Chapter 2
ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN CACHAR: FROM EARLY TIMES

The northeastern region occupies a strategic geo-political importance due to its international boundaries with Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Myanmar and Nepal. It comprises eight states; namely, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and recently included Sikkim (Sharma 2005). Assam covering the total area of 78,438 sq km is divided into three segments: the Barak Valley, the Brahmaputra Valley and the hills. Barak valley experiences a subtropical monsoon climate with an annual rainfall ranging between 2500 and 3300m.m. About 80-85% of this rainfall occurs during the months of April/May to September/October. December and January are normally the driest months. Pre-monsoon rains often accompanied by thunder and hail occur in April- May. The monsoon arrives in early June and continues till September, although heavy rains may also occur in October (Gupta 2007:111). From geo-historical point of view Cachar district has been the key district in Barak Valley, forming the southernmost edge of the state. The tract is today bounded by the State of Manipur, Hailakandi and Karimganj districts of Assam, Tripura State of India in the east and Sylhet State of Bangladesh in the west, North Cachar Hills of Assam and Meghalaya in the north and Mizoram State in the south. The district now covers the total area of 3786 sq.km. The climate is damp with an average annual rainfall of about 130 mm and temperature ranges from 5°C in winter to 38°C in summer. According to Census 2011, the total population of Cachar district is 17, 36,319 (Males 8, 86,616 and Females 8, 49,703). The literacy rate of the Cachar district is 79.34% (Males 85.85% and Females 74.62%).

I
CACHAR DISTRICT: THE HISTORICAL EMERGENCE

Historians are of the opinion that Barak Valley experienced social and political formations as early as in the 7^{th} or 8^{th} century A.D. In the early times it was

called the Kingdom of Heramba. Cachar was annexed to the British India territory in 1832. However, based on copper plates, royal documents, coins and other evidences of such nature the historians have conceptualized about the early rulers of Cachar. Some of the important kingdoms that ruled Cachar were the Tipperah the Kamrup, the Samatat, the Horical, the Srihatta Mandal, Srihatta followed by the Koch and the Dimasa.. Khaspur was capital of Cachar during the Koch and the Dimasa rule. The earliest available Kachari coins are those of Jasonarayan Deva (1583AD). He was a follower of Haro-Gouri (Govt. of Assam 1976: 11) At the time of British annexation, the present North Cachar Hills district (now Dima Hasao district) and Hojai Davaka areas of the Nowgong district of Assam and Jiri Frontier Tract of Manipur formed parts of Cachar, then, known as Heramba Rajah; while the Karimganj sub-division of post- Independence period was included in the Sylhet district of the then East Bengal (Bhattacharjee 1977: 1). The earliest people, known to have inhabited Cachar in historical times are Tripprah, kinsmen of Cacharis, both off-shoots of the Bodos, Dimasas, Herambas and Kacharidoan Nagas. There were numerous Bengali villages in the northern side of the Barak, bordering Sylhet, and the Bengali population has inhabited there since the unknown time. In addition, after British annexation of Cachar some immigrants came from Sylhet, Jaintia, and Khashi hills, Tripura and even distant Dacca and Mymensingh (Bhattracharjee 1977: 211-212) .Table 1 and 2 show populations of South Cachar and Cachar plains, increasing year after year. Cachar Plains consisted of Silchar and Hailakandi of the Barak Valley, generally known as South Cachar (Bhattachrrjee 1977: 2). The tables show South Cachar, North Cachar, Cachar Plains and North Cachar Hills.

Table 2.1
Population of South Cachar and North Cachar 1831-1857

Year	South Cachar	North Cachar
1831	50000	14000
1837	-	6000
1842	80000	-
1851	85522	20000
1857	137000	30000

Source: J.B.Bhattracharjee, 1977, Cachar under British Rule in North East India, New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, P.245.

Table 2.2
Population of Cachar Plains and North Cachar Hills 1872-1931

Year	Cachar Plains	North Cachar Hills	Total
1872	205027	30000	235027
1881	293738	20121	313859
1891	367542	18941	386483
1901	414781	40812	455593
1911	469984	29491	499475
1921	500388	28913	529301
1931	537687	32844	570531

Source: J.B.Bhattracharjee, 1977, Cachar under British Rule in North East India, New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, P.245.

Furthermore, population of Cachar plains in 1931 as sub-divided on the basis of two subdivisions; viz, Silchar and Hailakandi. In Silchar, population was more than Hailakandi subdivision. Again, North Cachar Hillsô population was less than that of the Cachar plains.

