CHAPTER-1

Introduction
Education is a means to develop hidden potentialities of an individual in social context. Educated man is supposed to behave properly with others and endeavour towards the establishment of peace in individual, social and global life. Right or wrong can easily be distinguished by an educated man and he can adjust himself with the changing conditions of the time. Education preserves the basic values and transmits them to the next generation. It helps in the acquisition of wisdom and because of its uncounted qualities, all religions have placed it in the highest cadre of life. Without education, a man can easily become a victim of his surroundings which influence his habits, behaviours, feelings, traditions and modes of living.

The acquisition of knowledge and learning is considered as an act of religious merit in Islam. It provided an open educational system since 7th century A.D. Religion, caste, creed, gender and age remain no bar for the acquisition of knowledge. Islam attaches too much importance to education. The Prophet (SAW) gave it the highest place. He said, “Learn your duties and teach men their duties,”\(^1\). He also remarked that “Who so goes forth in search of knowledge, engages himself in the cause of God until he returns

\(^1\)
Hundreds of the teachings of Prophet (SAW) say about the good qualities that it showers on its acquirers.

When Islam spread over Asia and Europe, it produced scholars of repute, who undertook the translation of classics from Hebrew, Greek, and Sanskrit into Arabic and, thus, sprang vast Arabic literature. Later on, Baghdad, Cairo and Cordova emerged as great centers of learning. The Spanish Universities and its scholars like Ibn Rushd, Ibn Tufail, Ibn Bajjah and others rendered Greek classics into Arabic and these found a place in European countries. As a result of the abundance of Arabic translations of the Greek classics, universities were established in many of the European countries. Arab sciences continued to inspire European scholarship till the 17th century in subjects like mathematics, astronomy, mechanics, chemistry and medicine. The name logarithmic table is a reminder of the debts Western Sciences owes to Al-Khwarizmi.

With the advent of Islam in India, the Muslims brought here the Islamic system of education. In this system, the mosques occupied the central position which imparted knowledge since the time of the Prophet (SAW). With the expansion of Islam, mosques were built all over the conquered countries. It was a place where
prayers were offered and lessons of Islamic scriptures taught to the adherents of the Prophet (SAW). Madrasas of the present type did not come into being until 350 AH (9th Century). Madrasa is an institution of Islamic education where Islamic sciences, including literary and philosophical ones, are taught. A madrasa literally a place of learning, was an educational institute, where the traditional Islamic subjects were taught. "Madrasa in Muslim countries are institutions of higher learning. The madrasa functioned until the 20th century as a theological seminary and law school, with a curriculum centered on the Quran. In addition to Islamic theology and law, Arabic grammar and literature, mathematics, logic, and, in some cases, natural sciences were studied in madrasas. Tuition was free, and, food lodging, and medical care were provided as well". The basic purpose of madrasa education is to develop the morality and values among the children. It is also aimed at making the children obedient towards the principles of Islam. Through Islamic teachings, the children will also be able to be conscious about their social responsibilities. Encyclopaedia Britannica describes madrasa as an institution for religious training, set up independently of the mosques. It is known from texts that such privately endowed schools existed in the
North-Eastern Iranian world as early as in the 9th century, but no description exists of how they were planned or looked after. Thereafter, a number of madrasas were established in Baghdad, Cairo and Nisapur, the prominent being the Nizamia, Mustansiria, Al-Azhar, Dar-ul-Hikmat, Madrasa-i-Abu Ali al Hussain of Nisapur. There was no university or college, but madrasas were the highest seat of learning. Not only theological subjects were taught in them, but subjects like medicine, philosophy and applied sciences were also taught. Perfect rapport between the teachers and the taught was maintained. Periods of teaching and number of holidays were not fixed. It depended on the discretion of the teachers. Apart from teaching and instructions, there was also group discussions on relevant topics. Great attention was paid on the moulding the character of students.  

These madrasas produced young men well versed in Islamic theology and assisted in the recruitment of the posts of Quazi, Mufti and men of state-affairs.

