CHAPTER – III

HISTORY
OF
MADRASA EDUCATION
IN ASSAM
The history of Madrasa Education is as old as the advent of Islam. Mohammad (SAW), the Prophet of Islam himself being an Ummi (unlettered), found his people groping in darkness of ignorance. The first revelation revealed on him was regarding 'Iqra', which means read. By the grace of God Almighty, the Prophet (SAW) started reading. After receiving the first revelation, the Prophet (SAW) started teaching of revelation, informally, to the people. Later on, 'the teaching of Islam was started at Darul-Arquam' in Macca near the Safa Mountain, where, the Muslims were imparted the basic knowledge of Islam'.1 After migrating to Madina, he imparted education to Muslims at Suffa which was a raised platform attached to Masjid-e-Nabvi. This may be treated as the first residential educational institution in Islam. Besides this, he also established various madrasas in Madina attached to various mosques'.2

At that time, there were a few other insignificant educational institutions in Arabia run principally by the Christians and Jews. A new era of total awareness started when Prophet (SAW) pioneered restructuring the society on the basis of Islamic faith and principles. The consequence was that in 632A.D., when he left the world, from the Northern border of the Arabia i.e., Syria to Yemen
and from the shore of the Red Sea in the West to the shore of the Arabian Sea in the East, a vast network of the mosque-cum-madrasa were spread where Arabic language, elements of Philosophy and other sciences, side by side the Quran and the laws it brought for the transformation of the old ways of the life into a new all pervading order of life, was taught.3 Everywhere there were Kuttabs, Darul Qurra etc. besides the famous "Suffa", which was the model of dedication, sincerity and sacrifice for knowledge. Among them, the 'Mosque of Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique(RA), the first Caliph, Bait-e-Fatima-Bint-e-Khabbab, the Mosque of Bani Zuraique, Quba Mosque etc. were notable'.4 'About the Mosque of Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique (RA), it is known that this was an open place where he used to offer his daily prayers and recite the Holy Quran'.5 The Mosque of Bani Zuraique was situated in the center of Madina. Besides offering prayers, people used to get education there. 'Hazrat Raafe Bin Malik Zuraique, who was from Bani Zuraique, a branch of Khazraj tribe, was its teacher'.6 'After migrating from Macca to Madina, many people resided in Quba. Here they engaged themselves into learning in Quba Mosque'.7

The education was also given at the house of Hazrat As'ad Bin Zurarah by 'Hazrat Musab Bin Umair, where the students
came from a nearby place named Naqeeul Khadhamat. He, at the request of the residents of Aus and Khzraj tribes, was invited to Madina to teach the Holy Quran and other sciences'.

The Prophet (SAW) introduced a system of educational administration, where, teaching-learning process was going on in a regular and systematic way. It is a well-known fact of history that the services of the non-Muslims were also taken for educating the Muslims as we find in the case of the prisoners of the battle of Al-Badr. Not only men but women also got full attention of the Prophet (SAW) in respect of education. There was the scope for specialization in certain subjects and some of the distinguished personalities from among the disciples of the Prophet (SAW) excelled in such subjects'. Some of the areas of specialization were the Islamic law, commentary on the Holy Quran, sayings of the Prophet of Islam, memorization of the Holy Quran and recording of the revelations.

The above historical facts about education system during the period of Holy Prophet, clearly indicates the mode of education in Islam. The Prophet's (SAW) companions and the general public of Arabia were competent enough to learn and practice the teachings of Islam. In the subsequent years, when the domain of Islam
expanded far and wide in the three continents of Asia, Africa and Europe, the quest for knowledge increased. They became the torch-bearers of learning for the whole world. They dispelled the darkness in the West as well as in the Arabia itself and illuminated it with the knowledge of Islamic sciences. 'New institutions were built up and they made a reformation in the existing institutions wherever it was feasible'.

Some extraordinary learned men in different branches became so much well known that students from far and wide came to them to benefit from their high quality of knowledge.

Madrasa Education in the Later Islamic Period:

The later part of the Islamic period shows the consolidation of Islamic empire, specially, during the Umayyad period. Muslims started thinking in divergent manner. In this period, the first attempt was made towards formalizing the age old non-formal system of education. 'Elementary education established formally in this Umayyad period'. Mosques, shops and houses were used as elementary schools. Elements of arithmetic other than important religious percepts were also taught.