Table 2.3

Population of sub-divisions of Cachar district, 1931

Sub-division	Population
Silchar	386695
Hailakandi	150992
Cachar Plains(Silchar + Hailakandi)	537687
North Cachar Hills	32844
Total	570531

Source: J.B.Bhattracharjee, 1977, Cachar under British Rule in North East India, New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, P.245.

In 1931, population of Cachar plains and North Cachar Hills were subdivided on the basis of language. More than 39 communities lived in that area. From these Bengali, Hindi, Manipuri etc. were maximum.

Table 2.4
Populations of Linguistic Communities in Cachar District 1931

Linguistic Community	Population
Bengali	338772
Hindi	103789
Manipuri	55550
Dimacha	13547
Oriya	9611
Boro(Plains Cachari)	9068
Kuki(All Tribes)	8885
Naga(All tribes)	6871
Mundari	4128
Santhali	3327
Mikir	3132
Assamese	2215
Telegu	2097
Khashi	1737
Nepali	1671
Oroan	1604
Tipperah	852
Gondi	773
Turi	676
Lushai	412
English	331
Kandhi	298
Karku	229
Pashto	175
Punjabi	168
Bhumji	155

Linguistic Community	Population
Tamil	147
Gujrati	133
Marathi	123
Rajasthani	20
Khamti	16
Miri	9
Chinese	9
Koch	7
Magari	5
Limbu	4
Chutiya	2
Garo	1
Bhotia	1
Others	51
Total	**570531**

Source: J.B.Bhattracharjee, 1977, Cachar under British Rule in North East India, New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, P.245.

The district of Cachar was annexed to British domination by a proclamation on 14th August 1832, after the assassination of last legitimate Cachari Raja Govindo Chandra in 1830. The district came under administration of the Superintendent controlled by the Commissioner of Assam. Captain Thomas Fisher was appointed as the first Superintendent of Cachar district after the formal annexation of South Cachar, i.e., Silchar and Hailakandi sub-divisions. This annexation opened up a new era for socio-economic and political re-structuring in Barak Valley. Actually, Fisher was posted as in-charge of the Cachar affairs and then he was permanently appointed as the Superintendent of Cachar. Lord William Benttick, the then Governor General of India, in his Minute of 18th January 1834, observed that since the province of Cachar was in the plains and was distinct from the hill tract of the north -east frontier, it should be placed under the control of the Dacca Commissionership and be managed under the same regulations as existed for the neighboring district of Sylhet.

Accordingly, in 1836, Cachar was included in the Dacca Division and the Superintendentós headquarters were shifted to Silchar. When Cachar was passed

under the Commissioner of Dacca, in 1836, many of the departments had common heads for Cachar and Sylhet. About the Cachar-Sylhet boundary, R.Stewart, Superintendent of Cachar, reported on 7th September, 1858, that the boundary between these two districts was not accurately laid down but was indefinitely known as the watershed of the range of the hills which separated the Pargana of Chapghat of Sylhet from that of Sirispur. Thus, all the eastern slopes were in Cachar and the western slopes in Sylhet. On the other hand, Jamunamukh to Dharampur, including Hozai-Davaka areas, were separated from Cachar and attached to Assam. In 1880, the sub-division of North Cachar was re-constituted with headquarters first at Gunjong and thereafter at Halflong. This was done to give more direct attention to the development of the territory and improvement of the general condition of the people. Since then, North Cachar had continued as part of Cachar throughout the rest of the British period and in a peaceful condition (Bhattracharjee 1977: 73,104,112).

In 1921, Assam was upgraded as Governorós Province and Cachar, thus, became a part of Assam. The Revenue Report of Cachar 1903-1904 informed that the radical reforms in the land revenue were initiated by the assessment of land, scrapping of traditional *khel system* and grouping of all lands into Parganas and Mouzas in the line of Bengal. Khel system was the lowest self-governing agricultural unit headed by a Mukhtar. A group of khels formed a Raj headed by a Raj Mukhtar known variously as Choudhury, Barbhuiya etc. There were 21 Parganas in Cachar plains (Silchar and Hailakandi); viz., Udharbond, Katigorah, Kalain, Gumra, Chatla, Jainagar, Jalalpur, Davidsonanbad, Fulbari, Banraj, Barkhola, Barnarpur, Barakpur, Bansikunda, Jatrapur, Rajnagar, Rupaibali, Lakhipur, Leverputa, Saraspur and Sonapur (Bhattacharjee 1977: 161). The introduction of the British rule and gradual opening

up of Cachar in various fields had immediately resulted into a substantial increase in population with marked changes in political, economic, social and cultural life of the district. After Independence of India, Cachar was constituted into four sub-divisions; namely, Silchar, Hailakandi , Karimganj and Haflong. The Halflong sub-division was separated in 1952 from Cachar and eventually constituted into the present district of North Cachar Hills.