Institutions of madrasa education were of two types: maktab or elementary school and madrasa or institution of higher learning. Madrasas were the apex of this system of education and controlled by the state. The maktabs and the madrasas concentrated on the
study of Quran, Hadith (sayings of the Prophet of Islam), Tafsir (commentary), Fiqh (jurisprudence) and Kalam (Muslim scholasticism). Subjects like philosophy, ethics, politics, mathematics, grammar and later on medicine and agriculture were studied. The aim of education was much dominated by theological consideration. Aristocratic families engaged moulvies (religious teachers) for their children. Apart from this, there was a state system of education in which a trusted and experienced man was appointed to supervise the Department of Education and was called Shaikh-ul-Islam, who arranged regular supply of best scholars to the state. Sultan Alauddin khilji (1290-1320), Feeroz Tughlaq (1351-1385) and Sikandar Lodhi (1489-1517) founded hundreds of madrasas all over India and patronized education. Mir Hassan, Amir Khusro, Kamaluddin Zahid, Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi and Maulana Shamsuddin were the most distinguished scholars who helped the dissemination of education. Madrasas were granted lands to meet the requirements. Education was free and students were provided free books and free boarding and lodging. Selected madrasas imparted post-graduate instruction and a number of towns – Agra, Badaun, Bidar, Gulbarga, Delhi, Jaunpur and a few
others developed into centers of Islamic education to which students flocked for study under renowned scholars.

The Mughals succeeded the Sultans of Delhi and known today for their magnificence in all spheres of life. They also were the great patrons of learning. They established some important madrasas and provided their fullest support to the development of public education. Babar (1526-1530), Humayun (1530-1540 and 1555-1556), Akbar (1556-1605), Jahangir (1605-1627), Sahajahan (1627-1658) and Aurangzeb (1658-1707) left no stone unturned to develop fruitful education. The well known Dars-e-Nizamia syllabi for madrasa education and the Fatawa-i-Alamgiri which is popularly known as Fatawa-i-Hind are the two important developments taken place during the Mughals.

Towards the closing years of the Mughals, many European powers competed in India for political supremacy, in which, the British emerged victorious. As they captured India, they started to interfere in every field. Along with the political interference, they interfered in the field of education too. Gradually, they took interest in the Madrasa education. Warren Hastings founded the Calcutta Madrasa in 1781. This was the starting point of British interference to the Madrasa Education. Consequently, madrasas
had to pass through various stages of ups and downs. Gradually, the Madrasa Education system spread all over India.

Since dealing with madrasa education throughout India is a very comprehensive and stupendous task, the present researcher has humbly tried to concentrate on a limited and more manageable area of one of the provinces of India, i.e., Assam.

The State of Assam:

Assam is one of the North-Eastern states of India. Its capital is Dispur, a suburb of Gauhati city in Kamrup district. It comprises of the Brahmaputra river valley, the Barak river valley, the Karbi Anglong Hills and the North Cachar Hills with an area of 78,438 square kilometers. Assam is connected to the rest of India by a narrow strip in West Bengal popularly known as the “Chickens Neck”. It also shares international borders with Bhutan and Bangladesh. Assam is consisting of twenty seven (27) districts. Map showing the districts in Assam is given on the next page.
Districts of Assam:

Assam comprises of 30.9% of Muslim population. According to the National Census of 2001, the Muslim population is 82,40,611 out of a total population of 2,66,55,528. The rate of growth of Muslim population is highest precisely in those districts of Assam that share a border with Bangladesh.

The entrance of Muslims in Assam can be traced back from the 12th century onwards. Muslim population consolidated during the British period. The Muslims of Assam can be divided into three categories on the basis of its origin. They are:

i) Goria and contemporary Muslims;

ii) Assamese or local converted Muslims;

iii) Mia or Bengali origin Muslims.

On the basis of mother tongue, the entire Muslim community in Assam can be divided into two as given below:

i) Assamese speaking Muslims;

ii) Bengali speaking Muslims.

Assam is divided into two regions on the basis of two major rivers. One of them is the Brahmaputra Valley Region and the other is the Barak Valley Region. These regions are known after the name
of rivers Brahmaputra and Barak respectively. The area of research in this study is the Barak Valley Region.

**Barak Valley:**

"Barak Valley is named after a river Barak which flows through this region of Assam. This Valley is situated in the Southern part of Assam. It consists of three districts namely, Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi. The spoken language of this valley is a dialect of Bengali, popularly known as Sylleti Bangla. Among these three districts, Muslims are in majority in two districts, Karimganj and Hailakandi. There are 57% of Muslims in the Hailakandi district and 53% Muslims in the Karimganj district." A map showing the location of Barak Valley is given on the next page.
Map Showing the Location of Barak Valley.
Madrasa Education in Assam:

Bakhtiyar Khilji had been the first ruler to set up various madrasas at his newly established city called Rangpur (now in Bangladesh). The Muslim rulers of Bengal and Assam continued patronizing maktabs for primary education and madrasas for higher education.\(^\text{13}\)

The Muslim chiefs, landlords, and ulema maintained maktabs and madrasas of their own for the purpose of promotion of Islamic education. The madrasas gave emphasis on the teaching of the Quran, the Tafsir and the Hadith. Arabic and Persian languages were also taught in those madrasas of Bengal and Assam.

