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Introduction of Western Education in Cachar Plains

Sagolsem Kalyan Singha

Research Scholar, Assam University, Department of History, Silchar, Assam, India

Abstract:

At present the state of Assam is composed of three physical divisions, namely, the Brahmaputra Valley, the Barak Valley and hill range. The Barak Valley formed the southern part of the state of Assam. Barak Valley is a post partitioned term. Before independence Sylhet and Cachar together formed Surma Valley (Karimganj was an integral part of Sylhet district). The two Valley's derived their names from the respective main rivers, the Brahmaputra and the Barak following through east to west in the valley's. The hill region formed by the Karbi Anglong and the North Cachar hills district and the state of Meghalaya in the north; the state of Manipur in the east; the state of Mizoram in the south and the state of Tripura and the Sylhet district of Bangladesh in the west. The plain tract covering Cachar and Hailakandi districts of Barak Valley were earlier known as 'Cachar plains'. It is surrounded on the three sides by hills and only on the lower side it is exposed to Karimganj district which till 1947 was integrally included in Sylhet district without any natural barrier. In fact, the tract is a geographical extension of Sylhet. As it is inhabited by the Indo-Aryan population, the settlements in Cachar plains caused in the early times by the immigrant peasants from Bengal in their North Eastern march to the farthest limit of the Indo-Gangetic plains, in search of agricultural land. In fact, the divided between India and Bangladesh the Cachar-Sylhet region is a single valley formed by the Barak river. In the British period it is called the Surma Valley after a branch of the river, which flanked Sylhet town, and the undivided Valley was the homeland of a common dialect group of Bengali.

Information about the system of education which prevailed in Cachar in the early times is shrouded in obscurity. Scanty references are available on the education system of Cachar of during Kachari rule. So the research made an attempt to investigate the system of education in Cachar during Kachari rule. However, it is presumed that the Gurukul system of education and Dekachang or Young man's club found popular support in Cachar. All practical things on agriculture, handicrafts, music, sports and tribal-warfare were imparted in Dekachang.

When British took over Cachar formally after the death of Gobinda Chandra in 1832, there was some Tols, where Brahmin and Kayastha pundits imparted informal education. Information on the condition of educational institutions as founded by the British in Cachar can be 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 administrative unit of Dacca division of Bengal Presidency, Mr. T. Fisher suggested that school be set up in Cachar following the model of Bengal Presidency. J. G. Burns proposed to set up schools at Silchar, Hailakandi and Katigorah. The Amolahs started three schools at Silchar, Hailakandi and Katigorah. It was the beginning of western education in Barak Valley. The Presbyterian mission also played splendid role in the introduction of school and spread of western education in Barak Valley. After the introduction of western education in Barak Valley, the British government also took a numbers of measures for improving education system and smooth running of schools. For these, they also created the post of Inspectors, Assistant inspectors. They also made examination system of Educational Officers who were serving in different parts of Eastern Bengal and Assam.

Western education has its impact in the society of Barak Valley. The introduction of western education in Barak Valley resulted, the emergence of new educated class who actively participated in the freedom struggle of India. The literacy rate amongst the women and lower caste masses was also increased. The proposed study has taken the view whether the spread of western education was comprehensive and whether, the introduction of western education had been marked by the establishment of English institutions in wider scale and whether the western or colonial education had transformed the traditional society of Barak Valley.

Keywords: *Introduction of western education, establishment of schools, subject and curriculum, inspecting agency of schools and impact*

1. Introduction

The Barak Valley forms the southern part of the state of Assam. Before the partition and independence of India it was a larger part of Surma Valley. The state of Assam is composed of three physical divisions, namely, the Brahmaputra valley, the Barak valley and the hill range. The two Valley's derived their names from the respective main rivers, the Brahmaputra and the Barak following through east to west in the valley's. The hill region formed by the Karbi Anglong and the North Cachar hills district and the state of Meghalaya in the north; the state of Manipur in the east; the state of Mizoram in the south and the state of Tripura and the Sylhet

district of Bangladesh in the west. The plain tract covering Cachar and Hailakandi districts of Barak Valley were earlier known as 'Cachar plains'. It is surrounded on the three sides by hills and only on the lower side it is exposed to Karimganj district which till 1947 was integrally included in Sylhet district without any natural barrier. In fact, the tract is a geographical extension of Sylhet. As it is inhabited by the Indo-Aryan population, the settlements in Cachar plains caused in the early times by the immigrant peasants from Bengal in their North Eastern march to the farthest limit of the Indo-Gangetic plains, in search of agricultural land. In fact, the divided between India and Bangladesh the Cachar-Sylhet region is a single valley formed by the Barak river. In the British period it is called the Surma Valley after a branch of the river, which flanked Sylhet town, and the undivided Valley was the homeland of a common dialect group of Bengali.