After Indiaôs partition, Sylhet went to East Pakistan, except for three and half thanas covering Badarpur, Ratabari and Karimganj. Till 1947, Cachar district consisted of Silchar, Hailakandi and Halflong subdivisions, but after the Independence Halflong Subdivision was separated and renamed as North Cachar Hills district. In place of Halflong Subdivision, Karimganj Subdivision became a part of Cachar district, which was segregated from Sylhet district (Roy 1980). In 1854 North Cachar was annexed and tagged to the district Cachar. In 1951 the North Cachar Subdivision was made a separate district, in 1983 the Karimganj Subdivision and in 1989, the Hialakandi subdivision (Singha 2008). Thus, the scenario of Cachar district has changed. The geographical area of Cachar district is 3786 sq km and its total population is 14, 42,141. The district has two subdivision; viz, Silchar and Lakhipur (Census 2001).

Since the ancient times different groups of people and cultural streams came from different places to this reason. Majority people of the Barak valley as whole speak Bengali, followed by the speakers of Manipuri, Assamese, Hindi, Dimasa and a small fraction of Hmar speakers. The people of this valley mainly depend on agriculture. Some people are engaged in tea industry and some are engaged in small scale industries like weaving, cane furniture, dairy farming, horticulture and other sectors. The history of the Cachar district and the valley as a whole includes the active

participation and support of its people, such as leaders Kamini Kumar Chanda, his son Arun Kumar Chanda and Abdul Matlib Mazumdar etc. in the Indian freedom movement. In 1960s, Moinul Haque Choudhury, who was a cabinet minister in Assam from 1957 to 1966, became a prominent political figure in the district. In 1971, he became the Industry minister of India under the Prime Ministership of late Indira Gandhi. Late Arun Kr. Chanda's wife Jyotsna Chanda also represented Silchar in the parliament. There are seven Assembly constituencies in this district; viz., Silchar, Sonai, Dholai, Udharbond, Lakhipur, Barkhola and Katigorah. Dholai is designated for scheduled castes. The seven constituencies make the Silchar Lok Sabha constituency. The district headquarters & town Silchar, is one of the most important business centres of Assam.The economy of Cachar district is basically agrarian in nature with about 80 percent of the population dependent on agriculture. Paddy is the major crop. Other important crops include oil seeds, pulses, cash crops like jute, vegetables etc. The viable industries in the district based on local resources like cane, bamboo, pineapple & other agro based and fruit processing industries have potential for growth. The total industrial area in the district is spread across 38.68 acres of land. The district has 1984 Small Scale Industry units of which 295 have been registered after the announcement of North East Industrial Policy in 1997. The Silchar town has different types of communication facilities like rail, road, air and water ways. The transport connectivity of the district comprises roads, railway and air services. The nearest railway station to the district headquarter of Cachar is Silchar. The district also has air connectivity and the airport is located at a distance of 30 km from Silchar, the district headquarters. Availability and access to infrastructure is one of the major inducing factors for economic and social growth across space and communities (Wikipedia: en-wikipedia.org/ wiki/cachar _ district om 26.8.2013).

II
THE ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN CACHAR

Elementary education is known as primary education in England and U.S.A and the pre-primary education is officially not a part of elementary education (Sodhi 1998). The Indian Education Commission of 1882 (p.174) favoured the transfer of control of the primary schools from the government to the local bodies. After 1884, in every sub-division a school board was formed in response to the recommendation of the Indian Education Commission with a view to control primary schools. Evolution of elementary education in Cachar is discussed here under two periods; namely, (i) the pre-Independence period, (ii) the post-Independence period.