The Abbasid period showed advancement in the Muslim culture and civilization. 'It is the period of the greatest intellectual advancement. It is the period when the Arabs came in touch with
the Indian sciences like mathematics, medicine and astronomy\textsuperscript{12}. Besides elementary education, efforts were also made towards the development of higher education. The teachers of the Madrasas were of high status and were respected in the society\textsuperscript{13}. The first institution for higher education was "Bayt-al-Hikmat", established in 830 A.D. by Al-Mamun\textsuperscript{14}. Later on, a number of other institutions came into existence.

Thus, education to the Muslims did not have any sharp division between religious and secular education. The ‘educational institutions like Jamia Nizamia and Madrasa Mustansariyah of Baghdad, Universities of Qarawain of North Africa, Corodova, Granada of Spain, Al-Azhar of Cairo were imparting religious and secular education both\textsuperscript{15}. These institutions produced great Islamic scholars like Al Ghazali (d.1111)\textsuperscript{1}, Al Beruni, Ibn-al-Heithen, and many others who made significant contributions in the field of Islamic knowledge, science, mathematics and philosophy etc.\textsuperscript{1}.

\textsuperscript{1} Al-Gazali formulated the new system of Islamic education by reviving purely Islamic sciences and curbing the heretical ideas of Muslim philosophers. He promoted Sunni doctrines. Ghazzali himself served as a teacher in the madrasas of Baghdad and Nisabur.
From the period of Khulafa-e-Rashidin*, the teachings of Islam started to spread all over the world. It is said that it was Khalifa Motasim Billah (died in 289 hijri) who built a magnificent building for philosophers. The building also consisted of numerous rooms for students of different sciences and arts. Qazi Athar Mubarakpuri mentions of two sisters from Maghrib-e-Aqsa who built the first two Jamias in Islamic history. Ummul Baneen Fatima, daughter of Mohammad Bin Abdullah Al Fari established Jamia Qarween in 245 Hijri. Other sister Hazrat Maryam, established another Jamia named Jami’ul Undlus’.

So far as the present type of madrasas are concerned, Quazi Athar Mubarakpuri says that ‘the credit of establishing first Madrasa in Islamic history goes to the people of Nishapur. They built Madrasa-e-Baihaqiyyah in the fourth century of Hijrat’. Though some people say that it was Nizamul Mulk Tusi (died in 485) who founded the first madrasa. But it is not the fact as according to Imam Tajuddin Subki, there were already several madrasas before Nizamul Mulk was even born. In Nishapur, atleast four madrasas, namely, Madrasa-e-Baihaqiyyah, Madrasa

* Khulafa-e-Rashidin were the four Calips who took the charge after the death of the Prophet of Islam(S) They were Hazrat Abu Bakr Sidique(RA), Hazrat Umar Farook(RA), Hazrat Usman Ghan(RA), and Hazrat Ali Karamuallahu(RA)
Sadiyyah, Madrasa Abu Hafs, Madrasa Shawafa etc. were there. The Caliphs started to spread the teaching of Islam in different parts of Asia, Europe and Africa. They made Iran the centre of learning and research. Gradually, from Iran the educational flow transferred to India. The Muslims became conscious of learning and spreading the teachings of Islam.

The great historian A.J. Toynbee, in his study “A Study of History”, by observing 26 civilizations for the last 600 years, said that, “the importance of knowledge is great in Islam”. He justified it by saying that when the whole of Europe was lying in the darkness of ignorance, it was the Arabia, which enlightened them.

In India, the Muslim Rule started from the 12th century and continued up to 19th century. During this period, several madrasas were established in various parts of India.

**Madrasa Education in India:**

The history of Madrasa Education in India is being discussed under the following headings:

a) Madrasa Education during Sultanate Period;

b) Madrasa Education during Mughals;
c) Madrasa Education in Assam.

**Madrasa Education During Sultanate Period:**

The Sultanate period was an important period in the history of Madrasa Education in India. Sahabuddin Mohammad Ghori (1203-1206) was the first Sultan. He, along with other developments made a great contribution in spreading education. He established a madrasa at Ajmir for spreading of Islamic culture and erudition.\(^{20}\) In a historical document, "Tajul Masir", mention is made of Mohammad Ghori establishing madrasas at Ajmir.\(^{21}\) He was the first Muslim king of India who established some schools and seminaries at Ajmir for Muslim Education.\(^{22}\) Qutub-ud-Din Aibak (1206-1210) established several mosques in which secular learning went hand in hand with religious instruction.\(^{23}\) After him Sultan Altatmush (1210-1236) established madrasas one each at Badaun and Delhi.\(^{24}\) He established a "madrasa Moazia" which was rebuilt and furnished with sandal wood doors.\(^{25}\)

Another Sultan Nasir Uddin Mahmood (1246-1266) also contributed to madrasas. His minister Balban (1266-1287) established Madrasa-e-Nasiria after his name.\(^{26}\)
'Alauddin Khilji (1290-1320) established the Madrasa Maqbara-i-Alauddin Khilji at Delhi in 1317 and made arrangement for water by making a well "Hauz-I-Khas" near the madrasa'.

