is 827 million liters in 2008-09 according to Economic Survey, Assam 2009-10 report.
Main worker as the percentage of total population of Assam in 2001

Table: 1.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/Country</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Persons</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>26.59</td>
<td>42.35</td>
<td>9.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>30.55</td>
<td>45.35</td>
<td>14.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Assam Human Development Report 2003)

From the above table, we can come to a conclusion that the overall female main workers are very low in Assam as well as in India. Assam female main workers are comparatively lower than India in both rural and urban areas. Thus Assam needs to boost up its female main workers to increase its per capita income for the overall economic development of Assam.

People and Society

The Assamese is a mixture of Mongolian-Tibetan, Aryan and Barman ethnic origins. About 2/3 of the Assamese are Hindus and about a quarter are Muslim. The people of Assam mostly speak Assamese language also known as ‘Asomiya’ which is an Indo-Aryan language with its root in the Sanskrit. Bengali speaking people are large in Barak Valley where Bengali is the official language. The tribal have their own language. A number of tribal communities are an integral part of Assam. These tribals include: Mishing, Tiwa, Lalung, Karbi, Kachari, Dimasa, Rabha etc. Thus the people of Assam can be broadly divided into two groups – tribal and non-tribal. It has been suggested by H.K. Borpujari and J.M. Choudhury that the process of Aryanisation or Sanskritisation nearly completed in the valley of Brahmaputra by 1200 A.D.

Literacy

It has been found that literacy is one of the most important areas of study to get an idea on women empowerment. Thus the literacy pattern is discussed in the form of a table and chart. According to the census report 2011, the total literate population in the state is 73.18%. Female literacy is lower (67.27%) compared to male (78.81%). But female literacy rate has increased than that of male literacy rate during the last decade from 54.61 % in 2001 to 67.27 % in 2011 showing a amazing rise of about 13 %.
Literacy rate in Assam, 2011 Census:

Table: 1.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Person (%)</th>
<th>Male (%)</th>
<th>Female (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>73.18</td>
<td>78.81</td>
<td>67.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Detail graph on the decadal increase in Male, Female and Total Literacy rate of Assam.

GRAPH: 1.4

(Source: Census of India, 2011, Statistical handbook of Assam, 2007)

The above figure contains the literacy rate of Assam. It shows that the male literacy rate of the state is greater than female literacy rate. The blue bar stands for male literacy rate, the red for female and green stands for the total literacy rate of Assam. In 1951, the male literacy rate is 28.01% and female is 7.58% and total literacy rate of Assam was 18.53%. In the year 1961, there is a little rise in the male literacy rate i.e. 44.28% but quite satisfactory is the female literacy rate which increased more than 50% i.e. 18.62%, thus the total literacy rate increases by 32.95%. Amazingly in the year 1971, the male literacy rate and the total literacy rate was exactly equal i.e. 33.94% whereas the female literacy rate was higher than both which is 43.72%. Again in the year 1991, the male literacy rate increased by 61.87% and the total literacy rate also increased by 52.89% but we see quite a decrease in the rate of female literacy i.e. 43.03%. The year 2001 shows male literacy rate rising to 71.93%, total literacy rate rising to 64.28 %, and female literacy rate rising is 56.03% which is 15% low male literacy. Coming to the latest census report 2011, it clearly shows that male literacy ration has risen to 78.18%, the total literacy ration being 73.18% and female literacy ration being 67.27% which is almost 9% lower than male literacy
ration. Thus an increase in all three literacy rate is almost 10% which is a great achievement. We may conclude that in the year 1951 to 1961 there was a great success over female literacy rate. In the same year more than 50% rise in literacy rate was observed, but after that period there had been no great accomplishment among the female literacy rate which is constantly rising at a particular rate.