(A) The Pre-Independence Period

The Assam Primary Education Act was passed in 1926 but it was not effected (Sen 2002:288). The provincial government could not manage to contribute a large amount of funds for expansion of primary education. Local bodies in Assam adopted a policy of converting aided schools increasingly into schools maintained by local bodies. Thus, by 1937 the bulk of the primary schools in Assam came to be maintained by local bodies. Besides these schools, there were other primary schools which were maintained by different agencies. Some of these schools are given below:

(i) Departmental Primary Schools established and maintained by the state under the recommendations of the commission in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, Naga Hills, Garo Hills, Mikir Hills and in the backward places of the Darrang district. Some Pathshalas attached to Normal Schools were maintained in Kamrup, Sibsagar and Tezpur for practice-teaching work (GRPIA 1989-90: 31-32).

(ii) Aided Schools were maintained by the missionaries who received lump sum grants from the Education Department. Other schools managed by private bodies received result-grants from local bodies. Up to 1917, these schools were known as Combined Schools as they were supported by a small amount of fixed payments to teachers and certain specified rewards earned under the reward rules. The payment-by-result was introduced in Assam in a modified form, which was abolished in 1917 only (GRPIA 1917-18:13).

(iii) Unaided Schools were schools started by individuals or private bodies without any aid from local bodies. Some of these schools which followed the prescribed curriculum and study courses of the department were upgraded to the aided list when they applied for grants.

(iv) Indigenous Schools were established by the local people, which were teaching through Ųnative methodsó. Indian Education Commission (1882:78-79) strongly recommended for improvement and expansion of this type of schools by extending the payment-by-result system to them. But subsequently these schools were completely neglected and, they decayed. There were two grades of primary schools; namely, upper and lower. The upper primary schools had seven classes while the lower primary schools consisted of five classes. Extension of the primary course by two years without giving any complete course came to be considered as aŲSuperfluityó(RPEEBA 1907-08-1911-12, Vol.1: 55) and, therefore, the upper primary type of schools disappeared by 1915 (GRPIA 1915-16 :10).

The following table shows the progress status of elementary education in Assam 1989-90 to 1936-37:

Table 2.5
Progress status of elementary education in Assam

Types of school	1989-90		1936-37	
	No. of schools	No. of pupils	No. of schools	No. of pupils
Government	24	333	343	10458
Local Board	1243	36261	4909	250621
Aided	516	15403	816	20947
Unaided	142	4227	727	31321
Total	1925	56224	6795	313347

Source: GRPIA for 1989-90, General Table III and RPEA-I, Classification of Educational Institutions 1936-37, Table II A and II B, cited from Renu Debi,1987, Program of Education in Assam , New Delhi: Omsons Publications, p. 79.

The progress of education during the British rule was indeed a commendable co-operative achievement of the Government and the people. Notably, during the Heramba rule, the Rajas encouraged and patronized education. The Raj Durbar was adorned by a galaxy of scholars who composed a number of scholastic works in Bengali. The last two Rajas of Cachar, Krishnachandra and Govindachandra , were well- versed in Bengali and Sanskrit.

There were some eminent persons such as Sambhunath Sharma Deshmukhya who prepared a map, indicating the physical features from Udharbond to Kashidham (Benaras) and Chandra Mohan Barman (a Dimasa) who enriched the Bengali literature. The former rulers of Cachar granted scholarships to the Brahmins and Kayasthas alike for studies in Bengal. However, education was confined to the Brahmins. The Rajas of Cachar granted Brahmattra land to the Brahmins and the traditions suggest that the Brahmins ran tols in their houses. The existence of regular

tols and Pathsalas in the noted temples of Ranachandi and Kachakanti, where learned Brahmins were appointed by the Rajas as hereditary Sebayats, cannot be ruled out, considering that adhyapana (teaching) was additional duty of the temple priests in India in the former times. The Commissioner or the Agent to the Governor General of Assam asked all the district officers to report on the general education in their respective districts. Mr. Fisher, the first Superintendent of Cachar, wrote that there was no permanent way to instruct the people but Brahmins and Kayasthas were instructed in Bengali and Sanskrit languages and that learning was strictly confined to Brahmins whereas Mohammadan portion of the population was the most numerous but few of their individuals possessed a moderate knowledge of the oriental classic tongue. According to Fisherós suggestions, curriculum of public instruction was made as secular education. He also provided religious education. This work was only done for the save of name onlty. In a letter dated 22nd September 1837, J.G. Burns, the then Superintendent, suggested that there were three thanas suitable for schools in Cachar; viz., Silchar (Saddar), Hailakandi and Katigorah. With regards to teaching, Burns also wrote on 25th April 1838 that Pundit of Sylhet could be appointed with a monthly salary of Rs.20/ which would be sufficient salary. He also recommended a school at Saddar Station as an experiment. Accordingly, a school was established. But due to lack of subscription it was abolished. In Cachar district, a school was established before 1851 and was maintained by voluntary subscriptions from the then Superintendent of Cachar and the Indian Government employees of the district administration. In 1857, three schools were started at Silchar, Hailakandi and Katigorah on private subscription. The enrolment in the Silchar School was 128, while the schools at Hailakandi and Katigorah averaged 30 pupils each. But the

