

**Decentralisation Of Primary Education in the
Autonomous District Council of
Karbi Anglong - Assam**

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ABSTRACT

This project which deals with academic, administrative and financial decentralisation of 25 primary schools in the Lumbajong block of Karbi Anglong tribal district in the remote area of Assam, probed into the DPEP intervention. Unlike Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and many other states in India, the DPEP intervention in the North East was limited to only Assam. Despite decentralisation being a major concern, there was a lack of proper intervention for quality improvement of primary education in remote places. The data was collected both from secondary sources at New Delhi, Gauhati and the DPEP Cell at Diphu, Karbi Anglong headquarters and through structured questionnaires administered to State, district, block or circle level authorities. Questionnaires and field visits were conducted along with interviews with Head Teacher and teachers and evaluation of school results, students' copies, teachers' record of work and head teacher's observations. Till today, the memory of this experience is vivid. Whereas some schools, especially those located in urban areas, coped with lack of electricity, water supply, teaching-learning materials making utmost effort, those schools located in rural areas felt a lack of hope of any redress in their demand for quality improvement.

The study is contrary to the author's earlier study on Lai Autonomous District Council in which awareness campaigns had made local bodies both responsive and accountable in imparting quality education to primary schools. If decentralisation has to take place, it needs to cover all spheres in its planning and administration. Implementation necessitates making the community feel that they are also taken into

account in planning, that they are responsible for imparting quality education as much as the State and Central governments.

However, this report clearly reveals that despite the enthusiastic spirit of the Karbis to improve their situation, their demands were not properly taken care of by both the State and Central Government authorities.

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Chapter I

ASSAM

The state of Assam is situated in the heart of the North-east of the Indian sub-continent, located in between latitude $24^{\circ} 1^{\circ} \text{N}$ to $27^{\circ} 58' \text{N}$ and longitude $89^{\circ} 49' \text{E}$ to $97^{\circ} 26' \text{E}$. The State is bounded by Bhutan, Arunachal Pradesh on the north, Nagaland and Manipur on the east, Mizoram and Meghalaya on the south, and Bangladesh and West Bengal on the west. The State is accessible to foreign countries through a narrow corridor (35 km. Wide) between Bangladesh and Nepal. The State has an area of 78,523 km.

To many outsiders, Assam is no more than a land of mountains and malaria, earthquake and floods and the Kamakhya temple. To others, it is a green woodland where slothful serpents, insidious tigers, wild elephants and stealthy leopards peep and peer with virulent eyes and claws. Assam to most of these people, is a distant horizon

The history of Assam is the history of the Brahmaputra valley plus the hills that surround it. Assam is a gateway to seven states as a part of a great tropical rainforest that stretch from the foot hills of the Himalayas.

1.1 Physical Characteristics

The physical features of Assam are characterized by diverse factors such as flood plains, marshes, scattered hillocks, folded hill ranges and old plateaus. On the basis of these characteristics, Assam is broadly divided into three major divisions:-

1. The Brahmaputra valley
2. Hills of Karbi Anglong and North Cachar.
3. Barak valley.

1.1.1 *The Brahmaputra Valley*

Extending east-west for about 725 km. with an average width of 80 km, the Brahmaputra valley is an important physical unit. The Meghalaya plateau and the hills of Karbi Anglong gently slope down to the valley while the lesser Himalayas on the north drops abruptly. The valley is dotted with occasional hillocks locally known as tila.

Numerous small and big tributaries from north and south join the Brahmaputra. The important north bank tributaries are the Subansiri, Bharali, Puthimari, the Pageadiay, Manas, AI and the Sonkosh. The source of these tributaries lie in the eastern Himalaya. The major south bank tributaries are the Burhi Dihing, the Dhansiri, the Kopili, the Digaru, the Kulsi, The Krishnai and the Jinjiram. Brahmaputra valley covers the length of 600 kms., its width is 60 kms. On the east of the plains are Naga hills, Karbi plateau and Meghalaya plateau. The mighty Brahmaputra flows through the plains. Many rivers have flown into the bigger rivers. The whole plain is flooded whenever there is continuous rainfall.

1.1.2 *Barak Valley*

The Barak valley or the Cachar plains lie in between North Cachar hills on the north and the Mizo hills on the south. To the east of the plains stand the Manipur hills and on the west lie the plains of Bangladesh. About $\frac{3}{4}$ th of the valley area has an altitude less than 150 mts. The Jiri, the Diksha, the Chiri, the Mahuna and the Jatinja are the major tributaries of the Barak valley.