The Madrasa Education in India underwent significant changes brought about by the British Government with the establishment of “Calcutta Alia Madrasa”. This madrasa for the first time followed the Dars-e-Nizamiya system of Islamic Education which was framed and introduced by Mullah Nizamuddin (1089-1161 A.H.). Almost all the madrasas in Assam were brought under the jurisdiction of this system.

The partition of Bengal in 1905 resulted in the creation of some separate provinces like Bihar, Orissa and Assam, which owned their respective madrasa Boards for conducting and
controlling madrasa examinations under their own jurisdiction. The madrasas lying under the jurisdiction of the newly created provinces of East Bengal and Assam followed the syllabi of Calcutta Alia Madrasa and the students appeared in the Central Madrasa Examination Board, Dhaka, owing to its being the capital of Assam. It played an important role in the spread of madrasa education in East Bengal and Assam till 1912 A.D.  

The educated Muslims of East Bengal and Assam, who were in favour of English education, prepared a new curriculum for madrasas on modern lines. This new modified scheme was reluctantly approved by Mr. Sharp, the then Director of Public Instruction who brought forth the scheme in force in some selected madrasas only.

Mr. Sharp was succeeded by Mr. Notojn who did not approve the curriculum approved by Mr. Sharp. To overcome this problem, a conference was organized in 1912 A.D. to prepare more useful syllabi for madrasas of East Bengal and Assam.

Sylhet displayed a significant role in madrasa education of Assam. All the madrasas of Assam followed the syllabi of Sylhet Madrasa. Gradually, Baskandi, Badarpur (both in Barak Valley), Jaleswar (now in Goalpara district), Hojai (now in Nagaon district),
Dhubri and Sibsagar became the distinguished seats of madrasa education in Assam. Various maktabs and madrasas under the patronage of some sufi saints, ulema, Muslim leaders and state Government sprang up to illuminate the minds of people with Islamic education in different districts of Assam.\textsuperscript{15}

All these aforesaid madrasas were not only set up by the state Government but also by some sufi saints and ulema who made inroad to Assam from Baghdad, Iran, Delhi, West Bengal, East Bengal, Bihar and other provinces of India. They took keen interest in establishing different types of madrasas with the aim of spreading Islamic education so as to enable the local people to understand the meanings and message of the Holy Quran and Hadith.

In discussing the maktabs and madrasas of Assam categorically, it has been observed that, from time immemorial, thousands of maktabs were attached with the mosques. These maktabs undertook, specially the teaching of the Quran. In some of those maktabs, apart from the teaching of Quran, teaching of Arabic, Persian and Urdu, was also done for getting themselves admitted in the madrasa for higher education.
It is to be noted here that hundreds of individual maktabs as well as maktabs attached to mosques were run without having any common syllabi and curriculum in Assam. It is only after 1986, that the Assam Rajyik Deeni Sikhya Board and the Nadwatut-Tamir have endeavoured to bring to light certain syllabi for Sabahi Maktabs of Assam. But these Boards have not yet been able to bring forth all kinds of maktabs under their jurisdictions and hence, they are being run individually depending on the public donations only.16

Two types of madrasas are found to have illuminated the light of learning of Islamic as well as secular education in various corners of Assam:

A. Non-Government Madrasas (Khariji Madrasas)

B. Government Madrasas. These are categorized into four viz; Pre-Senior Madrasa, Senior Madrasa, Title Madrasa and Arabic College.

(A) Non-Government (Khariji) Madrasa:

Changes have been brought in madrasa education right from the beginning of this system of education. The mode of education and financial pattern led to categorize the madrasa education system. Khariji madrasa is one of them. These
types of madrasas were set up in the second half of the 19th century. These madrasas are mainly run with the donations from the Muslims. The graduates who come out of these madrasas work as teachers in such madrasas or work as Imams of mosques. They do not have any definite scale of pay. They are paid very low amount as salaries.

In Assam, the Khariji madrasas are run specially under the All Assam Tanzeem Madaris Qawmiya, a Non-Government organization, established in 1955, at Nagaon. Some madrasas are also run under another Non-Government organization, known as the Azad Deeni Shiksha Board, established in 1937, at Hailakandi district of Barak Valley. These madrasas do not get any financial help from the Government.