schools did not receive financial assistance from the Government. The enrolment in the Silchar School came down to 13 in 1861 and the school was closed down in 1862 whereas Katigorah and Hailakandi schools continued to exist on private subscription. At that time, R. Stewart felt need for a Government school as Silchar School was closed down due to lack of financial support. In 1854, Woods Despatch recommended for grant- in- aid to the private sponsored schools. In November 1863, William Pyrse came to Silchar and on 1st December 1863 he started the Cachar High Grammar School with 80 students. Babu Nobokishore Sen (a student in the Pyrse Sylhet School) was appointed as the first Headmaster and the Superintendent of Cachar sanctioned a monthly grant of Rs.80/- on behalf of the Government. This school continued under the grant- in- aid system till August 1868 when it converted into a Government Zillah School. It is noteworthy that the establishment of a high grammar school in 1863 under Reverend William Pyrse should be taken as the beginning of the English education in Cachar. There might have been also some Pathshalas maintained purely on private basis and some tols run by individual priests or Pundits, of which the officials either failed to take note of or were beyond the purview of their correspondence. The formal education initiated by the institution of missionaries in Cachar district started with the establishment of Grammar School followed by a primary school (Pathsala) called Abhaya Charan Pathsala at Sadarghat, Silchar, in 1865 with local efforts. Since then, education system has developed under the British rule until Independence of India in 1947 (Bhattracharjee 1977).

The Pathshalas were not brought under the scheme of the grant-in-aid until 1872 and as a result, there is no mention of such institutions in the official records (table-6 The Report of the Director of Public Instructions shows 1870-71, 1871-72).

Sir George Campbellós reform extended the benefit of the grant-in-aid system to the pathshalas and also provided that even unaided schools would be subject to annual inspections. As a result, the growth status of schools and pupils in Cachar from 1872-73 was in high as shown in the following table:

Table2.6
Schools and pupils existing during Period 1870-71 to 1872-73

Type of Schools	1870-71	1871-72	1872-73
Government English Schools	1	0	0
Government Vernacular Schools	3	0	0
Aided Vernacular Schools	1	0	0
Government Primary schools	0	3	0
Aided primary schools	0	1	0
Unaided schools	0	1	0
Government Higher English Schools	0	1	1
Government Lower English Schools	0	0	3
Old Pathsalas	0	0	1
New Pathsalas	0	0	19
Unaided Schools	0	0	104
Total No. of Schools	5	6	128
Total no of Pupils	248	211	2259

Source: J.B. Bhattacharjee, 1977, Cachar under British Rule in North East India, New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, p. 234.

The following table gives a picture of the growth status of primary and secondary schools and pupils during the period from 1874-75 to 1900-01.

Table 2.7
Number of Primary and Secondary Schools and Pupils in Cachar in the Period from 1874-75 to 1900-01

Type of Schools and Pupils	1874-75	1880-81	1890-91	1900-01
Primary Schools	108	99	190	248
Pupils	2119	2565	4708	7188
Secondary Schools	7	7	3	4
Pupils	373	446	413	654

Source: J.B. Bhattacharjee 1977, Cachar under British rule in North East India, New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, p.236.

In 1872-73 the total number of schools was 128 where as in 1871-72 and 1870-71 it was 6 and 5 respectively. The increased number of schools was possible because of Sir George Cambellós reforms (see table-6). It clearly shows that the number of schools changed, sometimes, it increased and sometimes decreased and in 1900-01, the primary schools were 248 and secondary schools were 4 (see table7).

In 1875, a normal school was started at Silchar to cater to the needs of both, Cachar and Sylhet. The progress of education in Cachar in the last century is given in the following table showing educational institutions established in the Cachar district (excluding Hailakandi and Karimganj) during: 1910-20 to 1930-40:

Table 2.8
Schools Established in Cachar during the period 1910-20 to 1930-40

Block	1910-20	1920-30	1930-40
Katigorah	6	12	6
Borkhola	3	14	9
Sonai	3	11	7
Silchar	2	10	2
Lakhipur	1	4	9
Dholai	6	2	23
Udharbond	1	3	8
Algapur	1	3	1
Salchapra	-	-	1
Total	23	59	66

Source: Sikidhar, Sriparna, 1999, Elementary Education in Cachar District, M.Phil Dissertation, (Education), Assam University, Silchar, Pp. 17 & 18.