1.1.3 *Climate*

The climate of Assam is characterised by heavy rainfall in summer and drought in winter. Very high percentage of relative humidity and a relatively low temperature. Within the state there is significant spatial variation in the climate pattern, primarily because of varying terrain conditions.

1.1.4 *Natural Vegetation*

Assam is rich in natural vegetation, which can be classified into three main types: (a) evergreen (b) mixed deciduous and (c) reverine vegetation. The reserved forest covers 22% of the state's total area. The valuable species found in the forests of Assam include Sali, teak, Sisoo, Khair, Gonari, Bonum Hollong etc. in addition bamboo, cane and thatch are also important forest products.

1.2 Population

Assam is at present, a host to several population groups such as the tribals, the indigenous non-tribals, the Bengali and Hindi immigrants and above all the tea labourers. These groups have their own traditions and culture.

It is a homeland of several tribes – Rabha, Boro, Kachari, Karbi (Mikir), Tiwa (Lalung), Mishing (Miri), etc., each of whom have their own language. These people had migrated to Assam, in the past, from different directions and at different intervals of time. Perhaps at that time they were not called by their respective names as mentioned above. But they had their own culture including language and physical characteristics. In course of time, on account of various factors, changes took place in their different aspects. Whatever might have been the root of their languages, the languages they speak today assumed their present forms in Assam itself. Hence, the speakers of these languages are undoubtedly a part of the people of Assam. Assam has also several labourers engaged in tea plantation from Bihar and other parts of India.

The majority of the people are bilingual. Amongst themselves, they use a medium which is a mixture of Hindi and their own dialects, while the local people speak broken and tribalized Assamese (Chah Bagichar Ahomia i.e., Tea Garden Assamese). There are also a group of people who have been living together for generations and have never spoken their dialect.

The tea garden and ex-tea garden labourers have accepted Assamese as their language. In their way of life too, some of them are indistinguishable from the local Assamese people. Yet another set of population mostly because of economic reasons

came to Assam from erstwhile East Bengal, more particularly from Mymensingh District. In the course of time they too are became a part of the people of Assam.

The people of Assam can be divided into two broad categories: tribal and non-tribal. Government has given a list of scheduled tribes (The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Orders (Amendment) Act, 1976 (No. 108 of 1976, dated the 18th September, 1976) : Census of India 1981:

1.2.1 *Scheduled Tribes*

In the Autonomous Districts live the tribes such as: 1. Chakma; 2. Dimasa, Kachari; 3. Garo; 4. Hajong; 5. Hmar; 6. Khasi, Jaintia, Synteng, Phar, War, Bhoi, Lynggam; 7. Any Kuki tribes; 8. Lakher; 9. Man (Tai speaking); 10. Any Mizo (Lushai) tribes; 11. Mikir; 12. Any Naga tribes; 13. Pawi; 14. Synteng. (It may be noted that Synteng has been included under No.6 as well as No. 14. As a matter of fact the terms Jaintia, Synteng and Phar denote the same people). Others such as: 1. Barmans in Cachar; 2. Boro, Borokachari; 3. Deori; 4. Hojai; 5. Kachari, Sonowal; 6. Lalung; 7. Mech; 8. Miri; 9. Rabha often live outside the Autonomous Districts. The Rabhas mostly live in Lower Assam. They too have several sub-divisions, the main three being the Parti, Rangdani and the Maitori. The Mishings (Miri) and the Deoris inhabit some parts of Upper Assam. The Tiwas (Lalung) are mostly confined to Middle Assam, where the Hojais also live. The Meches mostly live in Lower Assam.

Some Garo settlements are found in Assam, though Garo homeland is the Garo Hills of Meghalaya. The same is true of the Khasi and the allied populations. Nagaland is the state of the Nagas, but some of them are also in Assam. Their settlements are

mostly found in the Garo Hills. The Kuki tribes and the Hmars live in the southern hilly regions of the state. The Karbis are mostly concentrated in Karbi Anglong, though many of them are scattered in some parts of the plain region, particularly in Middle and Lower Assam.

1.2.2 *Other Communities*

Besides the Assam tribes, which are of mongoloid origin, some other mongoloid population, not included under Scheduled Tribes, also live in different parts of Assam in large numbers, for example; the Ahoms, Chutiyas, Morans, and the small Buddhist population like the Tai Phake, Aiton, Turung, Duania. The Koches are also considered to be of mongoloid origin. Many of these are included under 'Other Backward Classes'.