Another Sultan, Sultan Firoz Tughlaq (1351-1388) attempted very much for the spreading of education. He collected great scholars like 'Zia Uddin Barni, Maulana Jalal Uddin Rumi, Quazi Abdul Qadir and Azizuddin Khalid Khani in his court who wrote on Theology, Islamic Jurisprudence etc'. He established 30 madrasas in the country. One of them was the "Madrasa-e-Firoz Shahi", in Delhi, on the south bank of the "Hauz-I-Khas". About this madrasa, Al Beruni (actual name, Rehan Muhammad Ibn Ahmed), the famous traveller comments that it was gorgeous like that of the Palace of Quisra (Palace of Persian empire). It was a famous institution where education was free. The teachers' quarters, hostels and rooms for the Imam of the mosques were very luxurious. Carpets brought from Yemen and Damascus were used on the floor of the madrasa. Maulana Jalal Uddin Rumi was the head of the madrasa. Some scholars say that Sayeed Yusuf was the head. 'The teachers used the "Jubbah" of Syria and the "Turban" (pagri) of Misr as uniform'.
Sultan Mohammad Shah (1375-1397) invited several learned men and scholars of reputation to impart education. 'He made arrangement for food for those needy and orphans to educate them free of cost'.\textsuperscript{30} In 1470, his minister, Khwaja Mehmud Ghawan(1463-1481) established one madrasa at Bidar. Along with that he established a great library with more than 30000 books'.\textsuperscript{31}

When Taimur-i-Lang (1382-1405), popularly known as Temur, attacked India, the education system was disturbed to a great extent. But after a few years, when Sikander Lodhi (1489-1517) came, he tried to re-settle the educational system in India. He himself was a great scholar and under his supervision he established a lot of madrasas spreading all over India. According to Abdul Haque, a great Muhaddis, Sikandar Lodhi appointed teachers belonging to Arabia, Persia and Central Asia for the madrasas. He established madrasas at Mathura and Agra also. 'A mention may be made of the Madrasa of Agra where even the non-Muslims learnt Persian Language'.\textsuperscript{32} He established other madrasas at Jaunpur, Ahmedabad, Bihar Sharif, Gulbarga, Bidar, Mand, Daulatabad and various parts of Bengal. Among them great was the Madrasa at Jaunpur. It is known as "Shiraz of India". 'He had seventeen learned men constantly with him in his private
apartment'. The Sultan of Bijapur, Adil Shah (1535-1557), also established many maktabs and madrasas and invited reputed teachers from Persia and Turkey'.

This was, in brief, the contribution of the Sultans to the development of Madrasa Education in India.

**Madrasa Education During The Mughals**

The first Mughal emperor Zaheeruddin Babar (1526-1530), within a very short period of 4 years made the foundation of the Mughal Dynasty strong. Apart from this, he was also interested in the advancement of education. He repaired the old madrasas. His son Humayun (1530-1540 and 1555-1556) himself was a learned man. He employed one very judicious Islamic scholar, Shek Hussain in a madrasa in Delhi'.

Emperor Mohammed Jalaluddin Akbar (1556-1605) popularly known as "Akbar the Great", though himself was an illiterate, took the pains of reforming the traditional education in India. He introduced secular subjects like logic and philosophy, Mathematics, Astronomy, Agriculture and Accountancy. The famous "Ain-e-Akbari", written by Abul Fazl, throws ample light on the efforts made by the emperor in traditional system'. He established madrasas at Agra, Fatehpur Sikri and other places of
India. Hindus along with Muslims also got education there. Mention may be made of Madhu Bhat, Ram Kishan, Basudebh Mishra, Gaurinath etc. Akbar had separate department for translating documents from Persian to other languages as well as from other languages like Greek and Arabic to Persian. He also got translated many Sanskrit documents to Persian language.