Information about the system of education which prevailed in Cachar in early time is shrouded in obscurity. No written records of Kachari rule and tradition current amongst the Kacharis give any reliable information about the education and literature of ancient Cachar. 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 provinces. From the social structure of Dimasha Kachari this much can be said that the only form of educational institution that seems to have existed in the district was *Dekachang* or young man's club. Though no reading and writing were taught in *Dekachang*, all the practical trainings on agriculture, handicrafts, music, sports and tribal-warfare were imparted there. In spite, *Dekachang* resembles *Gurugriha* and *Gurukul* system of ancient Hindu tradition and serves as a residential educational institute where all the students and teachers live together and learn community living.

Education in Cachar, as it was in the whole of Assam, during the first part of the nineteenth century, was in very low ebb due to confusion caused by local strifes, aggression of the Burmese and Manipuris and rivalries between the Kachari kings and local chiefs. So when the British took over Cachar formally after death of Gobinda Chandra, the last Kachari king in 1832, there was practically no educational institution in Cachar. Though there were some *Tols*, where Brahmin and *Kayastha Pandits* imparted informal education, their conditions were no good. The Raja sometimes allowed some sums to a few Brahmins and *Kayasthas* while they were absent from the country pursuing their studies in Bengal. The little learning extant in Cachar was strictly confined to the Brahmins, though the *Muhammadan* section of the population was the most numerous. Information on the condition of educational institutions as found by the British in Cachar can be 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. J.G. Burns proposed to set up schools at Silchar, Hailakandi and Katigorah. The *Amolas* started three schools at Silchar, Hailakandi and Katigorah. It was the beginning of western education in Barak Valley and Cachar. But these schools except the Silchar did not continue for long. In 1860-61, Silchar School was the only sole serving school of Cachar with only thirteenth students on roll. By 1870-71 the number of schools in Cachar increased to 5 of which one was Government English School with 163 students, 3 government vernacular schools with 71 students and 1 government aided vernacular school with 14 students. 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 and as well as in Cachar plain. William Pryse is also known as the pioneer of western education in Barak Valley. In this way western education was introduced in Barak Valley. The main sources of the work are based on various primary and secondary sources. The secondary sources are books and regarding primary sources census reports are used.

2. Objectives of the Study

- 2.1. To understand the background of introduction of Western education in Cachar plains.
- 2.2. To investigate the process of establishment of school in Cachar.
- 2.3. To study the impact of Western education on the society of Barak Valley.

3. Establishment of Schools in Cachar Plain

Regarding the establishment of schools in Barak Valley, Captain T. Fisher's name is remarkable. Fisher 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.C. Burns, the Superintendent of Cachar has written, 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. The spots were the central and accessible to scholars from the neighboring *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. He also imagined that Rs. 20 monthly would be sufficient salary for the teacher and the expenses of stationary can be ascertained and settled thereafter and either was charged as expanded of a consolidated sum allowed. Accordingly, a school was established at Silchar and maintained by the voluntary subscription of the *Amlahs* and the Superintendent. The subscription of the school gradually felt off and finally the school saw abolished. And in 1851, a petition was made to the commissioner of Surma Valley, on behalf of the guardians for providing educational facilities to the local people. As the result of these, the superintend was call upon to ascertain how many persons would pay the rate of one *anna* per month, if public school was established. But no one came forward to subscribe the amount for the education of their children and on the other hand, a section of the people requested superintendent to establishing a government school, where all the children would receive schooling education. G. Verner the superintendent felt that if some government schools were established in Cachar they would benefit the district and the children of the more respectable portion of the community would

gradually get into the habit of attending regularly and learnt to read and write which but few of them can do then. So he moved the request but unfortunately his recommendation did not find the favour with the Government of Bengal. However, in 1857, three schools were started at Silchar, Hailakandi and Katigora on private subscriptions and the enrolment in the Silchar School was 128, while the schools at Hailakandi and Katigora averaged 30 each.