The non-tribal category also include the 'caste-Hindu', Scheduled Castes and the Muslims. Government has identified the following populations as Scheduled Castes : 1. Bansphor; 2. Bhuinmali, Mali; 3. Brittil Bania, Bania; 4. Dhupi, Dhobi; 5. Dugla, Dholi; 6. Hira; 7. Jalkeot; 8. Jhalo-Malo; 9. Kaibarta, Jatiya; 10. Lalbegi; 11. Mahara; 12. Mehtar, Bhangi; 13. Muchi, Rishi; 14. Namasudra; 15. Patni; and 16. Sutradhar.

Some of the important Scheduled Castes of Assam are the Hira, Jalkeot, Kaibarta, Bania, Namasudra, etc. The Hiras are potters. They make pottery with their hands without using potter's wheel. The traditional occupation of the Kaibartas is fishing . Some are boatmen. Jalkeot are also fishermen. Some Hindu castes are also included under 'Other Backward Classes.'

The caste system is one of the most important features of Hindu society. The names and number of castes, the nature and extent of caste stratification, both horizontal and vertical, caste rule and regulations, functions etc., vary from region to region in India. Unlike some other part of India, casteism is not practised very rigidly in Assamese Hindu society. Various reasons can be attributed for this liberal ethos of the Assamese society. One may be the Vaishnavite movement launched by Srimanta Sankardeva, a socio-cultural reformer and religious preacher of the fifteenth century. Another, may be the fact that Assam came under the influence of the Aryan culture at a much later date and hence casteism could not gain strong foothold there. Moreover, the socio-cultural background of the earlier non-Aryan settlers of Assam might have been yet another factor

In Assam two broad categories of Hindu castes are recognized. These are the 'Bamun' (Brahmin) and the 'Sudir' (Sudra:non-Brahmin). The Sudir group includes several castes holding different hierarchical positions. The Kalitas are predominant. Perhaps it may be said that the Kalita caste is a specialty of Assamese caste system only. Opinions differ as regards their origin, migration and occupation. One account suggests that, they were originally Kayasthas, but as they took to agriculture they assumed a new name and formed a separate caste. According to another account they are the descendants of the Kshatriyas who fled from the wrath of Parasurama and to conceal their caste identity they threw away their sacred thread and thus became Kulaluptra or Kalita. Others say that they are not Kshatriyas, entering Assam before arrival of the Vedic Aryans and they were thus non-Vedic Aryans. According to other scholars, they were originally Buddhists. But they could have been also priests of the Boros in earlier days.

As regards their original homeland and their entry to Assam there are two views. It is generally believed that they came from the west through the valleys of the Brahmaputra and the Ganges. Though some say that the country to the eastward of Bhot and North of Sadiya, extending on the plain beyond the mountains was said to have been possessed by a powerful nation called Kalitas or Kultas, who are described as having attained a high degree of advancement and civilization. The Kalitas are divided into two main sub-divisions, namely, Bar Kalita and Saru Kalita. On the basis of the professions followed by some of them, there are several occupational sub-castes, which, however, are not endogamous. Some of these are Kahar Kalita, Kumar Kalita, Mali Kalita, Nat Kalita, Bez Kalita, etc.

The Kayasthas, popularly known as the `Kaith' are mainly found in Lower Assam. They wear the sacred thread. They claim to be the descendants of those Kayasthas who were given settlements by the King Durlov Naryanan. Their number is comparatively small. The Keot is another agricultural caste, who belong to the `Sudir' group. The Kumars make pottery with the help of a wheel.

The Rajbanshis, who are referred to as Koch can be cited as an excellent example of the tribe-caste continuum not only in terms of socio-cultural aspects but also in respect of a certain biological process. According to the Census Report of 1891 "in Assam Rajbanshis are mainly persons of Koch and Mech tribes who have assumed this name on conversion to Hinduism". Persons of other tribes e.g., Rabha Kachari, Garo, Karbi, Tiwa, etc., also became Koch or Rajbanshi after conversation to Hinduism. They were allotted a place in the caste-fold of the Hindu society. Hence, the Rajbanshis are of mongoloid origin. It is difficult to ascertain the exact date of their conversation. The

process is still going on. The Rajbanshis are recognized as an “Other Backward Classes” by the Government.

Assam witnessed a series of immigration in modern time. Reference has already been made to the labourers in the tea-gardens. With the opening of the gardens in the beginning of the second half of the last century, labourers to work in the gardens were brought from Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, etc. By 1901 the total number became about 6,54,000. The number went on increasing till 1941, when mass importation of labour was stopped. Even then their number increased in natural course. Many labourers left the tea estates and settled down as farmers in government wastelands or plots provided by the garden authorities. They are referred to as ex-tea-garden-workers. Tea garden and ex-tea garden labour form a heterogeneous people, as they came from different regions and belong to different ethnic groups. But in Assam they are regarded as forming one unit.

