

CHAPTER - SIX

CONCLUSIONS

The British East India Company came to India in 1600. They were the principal agent in disseminating western or modern education in India. They organised a huge, extensive, well-ramified state machinery to administer the conquered territory. A large number of educated Individuals were required to staff this immense machinery of political rule and it was not possible to secure this supply of educated people from Britain herself. So, therefore, it became necessary to establish schools and colleges in India to produce educated people who would staff the administrative apparatus of the British rule. They entrusted the key posts in this state machinery to the British and filled the subordinate posts with educated Indians. The political-administrative and economic necessity mainly urged the British government to establish schools and colleges in India, where modern or western education which alone could meet the needs of modern nation was imparted and these educational institutions provided clerks for the government and commercial officers, lawyers, versed in the structure and processes of the new legal system, doctors trained in the modern medical science, technicians, and teachers. Three main agencies were responsible for the spread of western education in India and they were (i) the foreign Christian missionaries (ii) the British government and (iii) progressive Indians. The British East India Company also passed some resolution and had also done numerous activities for the introduction of western education system. Amongst them Charles Grants Plan, Charter Act of 1813, Macaulay's minute, Lord William Bentinck's resolution is remarkable.

The downward filtration theory encouraged the missionaries to open several schools and colleges for educating the higher classes of the Indian society. The

immediate aim of getting educated people to run the various jobs in the administration was fully achieved and this policy promoted western knowledge and science among the Indians, who broadened their outlook in life. And by contacting with western thought it helped to develop democratic and liberal ideas among the Indian masses. But the downward filtration theory was an unplanned educational system and it was an urban system of education in a rural country, it created a gulf between the English educated upper and middle classes and the lower Indian masses.

In this way western education was introduced in India. After the Charls Grant plans, charter Act of 1813, Macaulay's minute, downward filtration theory and Lord William Bentinck's statements a numbers of educational plan as introduced in India by the British government. They are like wood's despatch of 1854, Indian education commission of 1882 and the university commission of 1902. Not only these in the 20th century numerous educational plan was proposed and introduced on the efforts of educated Indians, they are like Gokhale's resolution in the imperial Legislative council on primary education of 1911, resolution of the Government of India on education in 1913, Calcutta university commission (1917-1919), national movement in education (1905-1921), Education under Dyarchy (1921-1937), Hartong Committee of 1928, education under provincial autonomy and congress ministers (1937-1939), Abbot wood report (1937), Report on the Post-War educational development in India (1944) are remarkable. But the real foundation of the western education is credited to the Charter Act of 1813, Macaulay's Minute and Lord William Bentinck's Resolution of 1835. The educational plan which was introduced in the late 19th and in early 20th was like a measure to pave the education of India which was laid foundation by the charter Act of 1813, Macaulay's minute of 1834 and Lord William Bentinck's resolution of 1835 in right way.

Regarding introduction of western education in Barak Valley, information on the condition of educational institutions as found by the British in Cachar was gathered from a letter written in June 1834, by T. Fisher, the superintendent of Cachar, to the Commissioner of Dacca Division. On the incorporation of Cachar into the administration Unit of Dacca Division of Bengal Presidency, Mr. T. Fisher, the first superintendent of Cachar, suggested that the school be set up in Cachar following the model of Bengal Presidency. The first English school was founded by Welsh Presbyterian Mission in 1863 and taken over by the Government in 1868. The introduction of English school by Welsh Presbyterian Mission, with the efforts of William Pryse was beginning of English form education system in Barak Valley. William Pryse is also known as the pioneer of western education in Barak Valley.

So far as the pre British education system of India and Barak Valley is concerned there was no systematic education system and mainly three types of education system was available, viz, Hindu form of education, Buddhist form of education and Mohammedan form of education system.