The schools which was established at Silchar Hailakandi and Katigora 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. But during the five years that is from 1857 to 1862 the school lasted many local boys received instructions in Bengali and English. Anyway, the Katigora and Hailakandi schools continued to exist on private subscription, naturally it makes an interesting note that the inhabitants at the outstations at Hailakandi and Katigora could maintain private schools when the only school at Sadar Station had to be abandoned for the lack of patronage. Later on Captain Stewart opined that the establishment of schools at Silchar should be the duty of the government as it would be impossible to set up a school again on public subscription, and the public having been disgusted with the apathy of the Government to extend financial assistance. He further added believing that the money spent in opening a government school in Silchar would be by no means thrown away and would be put a measure of justice to the people whose revenue was so rapidly increasing and whose resources were so important, the superintendent felt that the government should first build a school house and then appoint a good English and Bengali teacher. According to him the monthly expenditure would be Rs. 100 to 150. On 17th July 1862 Mr. Stewart requested R.L. Martin, Inspector of schools, South East Circle, Bengal, for obtaining Government sanction for the same and set up the useful institution once more again and in continuation on 16 September, he again proposed that Rs 1800 be allowed for the construction of a large 'Kutcha Pucca' house as school building. He also proposed to the inspector that the Government should be solicited to grant to Cachar School the same allowance that were accorded to the lowest class of Zilla schools in the regulation provinces and that 'at first the whole staff of school masters' be not required at the Sadar Station and the junior teachers 'be deputed to outstations of Katigora and Hailakandi'. And at the outstations, that is Katigora and Hailakandi the school houses should be erected by the parents of the students themselves, and contingencies and repairs of the Sadar School house could be paid out of the number of fees collected from the scholars. Woods dispatch of 1854 also played a vital role in establishing schools in Cachar because the dispatch had already 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, but in districts remote from the great centre of civilization and activity the government was prepared to take upon itself greater responsibility. Finally, in 1863, 10th August, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal assigned strong reasons for setting up of Government schools in Cachar, Deogarh and Dibrugarh, and eventually a favorable 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 is also popularly known as the pioneer of western education in Barak valley and he had started a school at Sylhet. In 1859 one of his students from his school Babu Nabakishore Sen came out successful in the Entrance Examination of Calcutta University. With his success in Sylhet, William Pryse wanted to extend his work at Cachar and accordingly, 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. In November 1863, Pryse came to Silchar and on 1 December 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. In 1879, on 2nd May, the secondary education was transferred to the control of the Inspector of schools, while the Deputy Commissioner and the members of the District Committee was regarded as the visitors of the school and despite the donations, private subscriptions were realized for the maintenance of the school. As the result of these Babu Nabakishore Sen, the first Headmaster became the Deputy inspector of schools of Barak Valley and Babu Abhay Charan Bhattacharjee took his charge of head master in the school.

3.1. *Subjects and Medium of Instruction*

Meena Sharma Barkataki in her work, British Administration in North-east India, 1826-1874, opines that, reading and writing the alphabets, spelling and arithmetic as far as addition, multiplication and division were included in the course of study in the primary level and preliminary knowledge of grammar was also introduced in the course of education. The entire period of primary education was divided into five classes, which are first to fifth standard and the standards of books varied according to the level of the classes. Bengali was generally the medium of instruction, though sometimes, the books of the course were translated into Assamese. History, Geography, literature (prose and poetical readers), Grammar and Arithmetic was included in higher level subjects of study. The studies of these subjects were compulsory and the aim of teaching these subjects was to make the students to know the people around them, nature of the country and the logic of the language they had learned. Both the English and vernacular departments, the subjects were same though the titles of the books might differ. The difference between the books and their standard varied depending on the locality of the school and level of the respective classes.

3.2. *Inspecting Agency of Schools*

A school is consisting of teacher and students and for the smooth running of any institution an inspecting agency is required. The British government also created a number of posts for the smooth and regular running of the schools in Assam and Barak Valley. Some great alternations took place in the educational set up in 1844 in Assam. In this year Commissioner Jenkins became the Superintendent and Robinson was appointed as the Inspectors of the schools of Assam and the Inspector was comprised with the duty

to visit every school as often as possible and to introduce a uniform system of instruction in the entire province. A reasonable rate of travelling allowance was also sanctioned to the Inspector to encourage him to visit the schools scattered all over the province as frequently as possible and he also got control over the masters of all schools. The head master of each school was required to submit a monthly report on the attendance and progress of the students and regarding the students, the inspector had to see if they were supplied with the books for their instruction either gratis or at a moderate price. The Inspector was also entrusted with the duty to recommend the establishment of more schools in the localities where he felt them to be required and he was also supposed to persuade the natives, especially the more respectable among them to send their children to the schools. As a whole, the inspector had to carry out the policy of the government with a sound and gradually improving system of education through the medium the native language. Besides the general duties assigned to inspector, the inspector had to make periodical reports on the different schools which should be embodied in the annual reports of the head of the education department. For a single person in possession of a vast jurisdiction, such investigations with all perfectness was not possible, so, in order to secure this difficult position, in May 1855, three second grade Sub-inspectors were appointed in Assam. They had to visit the schools of their respective circles and subdivisions at least three times in a year. They had also to superintend the various academic plans for ensuring a great regularity of attendance.