The establishment of sub divisional office at Halflong in 1896 the British started trading on opium (a drug) in large scale. The report of the then Director of Public Instruction of Assam, Mr. J. R. Cunningham, regarding education in North Cachar Hills dated 21-01-1915 , informs that the spread of education in North Cachar Hills had been in progress since 1880 but the attempt was not successful . However, soon after the establishment of the sub-divisional office at Gunjung on 13th Dec.1880 the first school was opened there. The Gunjung Guru Training School was then shifted to Halflong in 1896. The brief report of the then DPI of Assam Mr. J.R. Cunningham, dated 21-01-1915 and his letter addressed to the second Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam dated 7-2-1916 mentioned that during the period from 1908 to 1914, besides the Central School at Halflong, there were only four other Lower Primary schools in North Cachar Hills; namely, (i) Govt. L.P. School, Gunjung, (ii) Govt. L.P. School, Maibang, (iii) Govt. L. P. School, Arkhap and (iv) Relai L.P. School. The development and progress of expansion of education took place in N.C. Hills after 1860. The N.C.Hills Autonomous District Council was created on 29th April 1952 under the provision of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India and Late Nitylal Daulagupu was made the first Secretary of the Council. After1960 many L.P. Schools, M.E.Schools and High Schools were established (Dev 2002: Pp 2-4).

(B) Post- Independence Period

Since Indiaós Independence in 1947, Cachar including Hailakandi and Karimganj sub- divisions remained under the Assam Province. Separate districts of Karimganj and Hailakandi were formed in 1984 and 1989 respectively and the boundary of Cachar district was restricted to the two sub-divisions; namely, Lakhipur and Silchar within the valley of the River Barak, flowing down from Manipur to

Bangladesh through the heart of Cachar district. In Assam, Primary Education Act was passed in 1947 and compulsory primary education was introduced in some selected areas. The Government repealed the Act of 1962 and brought in the Assam Elementary Education Act 1968. Under the provisions of this Act, the State Board of Elementary Education was set up. This board looks after the management, improvement and expansion of primary education in the state. In the year 1961, the Government of Assam passed a bill, making Assamese as the medium of instruction in the schools. This bill created a huge controversy in Barak Valley, largely inhabited by the Bengalis. Besides, the bill was also in contravention with the provisions of the three language formula under the National Education Policy. The state Government passed another Primary Education Act in1974 to improve the State primary schools. There from, a remarkable change ushered in the field of primary education as all primary schools were provincialised on 5th September 1975. In 1977, Janata Government came to power and declared its new policy for primary education. A separate Directorate of Elementary Education was set up in Assam. The Government of Assam made some special provisions for enforcement of Compulsory Primary Education during 1977-78. These committees made various recommendations like free tuition fee, free uniforms, scholarships etc. for pupils. Keeping in tune with these recommendations, Government of Assam has also taken various steps for upliftment of education in the state and, as a result, the number of schools, teachers, and pupils in Cachar has gradually increased. The growth status of schools in Cachar district from 1957-58 to 1990-91 is shown in the following table:

Table 2.9
Number of Primary and Middle Schools in Cachar District from 1957-58 to1990-91

Type of Schools	1957-58	1971-72	1973-74	1974-75	1976-77	1984-85	1986-87	1990-91
Primary	1355	2093	2336	2359	2536	2372	3510	1454
Middle	167	339	380	399	420	539	858	287
Total	1522	2432	2716	2758	2956	2911	4368	1741

Source: Sikidhar,Sriparna ,1999, Elementary Education in Cachar District, M.Phil. Dissertation, (Education), Assam University, Silchar. P.19.

III
THE SILCHAR BLOCK

Out of the eight educational blocks (Silchar block, Udharbond block, Salchapra block, Narsingpur block, Rajabazar block, Lakhipur block, Sonai block and Katigorah block) in the Cachar district, Silchar Educational Block consists of significant urban and rural schools. The Silchar educational block has 84 L.P. schools, 21 U.P. & Pre-senior Madrasa schools, 13 Senior Madrasa & Composite schools, 2 EGS schools in rural area only, 56 HTR schools and 1 RBC schools. Total population of the block (urban) 1, 42,393 and rural 56,912 is 1, 99,305 (DMC, SSA, Silchar 2003).