After Akbar, his son Jahangir (1605-1627), who was expert in Persian and Turkish languages, instead of establishing new institutions, tried to revive the abandoned madrasas. He ordered that if a rich and wealthy traveller died without any heir, his wealth would be used for the development of the madrasas. From various evidences; it is found that he revived madrasas, which had been non-functional for not less than 30 years. He revived those educational institutions, which were turned to the house of the animals.

After Jahangir (1605-1627), Shahjahan (1627-1658) and Auragzeb (1658-1707) contributed towards the development of Madrasa System of education. A major development in Madrasa Education was the introduction of “Dars-e-Nizamia” during this period. This system was initiated by Mulla Nizamuddin (1089-1161 A.H.) of Sihali, (near Lucknow) in the later part of the 17th century.
AD. Till today, the courses of studies in the madrasas are based on
*Dars-e-Nizamia*. *Dars-e-Nizamia* syllabi was formulated with the
major objective of developing comprehensive ability of other
sciences and arts among the students along with the religious
education. This would enable the students to go to the field of their
own choice. This would enable them to become good alim and mufti
as well as scientists, philosophers and doctors. *'Dars-e-Nizamia
consisted of 40 books of 11 arts',*³⁹ But Mufti Taqui Uthmani
mentions of 72 books of 20 arts. The major arts were:

* Ilm-e-Sarf (the art of derivation);
* Ilm-e-Nahv (the rules of grammar);
* Ilm-e-Mantique (logic);
* Ilm-e-Hikmat and Falsafa (philosophy);
* Ilm-e-Riyadhi (mathematics);
* Ilm-e-Balaghat (the art of using language in an impressive
  way);
* Fiqh (Islamic Law and Jurisprudence);
* Tafsir (exegesis of the Holy Quran);
* Hadith (the sayings of the Prophet (SAW));
* Ilm-e-Aqaid and Kalam (belief and faith, scholastic
  philosophy).
Aurangzeb, specially, issued a directive to give incentive to the students studying different types of books like Mizan, Munshaib, Kashaf and Fiqh. During this period, maktabs and madrasas made remarkable progress. In those madrasas, education was based totally on *Dars-e-Nizamia*. Another major contribution during the time of Aurangzeb was the compilation of the famous document "Fatawa-i-Alamgiri". It has been treated to be the greatest digest of Muslim Law made in India. In other parts of the world, it is popularly known as "Fatawa-i-Hind".

Thus, it is found that during the Mughal reign, there was much advancement and development of Madrasa Education. The system of education was modified and improved in accordance with the needs of the period. The rulers provided all facilities including funds to run the madrasas.

In October 1781, ‘Warren Hastings (1772-1784) established the famous Calcutta Alia Madrasa in response to a petition submitted by Muslims under Maulana Majduddin’. He established it in a place Baithak Khana in Sialdah near Calcutta. During this period, with the request of Lord Warren Hastings, English was introduced along with other subjects. He issued a grant of rupees 225 per month in the preliminary stage. After that
with the permission of British officials from London, he issued a grant of rupees 1200 per month to the madrasa'. With the model of Calcutta Alia Madrasa, another "Madrasa Mohsinia" was started at Hoogly. Within a very short period, this madrasa became very popular.

"Starting from 1826 to 1851 these two madrasas produced about 1787 scholars. But with the increase of the hatred against the Muslims as well as madrasas by the British Government, in 1851 English was abolished from these two madrasas. The consequence was that the source of employing the Muslims to the Government posts was almost stopped. But following the model from these two madrasas, a number of madrasas were established in other parts of India. India, the most advanced country in which Muslims had thrived for a long time also had many important madrasas in Gujrat, Deccan, Delhi, Bihar, Punjab, Sindh and other places, which produced men like Shah Waliullah (1703-1762), Shah Abdul Aziz (1746-1824) and others. Shah Waliullah is known as the last but the most prominent Islamic scholar of the 18th century. He was an outstanding Islamic scholar in the Indian subcontinent. He got his primary education from his father Shah Abdur Rahim, who, himself was a great scholar. He was an expert in Hadith. He completed his
education at Makkah. After return to India, he became a teacher of Hadith. ‘Along with teaching, he wrote about 20 books related to Hadith, Tafsir, Fiqh, History and Ilm-e-kalam. His greatest work was the translation of Holy Quran to Persian’.46 This translation made the Quran easy for the people to comprehend. It is during his time that the teaching of Hadith got prevalence in India. It is only due to his efforts that the teaching of Hadith started in a very systematic manner in India.