4. Impact of Western Education on Cachar Plains

Education had made more progress in the Cachar plains than in other parts of the province. The number of pupils under instruction in 1880-1, 1890-1, and 1903-4 was 3,025, 5,157, 7,900, and 8,0900 respectively. That the development of education has been satisfactory is also evident from the fact that the number of pupils at school in 1903-04 was more than three times that of the number twenty-nine years before. At the Census of 1901, 5 per cent, of the population in the plains (9.1 males and 0.4 females) were returned as literate. Only a small proportion of the natives of the north Cachar hills know how to read and write, and the percentage of literacy in the plains is reduced by the large number of ignorant coolies brought up to the tea gardens. There were 245 primary, 6 secondary, and 2 special schools in the district in 1903-04. The number of female scholars was 298. The enormous majority of the boys under instruction and all the girls are in the primary stage. Of the male population of school-going age 19 per cent., and of the female population of the same age less than one per cent., were under primary instruction. The total expenditure on education was Rs. 63,000 of which Rs. 13,000 was derived from fees. About 43 percent of the direct expenditure was devoted to primary schools.

4.1. Increase in the Literacy Rate

Primary education is ineffective unless it at least produces literacy and the only definite material for ascertaining the literacy rate in India is provided by the Census and a person was defined as a literate for census purposes if he or she could write a letter to a friend and read the reply. According to the census report of 1931, of the natural divisions the Surma Valley stands first in the proportion of literacy, there being 110 literates in every 1000 persons in that Valley aged 5 and above. In 1931, Cachar plain and Sylhet were the next best district of Assam in literacy rate and which almost had dead heat with 112 and 110 literates per million. According to Census report of 1931, "with a steady spread of education this is exactly what we would expect. There are now-a-days many more opportunities for children to acquire literacy than formerly and hence the proportion in the age group 15-20 which represents persons who have recently passed the ordinary school-going age should be larger than among older people." From these lines it is also clear that in 1931, the school going students were increasing and literacy rate amongst them also increasing.

| Natural division | Age 10 to 20 | | | | | | Age 20 and over | | | | | |
|------------------|--------------|------|------|---------|------|------|-----------------|------|------|---------|------|------|
| | Males | | | Females | | | Males | | | females | | |
| | 1931 | 1921 | 1911 | 1931 | 1921 | 1911 | 1931 | 1921 | 1911 | 1931 | 1921 | 1911 |
| Surma Valley | 214 | 191 | 142 | 44 | 25 | 11 | 213 | 178 | 139 | 27 | 15 | 7 |

Table 1: Number of literates per million at certain age periods from 1911 to 1931

Source: -C.S. Mullan, *Census of India, 1931, vol.-iii (Assam), Part-1 Report. p151*

From the above table we can see that the literacy rate in Surma valley was increasing. Here three census years were given and there is 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.

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.

The literacy rate of 1921 was doubled than in 1911 and not only these people also began to study the education system which can give them job. So, it is also an impact of western education system. In this regard in 1921 in the census report G.T. Lloyd added a point

noted by Babu Jagannath De of Silchar, "He quotes Chanakya's dictum " an educated man is respected everywhere" and note that the so-called unclean castes have risen much in the social scale by means of education; they can mix with the higher castes on an equal footing in schools and offices; they can improve their manners and customs and thus mix more easily with members of other castes- for example, the Yogis and Patnis of Cachar are said to have gained much in this way by education." This lines clearly reflects the caste system and education of 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 overall 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 female 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.

| Caste or race | Number per 1000 aged 5 and over who are literate | | | | | | Number per 10000 aged 5 and over who are literate in English | | | | | |
|---------------|--|-------|---------|---------|-------|---------|--|-------|---------|---------|-------|---------|
| | 1921 | | | 1911 | | | 1921 | | | 1911 | | |
| | persons | males | females | persons | males | females | persons | males | females | persons | Males | females |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| Namasudra | 36 | 67 | 4 | 26 | 49 | 1 | 21 | 40 | 1 | 3 | 5 | |
| Sutradhar | 86 | 158 | 7 | 56 | 103 | 2 | 47 | 88 | 1 | 11 | 21 | |
| Yogi | 98 | 178 | 13 | 69 | 130 | 6 | 53 | 101 | 2 | 21 | 41 | |

Table 2: Literacy by caste.