The ‘Sarva Siksha Abhiyan’ has been initiated in 14 non DPEP (District Primary Education Programme) districts of Assam. There are almost 21,000 Village Education Centers, 1000 Tea Garden Education Committees, 38,000 School Managing Committees and 2, 500 Gaon Panchayat Education Committees. (Assam HRD 2003)

As in case of female education at the primary level it is 48%. At the higher secondary level, this rate drops to 35% and in the overall higher education level it again drops to 33%. 70% of the girls drop out every year in overall education system which is higher than boys. As also the success rate of girls is much lower than boys. A huge rate of unbalance can be seen in technical education. (Assam HRD 2003)

**Media**


**Total Media Usage in Assam**

Table: 1.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audio and Visual Media</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Total (Rural)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Total (Urban)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Radio and Transistor</td>
<td>1,489,742</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
<td>1207,270</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>282,472</td>
<td>39.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>903,126</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
<td>508,212</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>349,214</td>
<td>55.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Census of India, 2001)
The table no. 1.5 reveals that the total radio and transistor used by the people of Assam comprises of 30.2% whereas television usage is only 18% which clearly defines that almost half of the population of Assam don’t have radio and television. If we compare this figure with urban and rural population of Assam, we can say that the use of radio and television is more in urban centric in nature. The causes of this lack in media usage may be due to lack of electricity, poor income etc. In the world of fast changing Communication and Technology; people using extensive internet and various software’s etc, it is depressing to note that people in Assam do not use these basic means of mass communication or to be said in an more appropriate manner do not have access to these basic technologies i.e. radio and television which has become an important member of our family. It is a fact that television has acquired a special position in our lives in a way that people think of placing the television in the most appropriate place while designing their home especially the drawing room of middleclass and upper middleclass families.

**Indian Readership Survey 2011 Q1, Assam**

Table: 1.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dailies in Assam (AIR)</th>
<th>Q1 2010 in (000s)</th>
<th>Q1 2011 in (000s)</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any Assamese Daily</td>
<td>ASM 2196</td>
<td>1917</td>
<td>-12.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Asomiya Pratidin (All Edn)</td>
<td>ASM 1230</td>
<td>1152</td>
<td>-6.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Asomiya Khabar</td>
<td>ASM 443</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>-21.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any English Daily</td>
<td>ENG 305</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Assam Tribune</td>
<td>ENG 226</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>11.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Dainik Agradoot</td>
<td>ASM 330</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>-36.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Dainik Janambhumi</td>
<td>ASM 193</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>3.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Amar Asom</td>
<td>ASM 244</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>-21.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Bengali Daily</td>
<td>BEN 191</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>-2.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Dainik Jugasankha</td>
<td>BEN 165</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>3.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Dainik Assam</td>
<td>ASM 158</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>-43.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Ajir Asom</td>
<td>ASM 78</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 The Telegraph</td>
<td>ENG 97</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>-32.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: IRS, 2011 Q1 and exchange for media, Pandey,N.)

The table shows that any English newspapers have a growth rate of 2.62% with Assam Tribune at 11.50% growth rate. The Bengali newspaper Dainik Jugasankha alone has a high growth rate of 3.64%. Amongst the Assamese dailies, Dainik Janambhumi has a growth rate of 3.11%. Besides all the other newspapers have recorded decline in their all India readership 2011.
BARAK VALLEY

Geography and Location

Barak Valley is situated in the southern part of Assam with an area of 6,922 sq.kms. It is separated by the Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills from the Brahmaputra Valley in Assam. The Barak valley is surrounded by the state of Meghalaya in the North, Manipur in the East, Mizoram in the South and Tripura in the West. The Sylhet district of Bangladesh is in the western region of Barak Valley. The region is separated by the natural border between the rivers in Bengal and the hilly northeast. The Barail range, Bhuban range, Saraspur, Chatacurra is the major hills in the valley. The main city of the valley is Silchar. According to J.B. Bhattacharjee the geographical factors have a major historical significance. This part of Assam experiences heavy rainfall during the summer season which leads to flood, water logging, loss of life, agriculture and property every year.