(B) Government Madrasas:

Four types of madrasas are run under Government undertaking such as the Pre-Senior Madrasa, Senior Madrasa, Title Madrasa and Arabic College. The Pre-Senior Madrasas are the feeder institutions for the Senior Madrasas. It imparts basic Islamic education for three years. The Senior Madrasas are those awarding the Fazil-e-Maarif (F.M.) degree to the students after completing its course duration of 10 (ten) years.
The Title Madrasas are those having 2 (two) years of higher study after completion of Senior Madrasa course. It is awarding the degree of Mumtazul Muhaddithin (M.M.) to the students.

The Arabic Colleges are those madrasas which run both the courses of Senior Madrasa and the Title Madrasa under their single administration. These madrasas are awarding both the Fazil-e-Maarif (F.M.) and Mumtazul Muhaddithin (M.M) degrees. Their course duration is of 12 (twelve) years.

It appeared from the general survey up to 1903 that, all the madrasas of Assam were under Dars-e-Nizamiya system which was followed by the Calcutta Alia Madrasa. The Muslim religious scholars identified the merits and demerits of syllabi of the then madrasas and it was resolved that, two fold system be followed after a certain stage of madrasa education. One system comprised of Arabic, Urdu and Persian and the other Arabic, Persian and English along with mother tongue. So, the present Senior madrasas, Title madrasas and the Arabic Colleges of Assam may rightly be said to be originated in 1903. In these madrasas, some secular subjects like History, Geography, games and sports were introduced in the syllabi. The medium of instruction of these madrasas was either Arabic or Urdu along with mother tongue.
The pattern of Senior and Title madrasa, following the syllabi of Calcutta Alia Madrasa continued till 1930. In the same year, the syllabi were revised that continued up to 1955. The next revision of the syllabi took place in 1979, which is continuing till date. The present madrasa education syllabi aims at making the madrasa education more need based than before and provides better employment opportunities. The present syllabi include English, Assamese, Bengali, Hindi, Social Studies, General Mathematics, Science etc. besides Arabic, Urdu and other Islamic subjects.

The Pre-Senior Madrasas, Senior madrasas, Title Madrasas and the Arabic colleges are set up all over Assam and are run under State Madrasa Education Board, Assam. Some of these have been taken over by the Government of Assam.

Singaria Senior Madrasa at Nagaon district was the first Senior madrasa established in Assam by Syed Azizul Haque in 1926 and Badarpur Title Madrasa at Badarpur in Karimganj district in Barak Valley was the first Title madrasa established in 1939 by Maulana Hatim Ali.

Madrasa education contributes much towards the language, literature and culture of the people of Assam and shall always provide a supplementary stream of education.
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The title of the problem is:

“Development of Madrasa Education in Assam Since Independence With Special Reference to Barak Valley Region.”

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The following are the main objectives of the present study:

1. To study the development of Madrasa System of Education in Assam in historical perspective with special reference to Barak Valley Region;

2. To study the contribution of Government and Private Enterprises towards the development of Madrasa System of Education in Assam, specially in Barak Valley Region;

3. To study the present scenario of the madrasas in Barak Valley Region keeping in view their different aspects;

4. To study the institutional and non-institutional problems related to the madrasa system in Assam, specially those located in Barak Valley Region.
JUSTIFICATION OF THE SELECTION OF THE PROBLEM:

In recent years, specially after independence, the question of Muslim education in India has been given a fresh impetus and there is a growing desire among educated people to know more about Madrasa system of education. Increasing complexities of the society compel the system of education to equip itself to make the younger generation more efficient and competitive.

The investigator of the present study went through different research studies in the area of Madrasa Education. He consulted a number of books, journals, encyclopaedias and educational surveys related to madrasa education specially about Barak Valley Region. He found that there is a dearth of researches in the field of madrasa education. However, he could find out some related studies which are mentioned here.

Fathima, Bilquis (1984) “The Role of Private Enterprise in Education with Special Reference to Muslim Educational Organizations in Karnataka- A Historical Survey". studied seven organizations which are spread all over the state of Karnataka in order to find out the extent to which the administration of education at the hands of Muslims had become secular and democratic. Ahmed, M.A. (1985), in his work, “Placement of Education of Minorities in Secular India and its Role in National Integration with Special Reference to Muslims in India”.