Source: Census of India 1921, Vol- 3 (Assam), report, page 112

4.2. Western Education and Women of Barak Valley

In the 1882 Sihar Municipality was formed in the name of 'Station Committee' and with the contribution of station committee, a girls' primary school was formed at Shillongpatty Silchar. At the same time missionary also started a school at Premtala Silchar. Both the schools imparted primary and upper primary education to girls. While looking back to the Bengali society a numbers of educated Bengali males were expanded in all over Barak Valley and Calcutta by doing jobs under British Government. In Cachar also there were a numbers of government servants and *Amolah*. But in opposite the wives of the middle class and high class Bengali personalities were in under the social taboos. During that time education paved the females in right way. In Barak valley and Cachar people did not paid much attention to the education of girls and females and they mainly think that women had to be sit at home. The change in the status of women came when missionary schools paid attention to educating small girls. Purdah system was also an obstacle in the education of the girls. At the end of the 19th century the female education and role of women in social activity was started in Cachar. With the activities of Christian missionary and British government, Barak Valley produces a numbers of educated women in the beginning of 20th century who contributed a lot in the national movement of India. Some of them also tried to change the status of women of Cachar and Barak Valley.

Hiran Kumari Dutta was born in 1893 and she got admitted in missionary school at Silchar and in the M.E. examination she got B.T. in 1906 she was the president of women's Association. Amitakumar Chanda was the daughter of Kamoini Kumar Chanda and she was also the headmistress of Swadeshi School of Silchar. Saudamini Deb was daughter of Kalimohon Deb and she was born on 1887. His father was a nationalist and he gave education to her. She got married with Shyamacharan Deb and in the earlier her husband work at Habinganj but in 1917 both husband and wife migrated to Silchar. After coming to Silchar both husband and wife began to work at Silchar Mission School. Shyamacharan Deb was the arithmetic teacher and she was the teacher of primary level. Saudamini Deb also regarded as the first teacher who got the teachers training education. In 1920-21 they left the school because of the Swadeshi movement and in 1921, 1st August Dinanath Nabakishore Swadeshi School was established and she also began to work there. Along with the formal education the school imparted vocational education like tailoring for the females. Josna Chanda also got education from Silchar Mission Girls' School and she was also born in 30 March 1904. In 1920 she passed the primary education but there was no institution which imparted higher education to girls. During that time in the entire SurmaVally only Murichand college of Sylhet imparted higher education. Finally, she convinced her father and went Calcutta for higher education and got admitted in Diocession a Womens' college. In this way because of the western education a number of educated women were emerged from Barak Valley. Some of them also participated in national movement of India amongst them the names of Suprava Dutta, Bilangamayi Kar, Matangini Das, Suniti Bala Das, Nalini Bala Deb Chudhuri Sardhasundari Chaudhury, Charubala Sen are remarkable.

4.3. Emergence of Libraries and Printing Press

The progress of education is closely linked with the facilities booksellers, libraries and printing presses. As the result of the progress in the education the demand of books also increased. The very first and earliest book stall in Silchar was started by Babu Mahananda De at Dewanji bazaar. Another student's library was also started at Janiganj. With the progress in the enrolment of the student's government high School maintained a school library from the beginning and other schools also began to maintain their own libraries to meet the demands of the students. The Normal school library was known for its rare collection and similarly, the Gurucharan College authorities had also taken interest in developing the library and reading habits of the pupils. Dr. H.K. Mukherjee, Vice Chancellor of Calcutta University, was happy over the display of newspapers and journals in the student's common room. As early as in 1876, a public library, known as Keatinge Library, was established at Silchar during the visit of Sir H. Keatinge, Chief Commissioner of Assam (1874-76). Renamed as Arun Chanda Ganthagar since independence, it has recently been merged with the District library