Population:

The population of Barak Valley is 36,12,581. Men population is 15, 40,362 and women comprises of 14, 51,215. In the below table the decadal increase in population of Barak valley is shown in comparison with Brahmaputra Valley.

Decadal increase in Population growth as per Census report 2011

Table: 1.7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Brahmaputra Valley (%)</th>
<th>Barak Valley (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1941-1951</td>
<td>19.93</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951-1961</td>
<td>34.98</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961-1971</td>
<td>34.95</td>
<td>24.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-1991</td>
<td>53.26</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-2011</td>
<td>16.93</td>
<td>20.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table clearly shows that the decadal increase in population of Barak valley has most of the time been lower than Brahmaputra Valley, but in the year 1991 to 2011, the decadal growth rate is slightly higher. The reason may be due to migration of people from surrounding areas of Barak Valley.
Sex ratio of different districts as per Census Report 2001

Table 1.8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts/State</th>
<th>Sex Ratio (per thousand Male)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cachar</td>
<td>958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karimganj</td>
<td>961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hailakandi</td>
<td>946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barak (Total)</td>
<td>955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam (Total)</td>
<td>954</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table clearly shows that the sex ratio of Barak Valley is quite satisfactory. District wise Karimganj is in better position where Hailakandi is in much lower position.

Administrative setup

Barak valley mainly consists of three districts namely Cachar, Karimganj, and Hailakandi. The district headquarters of the Districts are Silchar, Karimganj and Hailakandi respectively. Cachar is the largest among the three followed by Karimganj and lastly Hailakandi. The Valley has 4 sub-divisions out of which only Cachar district comprises of two sub-divisions- Silchar and Lakhipur. For law and order in the valley there are 18 police stations, 14 revenue circles, 27 development block and 321 Gaon Panchayats.

History

“Geographically, linguistically, culturally and socially, the Barak Valley is an extension of eastern Bengal. In 1874, when Assam was organized as a province by the British, two Bengali speaking districts of Sylhet and Cachar were carved out of the Bengal Presidency and incorporated in Assam to meet the revenue deficit of the newly formed province. The twin districts were then placed under a Commissionership and came to be known as Surma Valley division. In 1947, the major part of the Sylhet district was transferred to erstwhile East Pakistan. The remaining part of the Surma Valley division is known as the Barak Valley division.” (Sujit Choudhury, 2005)

The place is named after the Barak River. Nihar Ranjan Roy, author of Bangalir Itihash says, "South Assam or Barak Valley is the extension of greater Meghna Valley of Bengal" in all the way from culture to geography.

Economy

Agriculture is the dominant factor in the economy of Barak Valley. Another area is tea plantation. The area is very suitable for tea plantation because of its high and low valleys.
There are a total of 102 Tea Gardens in the valley. Also rubber plantation is a major contributing factor in the development of Barak Valley’s economy. The Rubber Board of India has been working for better development of rubber in this area. Besides these the other areas are small industries like saw mills, tea manufacturing units and plywood mills. Some of the notable public sector units are Cachar Paper Mill in Panchgram and Cachar Sugar Mill. DLF has two power plants in Karimganj district’s Adamtilla and Cachar district’s Bashkandi. ONGC is the sole natural gas supplier to DLF power plants. And other mini industries include cement plants set up by some private sector companies.

**People and society**

The Barak valley comprises of 80% Bengali population and also some ethnic groups like Kuki, Naga, Hmars, Khasis and Koch also known as Dehans. Barak Valley is also the home land of Kacharis, Manipuris (Both Bishnupriya and Meiti and tea garden labourers. The official language of Barak Valley is Bangla. However, majority of people speak a dialect, which is known as Sylheti Bangla. Religious composition of the Valley’s population is Hindu: 50%, Muslim, 46% and others 4%. Hindus are majority in Cachar district (60%) while Muslims are majority in Karimganj district (53%) and Hailakandi district (57%).