(a) In the *Hindu* form education system *Gurukul*, *Gaurigraha* and *Pathsala* education system was prevailed. In this system the pupils were required to spend a good many years, from the age of six to twenty-one, in the house of their preceptors. It must be noted that education was not universal but it was confined to particular classes. There were three types of institutions, the *Parishads*, the *Tols* and the *Pathsalas*. The *Parishads* were assemblies of the elders, almost exclusively Brahmins of the community. The *Tols* were the second type of these institutions for imparting education, and it had residential quarters attached to it. The *Pathsalas* were the real elementary schools in ancient India which imparting instructions in reading, writing and arithmetic

and these schools are still numerous throughout the country. The schoolmaster of the *Pathsalas* was an officer of the village community and either rent free lands were assigned to him or he was given some grains out of the village harvest as compensation.

- (b) In the *Buddhist* form of education system monasteries were the centres of imparting education. For admission in monasteries the student had to present himself before the teacher and request him for giving education and the teacher was fully responsible for education of the student. Both the teacher and the pupil were equally responsible to the monastery but regarding education, food, cloths, and residence of the student monk, the teacher was wholly responsible. In the *Buddhist* monastery a child could be admitted only on the consent of his parents but children suspected to tuberculosis, leprosy, and other diseases were not admitted. An individual belonging to any caste could be admitted to a *Buddhist* monastery, and after admitted he did not belong to any caste but military men, state employees and slaves were debarred from the admission. In the *Buddhist* form of education system education was classified into two stages that are, primary education and higher education. In the primary education, emphasis was mainly given on the three R's that is teaching of reading, writing and arithmetic, on the other hand in higher education, emphasis was mainly given on religion, philosophy, military science, medicine and other difficult subjects. The educational curriculum was chiefly spiritual because the main aim of *Buddhist* education system was to attain salvation or *Nirvana*. In this education system the study of religious books was the most important and *Suttana*, *Vinaya*, and *Dhamma* were the main subjects prescribe for the study. Besides these, spinning weaving, printing of the cloth, tailoring, sketching,

accountancy, medicine, surgery and coinage were the other subjects of *Buddhist* education. Talking about the medium of instructions in *Buddhist* education system well-nigh the entire important *Buddhist* works were written in *Pali* and primary education consisted of three R's and principles of Buddhism. The child was primarily educated in the knowledge of the alphabet, vowels, *Sandhis*, or rules of combinations, *Samasa* and other grammatical propositions and knowledge of grammar was also an essential part in the education system. From these interpretations it is clear that primary education was a harmonious combination of both secular and spiritual aspects of education.

- (c) In the medieval India there was the emergence *Mohammadan* education system. In this system the emphasis was given on *Maktab* and *Madrasah* system of education. In the *Mohammadan* form of education system the Mughal rulers also afforded hostel to the scholars. The aim of Islamic primary education was to teach the students knowledge of the alphabets and religious prayers and this was done in the *Maktabs*. The students entered into *Madrasah* after finishing their academic career in *Maktabs* and for this no formal ceremony were observed. The administration of *Madrasah* was conducted by a private managing body or respective benefactors. Higher education in *Madrasah* can be put under two categories that is (a) Secular and (b) Religious and the course covered a period of some ten to twelve years in all. The Secular education system in *Madrasah* included in its curriculum subjects like Arabic grammar, prose, literature and logic and philosophy, law, astrology, arithmetic, history, geography, medicine, agriculture and composition etc. the medium of instructions was mainly Arabic.

Information about the system of education in pre British period which prevailed in Barak Valley was covered insignificance no written records of Kachari rule and tradition current amongst the Kachari give any reliable information about the education and literature in colonial Cachar. Education was mainly manned by private individuals and concerns, but royal patronage was occasionally extended to scholars for their erudition and contribution towards dissemination of learning. However it is presumed that the *Gurukul* system of education, traditional system of education of early days found popular support in Cachar as in other parts of the province. In the *Gurukul* system of education no tuition fee was charged and students were also used to sit on the ground over which mats of *Kusa* grass or reeds were usually spread. In the seventeenth century of Christian era, a numbers of writers and poets of Cachar composed some poetical works. Noteworthy amongst those is a poetry book named *Shri Naradiya Rasamrita*, written by Bhubanesh war Basaspati Bhattacharya in 1730 at the request of Rani Chandraprabha, the Kachari queen. Gobinda Chandra, the last Kachari king of Cachar also composed some Vaisnavite poetical works like, *Govinda Kirtan* and *Maharasothsava Lilamrita*.