‘In 1866, Maulana Quasim Nanautavi (1833-1880) established the great “Darul Ulum” at Deobond in Uttar Pradesh for purely religious education’47. It was established at par with the madrasas of Middle East countries. ‘Again in 1894, the concept of Nadwat-al-Ulema emerged at the convocation of Madrasa Faid Am, Kanpur with an idea to form a system of education which may serve the religious as well as secular purposes. With this aim, Darul Uloom, Nadwat-al-Ulema was established in 1898 at Lucknow’.48

**Madrasa Education In Assam**

In Assam, right from the days of Ikhtiyaruddin Bakhtiyar Khilji, i.e., from 1206-07 A.D., Muslims started settling down there. Along with their settlement, they managed to build up mosques
and madrasas. The historical events reveal that right from the Mughal dynasty, the “Systematic Education” system was thought and its result came out in the establishment of maktabs and madrasas which are continuing till today.49

During the British period, Muslims were encouraged to migrate to Assam. These migrated Muslims had to face a lot of problems such as diseases like Kalazar, Malaria etc. as well as the wild animals in the dense forests. Their contribution towards making the hilly and jungle areas available for habitation is beyond description.50 Thus, gradually, their population increased to a great extent. With the increase in population the number of madrasas also increased. The settlers felt the need of institutions to educate their children. This resulted in the establishment of madrasas at every place where it was needed. Though they were started in an unsystematic manner in the beginning but gradually the process of rectifying the system started to gain importance. In 1934, these madrasas were brought under a single umbrella with the establishment of ‘State Madrasa Education Board, Assam’51 and ‘All Assam Tanzim Madaris Qawmiya’ in 1955.52 These madrasas can be categorized into two types. One is Government Madrasas run by the Government of Assam and the other is non-
Government Madrasas running on public donation by private agencies.

The madrasa education in Assam would be discussed under the two following headings:

a) Government Madrasa;

b) Non-Government (Qaumi/Khariji) Madrasa.

**Government Madrasa**

The British Government felt the need to educate the local youths of Assam so that they can be employed in at least the clerical posts in different offices in Assam. For this a school was needed to be set up to give instruction to the local youths. Different proposals were made and after long discussions, the British Government, with the assistance of General Committee of Public Instruction, recommended the establishment of a school at Gauhati. This resulted in establishment of Gauhati English School. Later on, the name was changed to Gauhati Zilla School. This school was the forerunner of the Department of Mohammedan Education in Assam.\(^5^3\)

Inspired by the Calcutta Alia Madrasa, initially madrasas were started in Assam. Later on, these madrasas came to be known as Junior, Senior and Title madrasas. In the beginning of the 20\(^{th}\)
century, at least a dozen of such madrasas were opened in several parts of Assam and these were running on public donations and support'. To systematize and supervise these madrasas, 'in 1934, State Madrasa Education Board, Assam was established. Its first office was established at the Sylhet Government Madrasa of the undivided India, and its first Secretary was Abu Naseb Mohammad, the Principal of the same madrasa. Later on, the Government shifted its office to Shillong. Again it was shifted twice to Nagaon and reshifted to Shillong. Finally, when Meghalaya was declared a separate state with Shillong its headquarter, in 1973, the Madrasa Board was shifted to Guwahati and is there till date. Sahabuddin Ahmed, Maulana Arzan Ali Mazumder, Sayyed Shamsul Hooda, Sayed Habibul Haque and many others held the post of the secretary who were responsible both for administrative and academic development of the madrasas. During the British period, this Madrasa Board was attached to English Education Board and Secretary of Middle English Board took the extra charge of looking after the Madrasa Board.

‘In 1945, a post of Assistant Inspector was created to look after the madrasa education affairs’. In 1965-66, the then Chief Minister late Bimala Prashad Chaliha and Education Minister late
Debokanta Barua gave deficit grant to 9 such Senior Madrasas. The teachers working in such madrasas were getting salary from the Government. Katariharia Senior Madrasa, Deorail Senior Madrasa, Asimia Senior Madrasa were notable among them. In 1984, the post of Assistant Inspector was upgraded as Deputy Director Madarsa Board.

The madrasas have been awarding the following degree certificates:

(a) Alim, equivalent to intermediate,

(b) Fazil, i.e., Fazil-e-Marif (equivalent to Bachelor's Degree) and

(c) Title, i.e., Mumtazul Muhaddithin (equivalent to Master's Degree).

'Scholars passing out of the Senior Madrasas are awarded Graduate Degree and scholars passing out of the Title Madrasas are awarded the Master’s Degree.'