**Literacy**

The literacy percentage of Barak Valley is 64.82 percentage of which male comprises of 72.56 percentage and female is 55.93 percentage. In literacy rate Karimganj Urban has the highest literacy rate of 91.62 percent in Assam.

**Literacy rate in Barak Valley, 2011 Census:**

Table: 1.9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barak</td>
<td>73.95</td>
<td>81.68</td>
<td>74.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam (Total)</td>
<td>73.18</td>
<td>78.81</td>
<td>67.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table shows that the literacy rate of Barak Valley is better than the entire Assam as a whole.

**Media**

**Pre-independence period:** The media of Barak Valley is essentially print media oriented. The first newspaper of Barak valley, ‘Silchar’ came out in the year 1889. It was edited by Bidhu Bhushan Sen who was a teacher by profession. The first English language
newspaper, ‘Eastern Chronicle’ came out in 1908 from Karimganj. It was started by national leader Bipin Chandra Pal. The newspaper greatly contributed towards Indian freedom struggle which was a newspaper as well as a views paper. The first daily newspaper of Barak Valley was ‘Surma’ which was earlier a weekly newspaper but was transformed into a daily newspaper during the World War I. The first English magazine to be published from Barak Valley was the ‘Surma Valley Magazine’ in 1927. ‘Graha Laxmi’ was the first women edited newspaper of Barak valley published in 1937 from Karimganj. Its editor was Kanakprabha Devi. On the backdrop of World War II, a newspaper named ‘Azad’ was published 1940. It was edited by the veteran journalist Hurmat Ali Barlashkar. This paper was a strong supporter of Indian freedom struggle. ‘Bijoyini’ was a monthly magazine edited by Jyotsna Chanda in the year 1940. This magazine worked significantly towards women empowerment. Rabindra Nath Tagore highly encouraged the work of Jyotsna Chanda.

Post-independence period: The first Bengali daily newspaper published after independence was ‘Dainik Prantajyoti’. In the year 1948, a veteran journalist Badhya Nath Nath, started a weekly named ‘Muktipradeepr’ which was later discontinued. Later in 1949 he started another weekly named ‘Jugasankha’ which is still in publication from Silchar. Presently, a number of newspapers are published from Barak Valley and they are: Dainik Jugasankha, Samuhik Prasanga, Sonar Cachar, Ploknoom (Manipuri), Dainik Batori (Assamese), Purvadhaya (Hindi), Silchar Times, The Sentinel(English), Navabarta PrASHAnga (published from Karimganj).

Television and Radio: Television was started in Barak Valley on 4th December 1984 by relaying programmes from Delhi through it Low Power Transmitters. High Power Transmitters started on 26th September 1987. The regional Bengali language programme was initially started for 30 minutes a day on 11th October 1991. The 30 minutes programme was telecasted for 5 days in a week. There is only one Doordarshan Kendra in Barak Valley which is located in Silchar town. All India Radio, Silchar is serving the people of Barak Valley by imparting education, information and entertainment for last 36 years.
CACHAR DISTRICT

Geography and Location

Cachar is bounded in the North by the North-Cachar hill district, on the East by the Manipur, south by Mizoram and on the west by the Sylhet district of Bangladesh and Tripura. The total area of the District is 3,786 sq. km. It is the gateway to Manipur and Mizoram States of Northeast. The river Barak flows from east to west through the center of the plain valley. Silchar is the center point of the district.

Population

Its population is 1,736,319 with male population comprises of 886,616 males and 849,703 females. The people are settled in both rural and urban areas. The urban population is less compared to rural population.

Administrative Setup

Cachar has two sub-division: Lakhipur and Silchar town, the headquarters. The Cachar district has 9 Police Station, 15 Development blocks, 5 Revenue circles, 163 Gaon Panchayats.