The only evidence is from the social structure of Dimasha Kachari was that the only form of educational institution that seems have to existed in Cachar district was *Dekachang* or young man's club and no reading and writing were taught there. All the practical trainings on agriculture, handicrafts, music, sports, and tribal-warfare were imparted in *Dekachang* and in sprit it also resembles *Gurugriha* and *Gurukul* system of ancient Indian *Brahmanical* tradition of education system and serves as residential educational institute where all the students and teachers live together and learn community living.

Establishment of educational institutions in India was mainly confined with the Christian missionaries and British Government but in Barak Valley it was mainly confined with the British government, Christian missionary and local masses. Introduction of school in Barak valley was confined with the Captain Jenkins and the introduction of Christian missionary schools was credited to Presbyterian churches. In the Presbyterian Christian community the name William Pryse is unforgettable. After the coming of the Christian missionary and the introduction of western education in India there were also increase in the schools. Sometimes the local people also started schools for the common masses. During the Swadeshi movement of India there were also emergence of a numbers of schools in Barak valley and Cachar.

In the establishment of schools in Barak valley Captain T. Fisher's name was remarkable. He proposed a competent *pundit* from Sylhet to be appointed as a teacher in the first ever school to be establish in Cachar by the British government but his pious desire took to be materialized. On 25 April 1838, J.G. Burns, the Superintend of Cachar has written that the place most suitable for schools in Cachar were the three *thanas* Viz Silchar (the Sudder), Hilakandi and Kattigora and the large *Pargaunnah* of Sonapoor. According to Burns, the spots were the central and accessible to scholars from the neighbouring *Pargaunnahs* except during a portion of the rainy season and with regard to the teachers there were none in Cachar no native of the Zillah capable of this task, but competent men can be had from Sylhet where there was a pundit whom Capt. Fisher proposed employing should schools ever be established. Again in 1857, three schools were started at Silchar, Hailakandi and Katigorah on private subscriptions and the enrolment in the Silchar School was 128, while the schools at Hailakandi and Katigorah averaged 30 each.

But the schools which was established at Silchar, Hailakandi and Katigorah did not received any financial assistance from the government and in 1861 the enrolment of Silchar school came down to 13, finally the school was closed down in 1862. The Katigorah and Hailakandi schools continued to exists on private subscription. Because of Woods Despatch of 1854, a numbers of schools were established in Cachar. Woods Despatch of 1854 recommended the system of giving grant-in-aid to the private sponsored schools, so that the financial commitment of the Government did not become heavy. Finally in 1863, 10th August, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal assigned strong reasons for setting up of Government schools in Cachar, Deoghar and Dibrugarh, and eventually a favourable atmosphere had created for setting up Government school at Silchar.

At the moment the Presbyterian missionary Reverend William Pryse appeared in the field of education in Cachar plain. William Pryse was also popularly known as the pioneer of western education in Barak. William Pryse first started school at Sylhet and now he also wanted to extend his work at Cachar. Accordingly, he wrote to the Superintendent of Cachar for necessary permission, and R. Stewart, the superintendent of Cachar welcome his proposal and allowed him to start his school in the former school house at Silchar. On 1st December he started the Cachar High Grammar School with 80 students. On behalf of the government, the superintendent of Cachar, R Stewart sanctioned a monthly grant of 80 rupees and Babu Nabakishore Sen was appointed as the first Headmaster of the school. The school continued under the grant-in aid system till August 1868 when it was converted to Zillah School and in October 1872, the school came directly under the management and control of the District Committee.