In 1885 Cachar district has its own printing press and 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. In the beginning of the 20th century, Aryan Insurance Company also established Aryan press and it was closely followed by the Cachar press of Babu Satyadas Roy and Jayanti Press of Babu Gajendra Chandra Datta. With the growth of the printing press also facilitated the progress of journalism and earliest known newspaper of Cachar district was Bengali weekly *Silchar* and it was printed in the Silchar Press and edited by a teacher of Narshing M.E. School, Babu Bhusan Sen. He was also popularly known as Bidhu Pandit, the editor and had also a powerful pen, and he used it unsparingly against both officials and non-officials. From the Aryan press another Bengali weekly *Surma* also began to publish in 1911, Pundit Chandra Dey Vidyavinode was the first editor and he was succeeded by Pundit Bhuban Mohon Vidyarnava. The Aryan Trading Company at Silchar was the owner publisher and the paper was converted into daily in 1914 and it kept the people informed about the development of First World War. Being discontinued for some years in the twenties, the *Surma* resumed its publication in the thirties under the editorship of Babu Nagendra Chandra Shyam, the noted lawyer-litterateur of Cachar. Shri Hurmat Ali Barlaskar, became the editor in the forties and he also the editor of another Bengali weekly *Azad*. Like the another newspaper, daring in spirit and constructive in criticism, the *Surma* also played a great role in guiding the public opinion in Cachar district and on occasions forced the British Government to note its comments. The newspapers also acted as a fillip to the literary pursuits in Cachar district by opening columns for young talents and Nagendra Chandra Shyam, Ashoke Bijoy Raha, Ramendra Deshamukhya and Sudhir Sen were among the regular contributors. In 1929 Bhabishyat, a Bengali monthly publication also came into existence and Babu Aswini Kumar Chakravarty of Shillongpatty, Silchar was the editor. The paper was printed at the Calcutta printing Works, Calcutta and published from Ukilpatty, Silchar. In 1935, the Gurucharan College Majlis also brought out bits handwritten magazine, *Kundakali* and *Purbasree*, the college Magazine, came into publication since 1940. In 1930 *Vijoyini* was published as the organ of the Silchar Mahila Samiti and it was edited by professor Khushi Mohon Das and in the year 1937, *Saptak*, a literary magazine also published. Before the introduction of the western education in Barak Valley there were no sign of printing Press, journals. And most of the newspapers editors were the well literate person of the Barak Valley, so, the emergence of printing press library and journals also an impact of western education.

The intellectuals like Bidhu Bhusan Sen, pundit Bhuban Mohon Vidyarnava a great name in the history of journalism in Cachar and besides his association with the *Surma*, Bhuban Mohon edited *Deshabrata* and *Janasakti* from Sylhet. Not only these, he was also associated with *Hitavadi* and *Sadhana*, which was published from Calcutta and Dacca respectively and he was also an ardent nationalist without belonging to any political party and wielded his pen forcefully for the national cause. A numbers of intellectuals also published a numbers of books in Cachar and amongst them Babu Suresh Chandra Bhattacharjee, a teacher in the Silchar Government High school, published his book *Cacharer Mahaplaban*. After the introduction of western education besides the newspapers and magazines a numbers of literary works were published from Cachar. The progress of education in the new way of education system added to consciousness of the people and the role of the intellectual middle class in social economic and political behaviour of the people exposed its inherent characteristics.

5. Conclusions

In the pre British India there was not systematic education system and there were mainly three types of education system that is Hindu form of education, Buddhist Form of education and Mohammedan form of education system. In the *Hindu* form education system *Gurukul*, *Gaurigraha* and *Pathsala* education system was prevailed. Like India in Barak valley and Cachar palinsalso during the pre-British period *Gurukul* system of education was prevailed and among the Kachari, *Dekachang* form of education was also prevailed. Education was mainly confined with the Brahmins and priestly caste and the common masses did not get any form of education. There were also a numbers of literary works compiled by the *Brahmins*. Establishment of schools in India was mainly confined with the Christian missionaries and British Government but in Cachar plains it was mainly confined with the British government, Christian missionary and local masses. Amongst the British Officers Captain Jenkins names is remarkable and amongst the Presbyterian Christian community the name William Pryse is also 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. 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 impact of western education in Cachar plain was many. With the introduction of western education, there was also emergence of new educated middle class people. In Cachar plain the literacy rate was increased and the western education also changed the indigenous education system. 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 of women from Cachar plains also got education from Girls' Mission school and after getting education they also serve in different educational institution of Barak valley. A numbers men and women also participated the national struggle for independence of India representing Barak Valley and the leadership of the movement was provided by the educated classes. 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. 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. In this way western education was introduced Barak valley. The spreading of western education in Barak valley was mainly confined to the Christian missionary and local masses.

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