History

According to historians, Cachar was known as Haidimbades, the land of demones Haidimba. Prince Bhima met her and had a son name Ghototkach. He was the king of this part of India till he died. There are also other concepts regarding the name of Cachar and its origin. Some say that Kacharis gave this place the name Cachar; some say that the name Cachar has its origin root in Sylhet. It is the oldest District of Assam.

The Kachari King moved toward south in the middle of the 16th Century AD from Dimapur, to Maibong in the North Cachar Hills where they built up a capital. In the year 1706, the Kachari King was Tamradhaja and he was attacked by the Ahom King Rudra Shingha and defeated. The fled Kachari King then asked help from Jaintia King who in return seiged him. The Kachari King left with no other option and had to call the Ahom King Rudra Shingha for help which was accepted. Thus the Rudra Shingha rescued Tamradhaja and reinstated him as the king of Cachar. From this time onwards the Kachari Princess have settled and developed the plains of Cachar and established their Court in Khaspur. Later the Brahmins and high class people from Koch Behar, Tippera, Bengal and Sylhet came seeking employment in the newly built kingdom.
The coming of British for the first time in this Valley dates back to 1762 and the Cachar district was formally annexed by them in 1832. Captain Thomas Fisher was the first Superintendent of this District. It was his contribution that Silchar was made the headquarter in 1833. In the year 1854, the N.C Hills, Hailakandi and Cachar district came under the British Rule. In the year 1874, Cachar became a part of Assam and later Silchar became the sub-division.

After Independence a part of Sylhet district was transferred to Cachar in the form of Karimganj sub-division. N.C Hills was separated in the year 1950. Later Karimganj and Hailakandi were made Districts under the Government of Assam notification.

**Economy**

The total percentage of main workers male is 41.85 and female is 7.52. And the percentage of workers male is 49.76 and female is 13.57 and interestingly the percentage of non-workers is 50.24 (males) and 86.43 (females). (Census report 2001). Tea, rice, timber, bamboo, cane, stone, sand, natural gas etc are the major products of the region.

**People and Society**

People are religious and half of the populations are Hindu and rests are Muslim, Christian, Buddhists, Sikhs, and Jains etc. The languages spoken in this part of Assam is Bengali, especially Sylethi. Other languages spoken are Hindi, Manipuri, etc. Durga Puja is the main festival of this region which is celebrated in the month of October.

**Literacy**

It has a literacy rate of 80.36% of which male comprise of 85.85 % and female 74.62%. It has one each, Central University, Assam University which is the only centre for higher education, engineering college (National Institute of Technology), Silchar Medical College, Law college, Polytechnic, Two Industrial Training Institute, three B.Ed College, four Veterinary Hospital, sixteen general colleges, twenty eight higher secondary schools and seventy five high schools.

**Mass Media**

The Sentinel, Samayik Prasanga, Dainik Jugasankha, Sonar Chachar, Prantajyoti, Dainik Janakanta, DDK Silchar, All India Radio, Silchar etc.
SILCHAR

Geography and Location

Silchar is located in the southern part of Assam. Silchar is connected by road, rail and air communication to the rest of the country including northeastern states of Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura. State transport buses and private buses are also easily available. The Assam Bengal Railway brought Silchar into the railway map in 1899. Silchar is connected through meter gauge railway network with Lumding. The railway station of Silchar is located in Tarapur. The regular flights connect Silchar with Guwahati, Kolkata, Agartala, Imphal etc. The Kumbhirgram Airport is located at a distance of about 29 kms. from Silchar.

Population

Total population of Silchar is 1, 43,003. Male population constitutes of 51% and females 49%. (2001, census report).

Administrative setup

In Silchar Municipal Board, there are 28 wards. In each ward, a commissioner is elected directly. In the Municipality Board, all the commissioners elect one Chair-person and one Vice- chairperson. Ms. Susmita Deb is the present Chair-person of the Silchar Municipal Board.