Guru Charan College Silchar, abbreviated as GC College is one of the oldest college in Barak Valley and during the colonial period after Cotton College, Guwahati, it was the only college which imparted higher education in Barak valley. In 4th June 1934 there was meeting amongst the prominent leaders of Silchar for the establishment of higher educational institution that is college in Silchar. The meeting was held at the residence of Kamaini Kumar Chanda, Central road, Silchar and the meeting was presided over by Bishnu Charan Dey. At the mean time the widow of late Gurucharan Nag, Mrs. Kiran Sahsi Nag proposed that the college should be established in the name of her late husband Guru Charan Nag and she was also willing to donate Rs 10000 for the establishment of college. In this way Guru Charan College was established on 15 July 1935 with the enrolment of 55 students and Arun Kumar Chandra was the first principal. In the beginning the college was housed in a deserted bungalow of Promode Chandra Dutta at Rongpur on the bank of river Barak. Unfortunately riverbank erosion began to engulf the College premises and it was shifted temporarily to the campus of Silchar Normal school. This temporary phase of accommodation was soon over and with the help of insistence from different quarters the college was able to acquire a vast area of about 7.1 acres in the Silchar municipal area. Initially the college had been affiliated to Calcutta university and in 1949 the college got an affiliated to Guwahati university. Finally with the establishment of Assam University, Silchar, in 1994, GC College has been affiliated to it.

After the establishment of educational institutions, the British government also created a numbers of posts for the smooth and regular running of the schools in Assam and Barak Valley. They also introduced medium of instruction and inspection agency (inspector of schools) in the respective schools of Assam and Barak Valley.

Not only these, time by time British Government also passed a numbers of Educational Bill which tried to shape the education system in the proper way.

So far as the role of Christian missionaries in the field of education in Bark Valley Presbyterian missionary is remarkable. Before the coming of the Presbyterian Christian missionary in Barak Valley, education was mainly confined with the kings, *Brahmins* and priestly caste. The *Hindu* society of Barak valley was consisted of social evil and education for the lower caste was always neglected. The Christian missionary came in Barak Valley and they converted a numbers of lower caste people into Christianity. Along with conversion they also gave them education by establishing a numbers of English medium schools. People also welcome their religion because in the Christian religion there was no caste system. Among the Christian in Barak Valley the name of William Pryse and Miss S.M. Dass names are remarkable. In the census of 1931 the literacy rate in all religion the Christian community stood on the top. They also spread education amongst the schedule caste, schedule tribe and more other backward classes and tea garden labourer.

The beginning of educational work conducted by the Christian missionary was started with Mr. William Pryse, and it is also mentioned in the beginning that William Pryse opened a school at Silchar, the chief town of Cachar district in 1856. The establishment of schools was followed by the opening of High school in December 1863, towards which a monthly government grant of 60 rupees was sanction by Captain Stewart a government agent of British government of that time. Mr. William Pryse desired to develop the educational work in Cachar and he also got enthusiastic support from Captain Stewart. Mr. Pryse had a numbers of schools in Cachar plains of Barak Valley. Among them were: Cachari School in Barkhola, which was supported by the widow of the old Cachari king, Gobinda Chandra, who was murdered in 1830;

Manipuri School in Lakhipur, Naga (Kabui) school in Binakandi; and Manipuri School in Katigora. Arrangements were also made for sending teachers to numbers of other villages outside Silchar of Cachar's plain that is Hailakandi and Tarapore etc and a portion of that is one half of expenses of each school was borne by the British government

At Karimganj educational work of the mission was started by Dr. Williams and Miss S.M. Dass. They established a High School for boys. In 1896, the sub-inspector of school visited the school and the sub-inspector was very much please to see the progress of the educational work of the school. In 1898 Miss S.M. Dass reported that in 1897, the work in the week days and Sunday school at Karimganj had been very encouraging. The girls of the school were examined in the middle of the December by the local government sub inspector of schools. Miss S.M. Dass further added that in the summer and rainy seasons there were the great drawback to the daily attendance of girls. In 1901, Mrs. Gerland Williams opened another school for the poor girls in the nearby villages, but this school was soon closed down because she had to move to the Hills with her little girl to avoid the heat. But Miss S.M. Dass's school was making progress. Up to 1912 Miss S.M. Dass conducted the school but from 1913 Miss M.A. Jones took over the charge of the girls' school, and again in 1915 Miss Hetty Evans took the charge.