In Cachar district in the pre-Independence period different schools were established from this growth and status of Silchar Educational Block is shown in the following table:

Table 2.10
Number of Composite Schools in Pre-Independence Period

Year	Government school	Provincialised Schools	
	Urban only	Urban only	Total
>1870	1	0	0
1871-1880	0	0	0
1881-1890	0	0	0
1891-1900	1	0	0
1901-1910	0	0	0
1911-1920	0	1	1
1921-1930	0	2	2
1931-1940	0	1	1
1941- till Independence	0	2	2

Source: DEEO, Cachar, 2009

Table 2.11
Number of Upper Primary Schools in Pre-Independence Period

Year	Government			Provincialised		
	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total
Up to 1870	0	0	0	0	0	0
1871-1880	1	0	1	0	0	0
1881-1890	0	0	0	0	0	0
1891-1900	0	0	0	0	0	0
1901-1910	0	0	0	0	0	0
1911-1920	0	1	1	0	0	0
1921-1930	0	0	0	1	1	2
1931-1940	0	0	0	0	0	0
1941-Independence	0	0	0	0	1	1

Source: DEEO, Cachar, 2009

Table 2.12
Number of Lower Primary Schools in Pre-Independence Period

Year	Government	Provincialised		
	Urban only	Rural	Urban	Total
>1870	0	0	0	0
1871-1880	0	0	0	0
1881-1890	0	1	1	2
1891-1900	0	0	0	0
1901-1910	0	0	0	0
1911-1920	2	0	1	1
1921-1930	0	3	2	5
1931-1940	1	3	4	7
1941- till Independence	0	2	4	6

Source: DEEO, Cachar, 2009

Table 2.13
Total Number of Schools in Pre- Independence Period

Year	Government Schools	Provincialised Schools	Total Schools
Up to 1870	1	0	1
1871-1880	1	0	1
1881-1890	0	2	2
1891-1900	1	0	1
1901-1910	0	0	0
1911-1920	3	2	5
1921-1930	0	9	9
1931-1940	1	8	9
1941- till independence	0	9	9
Total	7	30	37

Source: DEEO, Cachar, 2009

After Independence in Cachar district different schools were established. Only Silchar Educational Block is visualized in the following manner:

Table 2.14
Number of provincialised Composite Schools only in post Independence Period

Year	Provincialised		
	Rural	Urban	Total
Up to 1950	0	1	1
1951-1960	0	1	1
1961-1970	1	2	3

Source: DEEO, Cachar, 2009

Table 2.15
Number of Upper Primary Schools in post Independence Period

Year	Govt.	Provincialised		
	Urban only	Rural	Urban	Total
Up to 1950	0	0	0	0
1951-1960	1	1	5	6
1961-1970	0	0	4	4
1971-1980	0	2	4	6

Source: DEEO, Cachar, 2009

Table: 2.16
Number of Lower Primary Schools in post Independence Period

Year	Government Schools	Provincialised schools		
	Urban only	Rural	Urban	Total
Up to1950	1	1	3	4
1951-1960	0	5	8	13
1961-1970	0	5	8	13
1971-1980	0	6	11	17
1981-1990	0	9	2	11
1991-2000	0	1	0	1
2001-2010	0	0	0	0

Source: DEEO, Cachar, 2009

It is to be mentioned here that under the supervision and control of SSA there were started 2 EGS school in rural area , 56 HTR school in urban area and 1 RBC school in urban area of Silchar block during the period 2001-2010

Table 2.17

Number of Schools in post Independence Period

Year	Government Schools	Provincialised Schools	SSA schools	Total
Up to 1950	1	5	0	6
1951-1960	1	20	0	21
1961-1970	0	20	0	20
1971-1980	0	23	0	23
1981-1990	0	11	0	11
1991-2000	0	1	0	1
2001-2010	0	0	59	59
Total	2	80	59	141

Source DEEO Cachar 2009

Up to the Independence the total number of elementary schools was 37 (Govt. Schools 7 and provincialised Schools 30) and from that time up to 2000 the elementary Schools increased to developed 82 (Government schools 2 and Provincialised schools 80) . From the year 2000 to 2001 no schools were added but after the intervention of SSA in 2002 to 2010 there have been added at present 2 EGS, 1 RBC, and 56 HTR Schools.