History

Before and after independence, the undivided Cachar was under the control of Cachari Raja. At time Silchar was a small village. During the ruin of the last Cachar king Raja Gobinda Chandra, Cachar came under the control of British rule. At that time Silchar was established as the headquarter in 1832. Silchar town was established at the command of Captain Thomas Fisher, the first superintendent of Cachar after the British annexation during 1833. Slowly many offices like court, jail, educational institutions were set up.

Economy

There are no heavy industries in Silchar town, but there are about 61 registered small and medium size industries like, small-scale candle, Hume pipe, Dalmut, Match stick, flour mill and Brick industries. It also has some Tea estates. Tea, oil, bamboo, cane, rice and natural gas are other produce with are the major contributors to Silchar’s economy.

People and society
Silchar was referred as the “Island of peace” by former Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi. Most of the people in Silchar speak Sylheti a dialect of the Bengali. The staple food of Silchar is rice. People in this part do feast on fish which is also locally available in the Barak River. Shutki Torkari, Shidal Chutney, Chunga-peetha are some of the local dishes.

**Literacy**

Silchar has one of the best educational institutes in Northeast India. It has a literacy rate of 79% higher than the national average of 59.5%. Male literacy is 83% and female literacy is 76% according to census 2001. There are number of reputed primary schools, higher secondary schools and colleges like Guru Charan College, Cachar College, Ramanuj Gupta College and Radhamadav College. Silchar has a Polytechnic, a National Institute of Technology, and a Medical college including a Cancer hospital. Assam University, Silchar was established in 1994 by an act of Parliament of 1989 (Act no. XIII). The University came into existence on 15\(^{th}\) of January 1994 through a notification of the Govt. of India. It is a teaching cum affiliating university. All the colleges of five districts of South Assam-Cachar, Karimganj, Hailakandi, North Cachar Hills and Karbi Anglong stand are affiliated to Assam University. Silchar also has law colleges, B.Ed. Colleges and an Industrial Training Institute.

**Media**

**News Papers and Magazines:** Some of the Bengali Daily Newspapers are Samayik Prasanga, Dainik Jugasantha, Dainik Prantajyoti, Dainik Sonar Cachar etc. There is only one English Daily Newspaper-‘The Frontier Sun’ published from Silchar and a Monthly Magazine ‘Bazaar View’.

**Television:** Doordarshan Kendra Silchar is located at Malinibil, Tarapur. It started telecasting locally produced programme from 30\(^{th}\) April 1993. The programme was for half an hour. In 3\(^{rd}\) September 1995, the duration of the programme extended to 1 hour and the timing was from 6 P.M. to 7 P.M. The DDK Silchar started telecasting commercials from 30\(^{th}\) October 2008.

News bulletin in Bengali was started in the year 1991. This bulletin initially was for 5 minutes and was telecasted once a week (Monday). Later the news bulletin was extended to days i.e. Monday and Thursday for 10 minutes duration with effect from 1\(^{st}\) October 2003. At present DDK Silchar also telecast live sports coverage of cricket and football, phone-in programmes, coverage of general election, assembly election,
municipal and panchayat election and also live budget analysis. Besides some local private
cable television channels are operating in Silchar. These channels like BTN (Barak
Television Network), telecasts local news in English and Bengali.

**Radio:** All India Radio Silchar was established on 11th August 1972. It has the transmitter
power of 20 KW and frequency of 828 khz. The programmes are broadcasted in Bengali,
Manipuri and Dimasa. Its primary coverage area is 5540 sq.kms and secondary is 6940 sq.
kms. It has one talk studio, one music studio and one playback studio. It is the only radio
station in Silchar. It broadcast daily news bulletin in Hindi and Bengali. Sanskrit news
bulletin is broadcasted once a week. The programmes are broadcasted in Bengali, Manipuri
and Dimasa languages respectively. Some of the programs are Amritbani, Khete khamare,
Lokogeeti, Nazrul geet, Rabindra sangeet etc. It has a special women program called
‘Mahila Mazlish’ broadcasted twice a week. The latest annual revenue of the last financial
year 2009 is approximately 12 lakhs.