Here starts the blooming period of Madrasa Education. Madarsas were set up in every corner of Assam and people donated lands for the purpose of establishing madrasas and this was the main reason why maximum madrasas now-a-days are running on donated lands. Apart from donating lands for the madrasas, people also helped financially in the establishment of madrasas. They started sending their children in large numbers, which enhanced
the enrolment of the madrasas. Later on, Government released deficit grant to 65 more Senior Madrasas.

In 1968, these madrasas under the "Old Scheme" were upgraded to cope up with the present time. General subjects like English, Hindi, Mathematics, Social Studies and Science were introduced under the new "Re-organised Madrasa Education Curriculum", due to which in 1977 after passing out Fazil examination, Guwahati and Dibrugarh Universities recognized the Fazil examination equivalent to Metric (High School) examination. This scheme helped the madrasa products to a great extent. Now-a-days they get direct admission to senior secondary school and, thus, they can join the general education system. After passing out of senior secondary school examination, different disciplines of higher education are open to them. Consequently, in these days, the madrasa products are pursuing studies in different disciplines of higher education.

In 1993, the ex Deputy Director, Sayyed Habibul Haque worked hard to bring more and more madrasas under the scheme of deficit grant in aid. During his period, 25 madrasas came under the deficit scheme. In 1995, the then Chief Minister of Assam, Sri Hiteshwar Saikia brought 74 madrasas under provincialisation
scheme with effect form '15th August 1994'. Now, the teachers are at par with government teachers regarding salary and other service benefits at high school level. The Senior Madrasas were provincialised under Assam Madrasa Education (Provincialisation) Act, 1995'. It was the first Act to govern Madrasa Education System. Before that no such Act was passed. Now a days, there are more than 200 such Senior Madrasas, Title Madrasas and Arabic colleges in Assam.

The Senior Madrasas had a major problem at the primary level. This level of education is important since it develops the competence in students to perform better in further education. This level of education is suffering due to neglect from different government as well as non-government agencies of education. Due to lack of proper educational facilities, the educational performance of the students at this level is not up to the mark. To overcome this problem, 'several Pre-Senior madrasas had been set up as feeder institutions with effect form 1st January, 1996'. 'They are just like upper Primary schools, working in independent and secular way, where besides Arabic and Urdu, secular subjects are also taught'. Now a days there are more than 400 such institutions.
Again in 1995, a demand for separate Directorate of Madrasa Education was made. Though the then Chief Minister late Hiteshwar Saikia made an unofficial announcement for the creation of Directorate of Madrasa Education, in an All Assam Madrasa Teachers and Employees Association’s (AAMTEA) meeting at Rupahi Senior Madrasa, but it could not be introduced due to one or the other reasons.

In 1999, under the scheme of Central Government, Madrasa Board opened the "Multimedia Computerized Calligraphy Training Center" at Hatigaon, Guwahati. Under the supervision of "National Council for the Promotion of Urdu Language", with the help of 6 computer systems, 62 students were trained in the center. Among them 25 came from madrasas.65

Ultimately, it was in 2005, Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi announced the up-gradation of 70 years old Madrasa Board to a separate Directorate of Madrasa Education while delivering his speech on the occasion of Independence Day. Finally, on 3rd October 2005 the decision of a Separate Directorate of Madarsah Education was taken in the State Cabinet meeting and it was passed under a 'Government notification'.66
Non-Government (Qaumi / Khariji) Madrasa

Non-Government madrasas, popularly known as Qaumi or Khariji madrasa, follow the curriculum of Dar-ul-Uloom Deobond with slight modification according to local needs. The subjects taught are Tafsir, Hadith, Fiqh, Usul (principle of Islamic laws), Montique (logic), Hikmat (philosophy), Adab (Arabic, Persian and Urdu literature), Tarikh (History) and English language and literature. This type of curricula continued till the middle of 1960.67 However, there seemed to be a need to revise the traditional pattern of madrasa education. In 1968, the Madrasa Board initiated for revision of the old syllabi.