IV
SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) started with the Government of India setting the National Mission under the chairmanship of Prime minister in 2001-2002 while in Assam SSA was initiated in 2002-03. The National Mission have three important bodies; viz., Governing Council, Executive committee and Project Approval Board. The important functions of the Governing Council have full autonomy for the utilization of budget provision. The Executive Committee is to

conduct a regular review of the progress of the implementation of SSA in the country. The important functions of the Project Approval Board are constituted mainly for scrutinizing and approving the perspective and annual work plans of states and other institutions implementing Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The State Mission for SSA is under the chairmanship of Chief Minister. The State mission has Governing Council, Executive committee and State Project Director. The state level mission controls and maintains the link with all the districts, blocks, village level, school management committees etc. while discussing in context to the states of India, every states has some specific organization. The SSA Assam is constituted in more or less similar lines with that of other states. Assam Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan create the structure on the basis of component (Accountants, Audit, Alternative Schooling, etc.) i.e., Component in charges.

District level mission controls all the affairs of elementary education and to maintain the objectives of SSA. In Cachar district, Deputy Commissioner is the Chairman. It also works on components like civil works, Teacher training, Community Mobilization, Education Guarantee Scheme, Alternative & Innovative Education, Deprived Urban Children or hard to reach Children, Inclusive Education, Early Childhood Care Education, Management Information System etc. In other states, district level committee is followed by subdivision level committee but in district of Assam, it is divided into educational blocks. Cachar district is divided into eight educational blocks. The important function is reconstruction of SMCs, WEC, VEC, TGEC and GPEC at the block level structure. School Management Committee serves for two years. It is headed by President who is selected or elected from amongst senior citizens of the village or recognized citizens of the habitations or from amongst the parents of the school students. It ensures necessary steps for the

development of academic atmosphere within the school so that educational competence of the children can be enhanced. Gaon panchyat Education Committee serves for three years. It is headed by president who is elected president. It ensures the enrolment and regular attendance of every child in 6-14 yearsóage group in the panchyat area.Village Education Committee serves for three years. It is headed by President who is also elected and selected Gaon Panchyat member. Tea Garden Education committee, Ward Education Committee, Gaon Panchyat Education Committee mainly conduct house to house survey of the educational status of each household. SSA mission systematically spreads the elementary education. Some of the important achievements of SSA are highlighted below:

1) The target of civil works about additional class rooms (ACR) was 530 units, where L.P. 500 units and 30 units in the year 2007-08. In both the cases 50% works progressed.
2) Total 1609 teachers (one teacher per L. P. School) have been imparted training by 140 resource persons. Besides this, advancement of educational performance through teacher Support Training has been given to 6382 teachers. Bidya Jyoti intervention of SSA and UNICEF has given need based training. 4-day non-residential training of 3056 L.P. teachers has been conducted at zone level. A total number of 1643 teachers was imparted. 3 -day English Teachers Training at block level was given on Novó07. Total 5044 LP and UP teachers were imparted training and remedial teaching (prostuti 2008) was conducted for the whole month of January 2008.
3) The total status of people community in Cachar district are SMCs 2059, VECs 920, TGECs 120, WECs 38, GPECs 163, and Mother Group 1610 as per DISE 2009-2010. In Cachar district the Education for All (EFA) Week 2008 was

organized in 2058 schools, 116 clusters 8 blocks and also the district level competition.

4) After implementation of SSA it was found that some of the children could not be enrolled in existing schools and most of the children remained never enrolled or were dropout due to long distance between home and school. To minimize the gap, under alternative education SSA opened some centres like Jyoti Kendra in urban areas and EGS and Sanjoygi Siksha Kendra in rural areas. As per DISE 2009-2010, there are 246 EGS centres with 16845 learners. In the financial year 2009-2010, 111 EGS centres were converted in to formal LP schools as per Government order. Besides, 1615 children with special needs were provided with home based education for which Cachar is awarded as the best district.

5) SSA recognizes the importance of early childhood and education in the 3-6 years age group.

6) To achieve one of the objectives of SSA it is found that the reduced trend of the out- of-school children in cachar district is decreasing which is 14215 in 2007-2008, 4436 in 2008-2009, 2134in 2009-2010 and 2010-2011.

7) A data collection format (DCF) is prepared to collect data every year through District Information System for Education. This is the only source of data collection taken from the school level and habitations level. The data are verified at schools, cluster, block and district level. This is used during preparation of annual budget and plan of action for SSA.