In recent years a large number of people from other parts of India having different ethnic identities have come to Assam to settle permanently. These include people of various linguistic and cultural groups. Moreover, many Nepalis have also come from the neighbouring country, Nepal. In 1951 the total number of the Nepali population was 1,25,000, which rose to about 2,00,000 in 1961. It may be assumed that by 1971 it grew to 3,00,000. Many of the Nepalis have adopted Assamese as their mother tongue, and hence they are not included under ‘Nepali’. Most of the Nepalis came to Assam as livestock farmers, mostly cattle and buffaloes, but later on they took up farming of land also as a profession and gradually became permanent settlers.

When Assam came under the British rule, the British brought with them some Bengalees to serve them and to help them in different areas. These Bengalees encouraged other Bengalees to follow them. Mostly for economic reason they preferred to do so and are still continuing. Bengalees are found in varied professions, from petty traders and doing odd jobs to holding high government and non-government offices.

Immigration to Assam from East Bengal (East Pakistan now Bangladesh) has been going on unabated since beginning of the present century. The fertile land of Assam attracted the East Bengalee (mostly Muslim) farmers. Immigration started with establishments in Goalpara district, mostly in the 'Char' land and reserved forests, and then to other parts of the state. By 1931 their total number became about 5,75,000. Most of them came from one district of Bengal, called Mymensingh, and, therefore, they are sometimes referred to as 'Mymensinghia'. From 1931 they got political patronage.

The number of Muslims in Assam started rising remarkably, not because of conversion or high birth rate, but because of unabated immigration. The number of original Assamese Muslims has become insignificant in comparison to the immigrant Muslims.

Since the partition of India the influx of Hindu refugees to Assam from East Pakistan began and is still continuing. As per the 1951 census their number was about 2,75,000. By April 1968 the number increased to about 10,68,500. Assam experienced another mass immigration of people from the same region during the Bangladesh war of 1971. Both Hindus and Muslims started moving into Assam. Some of the refugees belonging to the middle class urban areas settled around the towns and engaged in small

trades and jobs of various nature, while others became cultivators and settled in the rural areas.

These immigrations, more specially from East Bengal, East Pakistan, and Bangladesh, have created a big problem for the people of Assam. The demographic picture of Assam has completely been changed. Long back in 1931, Mullan the then Census Superintendent wrote in the census report, “This influx of immigrants is likely to alter permanently the whole future of Assam and to destroy more surely than the Burmese invaders of 1820, the whole structure of Assamese culture and civilization”. What Mullan predicted about half a century back has become the reality today. The Assamese people are fast becoming a minority in their own homeland. Therefore, the people of Assam are making efforts by adopting different measures, to safeguard the interest of the people and to preserve their socio-cultural identity.

1.2.3 *Race*

Anthropologists’ concept of race, their approach to classification of race and to the factors responsible for the formation of race, etc., have greatly changed during the last three decades, because of new factual evidence. Some anthropologists are not even willing to recognize the existence of classical racial units. Their whole approach can be termed as non-racial. The racial classifications were made taking into account several racial criteria. In current studies the classical or conventional approach is adopted to discuss the racial elements of the people of Assam and then reference is made to other factors. Race is a concept. The term race is used in different senses by scientists, politicians, historians and the like. But the UNESCO (United Nations Educational,

Scientific and Cultural Organization) issued a statement on race in 1950 where it was clearly mentioned that the “concept of race is unanimously regarded by anthropologists as a classificatory device providing a zoological frame within which the various groups of people may be arranged and by means of which studies of evolutionary process can be facilitated.” It is further stated that “national, religious, geographic, linguistic, cultural groups do not necessarily coincide with racial groups and the cultural traits of such groups have no demonstrated genetic connection with racial traits.” In the opinion of the UNESCO it is better to use the term ‘ethnic group’ instead of ‘race’, for removing certain wrong notions connected with the word ‘race’.