Non-Government Madrasas are working in a systematic manner. They are working under the guidance of either the Azad Deeni Shiksha Board, established in 1937 or the All Assam Tanzim Madaris Qawmiya (Tanzeem Board), established in 1955. Both the organizations have the same aim and objectives i.e., to establish and run Non-government Madrasas. The Tanzeem Board was initially started with a few madrasas in South Nagaon and its name was “Dakhin Pub (South-East) Nagaon Zilla Tanzeem Madaris”. Gradually, it covered whole of the Assam and its name was changed to “All Assam Tanzim Madaris Qawmiya” in 1982 in its
meeting of Working Committee. It governs in total, 432 Madrasas, among them 33 are Madrasa for the girls generally named as Banath Madrasa, 126 are Hafizia Madrasa and 273 are Madrasa-e-Arabia. Its main aim is to link and bring all the madrasas under the same banner. Its duties are manifold starting from conducting examinations to awarding certificates and rewards to the talented students. It conducts seminars and counselling programmes to make the students self-confident. Now a days, it is aiming at introduction of computer literacy programme for the talented.

The Non-Government Madrasas are governed and run on public donations. They serve the purposes like, imparting Islamic Education to the students and providing food and shelter to the poor students of a large number of Muslims. Instruction is provided by able and qualified teachers who are paid a very low salary. However, there is a tradition of sacrifice of teachers for the sake of religious education. The system is working because of the efforts of the teachers, financers and administrators of the Non-Government Madrasas. Another feature of these Madrasas is that almost all of them follow not only the curricula of Darul-Uloom, Deobond, but also the values of Nationalism, Secularism and Patriotism.
Keeping the main character of Madrasa Education intact, more and more changes are being suggested and it is hoped that necessary changes will be made according to the need of the time and this system of education will come at par with the general education by following the pattern of education going on in Bangladesh where Public Services in both Civil and Police departments, are available to the Madrasa Graduates. Such facility may be provided to them in Assam also.

**Barak Valley**

The term Barak valley, ascribed to the southern part of Assam, is of very recent origin. It is not more than 26 years old. This area was a part of the earstwhile 'Surma Valley which included the districts of Sylhet and Cachar across which the river Surma, a branch of river Barak flows'.

Cachar was a native kingdom of the Cachari Kings, annexed to the British empire of India in 1832 and put under the administrative jurisdiction of Bengal. In 1874, when a separate administrative province was created with the then administrative area of Assam, three more districts, namely Sylhet, Goalpara and Cachar were annexed with it for revenue purpose. The two Surma Valley districts i.e., Sylhet and Cachar had not only common
geographical features, but linguistic and cultural features also. The hilly area of Cachar district known as North Cachar, was made a separate district, later on, in 1953. The term Surma Valley, however, lost its relevance after new arrangement was made after partition, by changing the geography of Cachar by 'including 4½ police stations of the Sylhet district as a result of the referendum in Sylhet and a map drawn by Mr. Redcliff, popularly known as Redcliff Award'. Cachar district was again divided into three districts by giving the status of districts to Karimganj in 1986 and Hailakandi in 1989. ‘The term Barak Valley was started firstly after a few years of partition but it was not popularly used nor given official status by the Government. After the creation of Karimganj and Hailakandi districts, it became prominent and gradually received the official status’.73

_Muslims in Barak Valley_

In the pre-partition Barak Valley, Muslim population in this area was slightly larger than the Hindus. For different reasons, it decreased after partition, but still, the Muslims constitute the single majority among the 30 lakh people, of whom about 99% are of Bengali origin, having close affinity with their Hindu counterpart. ‘Both the communities migrated from East Bengal, specially Sylhet
during the rule of Cachari kings. A large number of the Hindus, however, migrated after partition as a result of the communal riots in east while East Pakistan.

**Madrasa Education in Barak Valley**

Nothing is known about the education of Muslims of Barak Valley during the rule of the native kings and early British rule, except what Upendra Chandra Guha mentioned in his “Cacharer Itibritta” (the history of Cachar) 1972 edition of Asom Prakashan Parishad, that primary religious education was given to the Muslim children in Mosques. ‘The teachers were, generally, from the areas of Sylhet adjacent to Cachar’. However, the people of this region had to go to Sylhet and also U.P. to get higher religious education. These institutions of higher education were a source of inspiration to establish madrasas in Barak Valley. Consequently, madrasas were established for providing higher religious education. They believed that the madrasa products were not lagging behind. They were also advancing fast, keeping pace with the general students coming from schools and colleges. The general people were motivated to donate their properties for the purpose of the madrasas.