Khan, M.S., (1987) “An Analytical Study of Traditional Muslim System of Education and its Relevance in the Modern Indian Context”, made a study to delineate the meaning, aim, objectives, and educational ideas etc. of Traditional Muslim Education to find out the development of modernization of Traditional Muslim Education. It was also aimed to study the relevance of Traditional Muslim Education in modern Indian context. Alam, Zafar, (1991), studied, “The Islamic Concept of Education in Light of its Concept of Man and Society”. Ahmed, Samiruddin (1992) studied the “Educational Progress of Muslims in Assam”. Khan, Ghaznafar Ali, (2001), studied on “Nadvat-al-Ulama- A Centre of Islamic
The major objective of the study was to find out the factors responsible for the establishment of the Nadvat-al-Ulama. Ahmad, Mohd. Hanif, (2002), studied in detail about "The Secular Content of the Prominent Madrasas of U.P."^{27}, with the major objective of analyzing madrasa education as a parallel system of education. Hussain, S. M. Azizuddin, (2005), in his work, "Madrasa Education in India: Eleventh to Twenty-first Century",^{28} studied the system of madrasa education between 11\textsuperscript{th} to 21\textsuperscript{st} century. Thobani, Shiraz, in his article, "The Dilemma of Islam as School Knowledge in Muslim Education",^{29} studied the political and epistemological implications of the integrative and disciplinary modes of pedagogic Islam pertaining to contrasting Muslim contexts where tensions between state education and madrasa education have given rise to potential discourses on the curriculum in post-colonial period.

Earlier there was hardly any effort made to conduct any research work of Ph.D. level in Assam in this field. The investigator feels that, the study about the history of madrasa education in Assam, contributions made by different organizations towards the development of madrasa system of education in Assam, the
problems related to the madrasas located in Assam, specially those located in the Barak Valley Region and their present scenario related to their infrastructural facilities, educational programmes, financial pattern etc., will be of much help towards the effort of studying about the development of madrasas as per the modern needs and can also be instrumental in popularizing the modern education among Muslims. This justifies the selection of the topic of research.

**SOURCES OF DATA:**

The following sources of data have been used in the present study:

- the books on Madrasa Education by eminent scholars;
- reputed research journals and Ph.D. theses;
- encyclopaedias of education and Islam;
- questionnaire used for collection of data from madrasa;
- interviews with the experts in the field of Madrasa Education.

**METHODOLOGY OF STUDY**

A questionnaire was prepared to collect as much data as possible on educational programmes, infrastructural facilities, financial pattern, curriculum and the methodology of teaching in
the madrasa system of education in Assam with special reference to Barak Valley Region.

The respondents of the questionnaire were individuals in the field of madrasa education as well as the principals, the teachers, and the secretaries and members of the Governing Body of the Madrasa institution.

The data was collected from 167 respondents. Among them 126 questionnaires have been found to be complete. 41 respondents have given incomplete information and hence, they have been rejected. The data was collected by the researcher himself so as to get the accurate information. In some cases, the researcher had to explain the items in the questionnaire to the respondents. After collecting the data, it was tabulated, analyzed and interpreted. The tabulation of the data was in accordance with the various aspects of the madrasa education. The data tables contain the description of each aspects carried in the study for each of the institution sampled for study, for example, year of establishment, infrastructural facilities, curriculum, description of staff, etc. The copy of questionnaire is given in appendix-I.

Apart from the collection of data, through questionnaire, the researcher also had interviews with eminent persons and scholars.
in the field of madrasa education and incorporated their opinions in the interpretation of the data. A list of interviewees is enclosed in appendix-II.

**DELIMITATIONS:**

1. The materials regarding Madrasa Education are mainly available in Arabic, Persian and Urdu. But the researcher also consulted the materials available in English and Assamese languages.

2. The investigator took up all the important madrasas in the Barak Valley Region for the collection of data and ignored the insignificant very small maktabs and madrasas.
REFERENCES

1. Refer to Abu Hurairah: Tirmidhiy Shareef (a book of Hadith);

2. Refer to Anas: Tirmidhiy Shareef and Abu Daud Shareef (books of Hadith);


5. Ibid, P. XVIII.


7. Muhammad, Shan, op. cit., p. XVIII.

8. Ibid, P. XVIII.


17. State Madrasa Education Board, Assam, “Re-organised Senior Madrasa Curriculum, Courses and Studies, Gauhati, 1979, p. 5.


thesis), *Department of Education, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh*.