Another girls' school was built in 1925 and it was inaugurated by the Minister of Assam. Miss Blodwen William took over the responsibility of the school in 1935. In November 1936, the Governor of Assam visited Karimganj to open new Girls school at Karimganj. The Presbyterian Church of Mizoram, Synod Mission Board established an English medium School at Karimganj, called "Rowlands Memorial High school". In this way the Christian missionary had done commendable job in the

field of education in Barak Valley. The Christian missionary's main motto was to convert people into Christianity and they used education as an instrument. After the coming of Christian missionary the literacy rate in the lower caste people was improved. Barak Valley's society was caste stratified and there were also social evils which cut down the rights of lower caste people. People accepted Christian religion because in Christianity there was no place for caste and social taboos. In the Census of 1931, the literacy rate in all religion of Barak Valley the Christian religion stood on the top. For details see appendix 8.

The impact of western education in India as well as in Barak Valley were many. With the introduction of western education, there was also emergence of new educated middle class people. In Barak valley the literacy rate was increased and the western education also changed the indigenous education system. In 1931, there was tremendous increase in the literacy rate. In comparing three census years, there was a huge difference between the literacy rates of 1911 and 1931. The proportion of literate *Hindu* has risen considerably, namely males from 212 to 255 per Million and females from 29 to 48 per million. The advancement in Cachar plain areas was also being particularly good. Next to Hindus, but a long behind them, comes Muslims and their proportionate increase in literacy rate was also decidedly satisfactory. In Surma valley the increase had been from 85 literate males per million to 120 and from 4 literate females per million to 19. Sylhetti Muslims are considerably more backward in literacy than Sylhetti Hindus but they have made remarkable progress during the last ten years and, if they maintain it, the next generation of Sylhetti Muslims should be very nearly as literate as the next generation of Hindus. From this line it is clear that the literacy rate in Bengali Muslim of Barak Valley also in progress in 1931. Talking about the literacy rate by religion in Cachar plains, the Christian community stood on

the top. In 1931, 356 male and 151 female amongst the Christian community were literate. For details see appendix table number 8.

In the census of 1931 there was also an increase in persons who literate in English. From age 5 to 10 there were 41 males and 9 females, from age 10 to 15 there were 127 males and 19 females and from age 15 to 20 there were 353 males and 25 females and from age 20 and over there were 224 males and 15 females were literate in English per 10,000. When looking back to last three censuses that is 1901, 1911 and 1921 the literacy rate in English was also increasing day by day. In 1901, all ages five and over there were 37 males and 5 females in per 10000 people. In 1911 there were 127 males and 6 females per 10000 peoples and in 1921 there were 185 males and 11 females in per 10000 people. For details see appendix table number 6 and 7.

Female education was also always neglected by the pre British Barak valley society but after the introduction of western education female also got education. Many women from Barak valley also got education from Girls' Mission school and after getting education they also served in different educational institution of Barak valley. Some of them also participated in national movement of India amongst them the names of Suprava Dutta, Bilangamayi Kar, Matangini Das, SunitiBala Das, Nalini Bala Deb Chudhuri Sardhasundari Chaudhury, Charubala Sen are remarkable.