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‘Keeping in view the importance of madrasa education in the Valley, people established first madrasa known as, Banga Sharif Madrasa at Banga in present Karimganj district in 1840 for imparting elementary religious education’. It is continuing to produce persons equipped with basic knowledge of Islamic Shariyah, which are essential for day to day activities of the Muslims. But the British administration was totally against the madrasas in the whole of their dominion. Therefore, the people were facing difficulties in establishing madrasa education institutions. But they continued their efforts and ‘in 1842, another madrasa was established at the Cachar district. Its name was Kanakpur Faiz-e-Aam Alia Madrasa at Kanakpur’. Large number of enthusiastic people used to come to this madrasa with their contribution and support. After that the people had to face a bit of resistance from British Government. It took a long period of almost 14 years to establish another madrasa at ‘Ratanpur in the present Hailakandi district with the name Ashraful Uloom, Ratanpur Madrasa’. This very madrasa flourished a lot in comparison to the other two old madrasas and till today it is flourishing with a high quality products coming out of it. Again, it took a long period of almost 14 years to establish another madrasa at Nairgram in 1870.
In 1873, the foundation stone for the prominent Madinatul Uloom Baghbari Madrasa was laid. This madrasa is now one of the forerunner institutions of Barak Valley for imparting Islamic Education. In 1882, Chergia Qaumia Alia Madrasa (in Karimganj district) was established. From then onwards a number of madrasas came into existence in subsequent years. Prominent among them are Gandai Bazar Rafiul Islam Alia Madrasa in 1890, Darul Uloom, Sahabad in 1895, Madrasa Phurauria in 1897, Moinul Uloom Nitainagar in 1903 and Matijuri Hamidia Madrasa in 1913.

The maximum number of madrasas were established in Barak Valley in the middle and later part of the 20th century. The biggest contribution of this period was the Badarpur Title Madrasa established in 1937 by Maulana Hatim Ali in Karimganj district and Darul Uloom Baskandi at Baskandi by Ahmad Ali, in 1955 at Cachar district. The number of madrasas established after independence exceeds the number of madrasas before independence. Besides this, persons having zeal and means for acquiring higher education went to the big madrasas like Dar-ul-Uloom, Deobond, Nadvatul Ulema, Lucknow etc.
In Barak Valley too, there is the concept of Government and Non-government madrasa. The changes coming in both the Madrasa Boards are automatically covering the madrasas in Barak Valley. The other Madrasa Board, known as the Azad Deeni Shiksha Board was established in 1937 in the present district of Hailakandi. This Board looks after some of the madrasas in Hailakandi district and a very few in Karimganj district only.

After independence, a number of madrasas came into existence in Barak Valley Region. Some of these important madrasas are Kalain Senior Madrasa in Cachar district, established in 1947, Fulbari Senior Madrasa, established in 1955, Jamiul Uloom Nizamia Madrasa, established in 1962, Boalipar Senior Madrasa in present Hailakandi district established in 1963, Bam Senior Madrasa, in 1970, Bikrampur Senior Madrasa, in 1973, Baitul Uloom Zarer Bazar Madrasa, in Karimjanj district established in 1988, Katigorah Senior Madrasa, in 1994 and Markazul Uloom Senior Madrasa, established in 2000 in present Cachar district.

In 1965-66 deficit grant was given to 9 senior madrasas in Assam. Among these 9 madrasas, 4 were located in Barak Valley Region. They were, Deorail Senior Madrasa and Asimia Senior
Madrasa in the present Karimganj district, Hailakandi Senior Madrasa in present Hailakandi district, Sonai Senior Madrasa in the present Cachar district. In the subsequent years, when 65 more madrasas were taken under deficit scheme, 16 madrasas were from Barak Valley Region. Among them 7 were in the present Karimganj district, 4 were in Hailakandi district 5 were located in the present Cachar district.

'In 1995, Chief Minister Hiteshwar Saikia brought all the 74 deficit madrasas under Provincialization Scheme'. With this order, 20 Senior Madrasas alone from Barak Valley Region came under Provincialization Scheme.

When the order of establishing Pre-Senior Madrasas, to serve as Feeder Institution to Senior Madrasas was passed, more than 150 madrasas, located in the 3 districts of Barak Valley, got the opening permission with effect from '1st January, 1996'.

Thus, it is found that the history of Madrasa Education in Assam and specially in Barak Valley is not a new one, though it is not as old as those in Northern parts of India. Madrasas flourished in full after independence when Muslims used democratic platforms to raise their voice to meet their needs. Muslim participation in Politics increased gradually and this resulted in the
facilitation for opening of madrasas at different places. Now, there are madrasas at every corner of the state. They are contributing a lot to the society. Though they seem to be neglected, they are trying to contribute their best service to the society. They seem to be fully aware of their duties and responsibilities, which the society has entrusted upon them.
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