With the introduction of western education, there were also emergence of newspapers, journal and printing presses in Barak valley and a numbers of educated personalities worked as the editor of the numbers of newspapers and journals. Cachar district has its own printing press in 1885. The Silchar printing press, which now exists on Central Road was the first printing press founded by Babu Hara Kishore Gupta and it was also followed by the establishment of another printing press Sadhya press by Babu Radhakanta Sadhya. With the growth of the printing press also

facilitated the progress of journalism and the earliest known newspaper of Cachar was Bengali weekly *Silchar* and Babu Bhusan Sen was its editor. The intellectuals like Bidhu Bhusan Sen, pundit Bhuban Mohon Vidyarnava a great name in the history of journalism in Cachar.

The low caste people of Barak valley like Namasudra, Patni, Teli also got education after the introduction of western education though in a very limited scale in Barak Valley. Before the introduction of western and English form of new education system only Brahmin and Pundits had got the opportunities for education. But after the introduction of western education every caste and class of peoples began to study. In the year 1911, there were 18 males and no women were literate in English in per 10000 persons in the Patni group of people and in 1921 it increased to 18 males and 1 female in 10000 persons. And in over all literacy there were 76 males and 5 females in per 10000 persons in 1911 and it again increased to 45 males and 2 females in 1921. The yogi community there were 41 males who were literate in English and no female in per 10000 people and in the year 1921, there were 101 males and 3 females who were literate in English. Talking about the overall literacy there were 6 females and 130 women in 1911 and it increased to 178 males and 13 females in 1921 in per 10000 persons. Namasudra, Sutradhar is also can be seen in Bengali community of present day and the impact of education can also be seen amongst them. In the year 1911, amongst Namasudra's there were 49 males and 1 female in literacy census and it was increased to 67 males and 4 females in 1921. Amongst them in 1911, 5 males were literate in English and in 1921 it increased to 40 males and 1 females in per 10000 persons. In 1911 amongst Sutradhar, there were 103 males and 2 females were literate in per 10000 persons and 1921 it increased to 156 males and 7 females. Amongst them in 1911, 21 males were literate in English and in 1921, 88 males and 1

female were literate in English in per 10000 persons. For details see appendix table number 4.

The pioneers and all subsequent leaders of Indian nationalism came from the educated classes of the Indian society. Amongst them Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Subash Chandra Bose were remarkable. A number of British statesmen and writers claimed that Indian nationalism was the product of the western education which the Britishers introduced in India. They also asserted that the urge for national freedom grew among the Indian people because modern education helped them to study and imbibe the doctrines of liberation propounded by western authors.¹ The British government was also frequently alarmed at the spread of extreme political ideas among the educated Indians which they imbibed from the political literature of Europe due to their knowledge of English. As a result of the introduction of western education, Barak Valley also witnessed the emergence of new class which played active role in the freedom struggle of India. The formation of Indian National Congress gave expression to the English educated middle class. The Surma Valley Association was founded on 11 August 1906, and its first conference was held at Jalsuka in Sylhet district under the president ship of Kamini Kumar Chanda, a prominent lawyer and leader of Silchar. After The Surma Valley Association, The Arunachal Ashram founded at Mashimpur near Silchar by Thakur Dayananda became another important institution for preaching awareness of freedom and brotherhood. The salt Satyagraha led by the Gandhiji also found sympathetic response in the Barak Valley. In 1941, the Congress programme of individual Satyagraha was also followed by in the Barak Valley and Karunasindhu Roy was the first to offer Satyagraha. At Silchar, Arun Kumar Chanda, Deputy Leader of the

1. A.R. Desai, *Op.cit*, P.146.

Congress Legislature Party was arrested and also sentenced to one year imprisonment with a fine of Rs. 100. In this way the educated middle class of Silchar responded the national struggle for independence. The names of Shyama Charan Dev, popularly known as the 'Gandhi of Silchar', Arun Kumar Chanda, Bipin Chandra Pal, Dr. Brajendra Bhattacharjee, Gopen Roy, Kamini Kumar Chanda, Dr.Sundari Mohon Das are remarkable in the history of freedom struggle in Barak Valley.