R.B. Dixon, analysing the anthropometric data, collected by him from the then Assam identified four main types with intermediaries on the basis of head form and nose form. These are: Brachycephalic-leptorrhine, Brachycephalic-platyrrhine, Dolichocephalic-leptorrhine and Dolichocephalic-platyrrhine. According to him the Dolichocephalic-platyrrhine type represent the aboriginals Negroids who were assimilated by the Brachycephalic-platyrrhine. He writes, “this type represents the western expansion of that type which forms the fundamental stratum among the population of southern China and much of south-eastern Asia and the Malay Archipelago. It brought with it the ancestral form of Mon-khmer speech.” On the other hand the Brachycephalic-leptorrhine type “appear to represent the southern extension of a great area, characterized by this factor, which includes most of Central Asia and the Great Plateaus, Northern China, and much of the northeastern portion of the Continent, and as a type shows very close relationship with the Alpine, so widely spread in Central and Western Europe.” At a much later date the Aryan immigrants brought the

Dolichocephalic-leptorrhine type to Bengal and Assam through the Gangetic valley. Thus, Dixon is inclined to believe that the earliest inhabitants of Assam were of Negroid type.

A.C. Haddon also considered head form and nose form in isolating the racial types in the population of the then Assam. He identified seven ethnic-elements, which are as follows:

1. Dolichocephalic-platyrrhine type (Pre-Dravidians): This element is strong among the Khasi, Kuki, Manipuri, Kachari, etc. It occurs in weaker form among the Naga tribes.
2. Dolichocephalic-mesorrhine type (Nesiot element): It is noticed among the Naga tribes and other hill tribes.
3. Mesocephalic-platyrrhine type: It is noticed among the Khasi and appears to have the characteristics as those living in Kachin territory.
4. Mesocephalic-mesorrhine type: Outside Assam it occurs among the Lepcha and Murmi and in certain castes of Bengal and Bihar.
5. Brachycephalic-leptorrhine type: It came from the north and is related to the Eurasiatic group.
6. Dolichocephalic-leptorrhine type: This element came from India, from western direction.

Haddon's analyses clearly indicate that he did not find any Negrito traits in Assam. Dixon called the Dolichocephalic-platyrrhine type as the aboriginal Negroid, while to Haddon this type represents the Pre-Dravidians.

The tribes of Assam are of Mongoloid origin. But among some Assam tribes certain Australoid ethnic traits exists. A detailed study of several anthropometric characters of tribes like Boro, Kachari, Rabha, Garo, Tiwa, Karbi demonstrates occurrence of certain non-Mongoloid traits, which deserve explanation. There is no doubt that Caucasian elements have liberally entered the Mongoloid populations of

Assam in considerable magnitude. But along with that Caucasoid traits Australoid elements are also observed. When a particular population is taken into consideration as a whole, such Australoid elements do not become conspicuous. On the other hand, a careful study of some individuals clearly indicates existence of such traits in them.

If the Assam tribes are compared with other Asiatic Mongoloids, it is found that the Assam tribes are shorter in stature and have narrower heads. Though in general, many of the Assamese tribes are characterized by mesocephalic head. Dolichocephalic elements is equally strong in some of the tribes. A high percentage of them are dolichocephalic and a few of them exhibit hypredoli-chocephalic (very long head) as well. As a matter of fact the tribes like the Rebha, Karbi, Garo have dolichocephalic traits. The Australoids were perhaps the first to come to Assam. It may be assumed that they left behind some genetic endowments. They came before the advent of the Mongoloids.

Though Australoid elements are among various groups of population of Assam in varying degrees, yet at present there is no Australoid population as such unlike other parts of India, more particularly south and central India. However, the labour force of the tea gardens (also ex-tea garden labourers) which is composed of heterogeneous elements, includes members of several tribes, for example, the Gond, Oraon, etc., showing distinct Australoid strains. Many of them have preserved their Australoid physical features. But it should not be forgotten that these Australoid populations migrated to Assam in modern period.

The Austric speech-family is associated with the Australoids and their descendants. This language-family has two broad divisions, namely Austro-asiatic and Austronesian. The Austroasiatic languages are spoken by some populations of India, Burma and Indo-China. For example, the Kols and Mundas of Central India, the Nicobarese of Nicobar islands and the Khasis of Meghalaya belong to this linguistic group. The Austronesian division includes three sub-divisions like Indonesian, Melanesian and Polynesian.

1.2.4 Mikirs

The Mikirs, locally known as the Arlengs (meaning men), live in the Mikir Hills, adjacent to the Khasi Hills of Meghalaya. These tall musclemen bear a light yellow brown complexion. A hair knot behind the head is a major characteristic of a Mikir. They are shifting cultivators and largely pursue jhuming. Weaving is a major allied economic activity of these people. The Mikir males wear stripped petticoat and an upper garment that are tightly laced. The Mikir women are fond of tatooing. In fact, tatooing is the symbol of the attainment of puberty among females.

The Mikirs have rice as their staple diet. They relish meat but are not beef eaters. Nonetheless, the chrysalis of endi silk worm are a delicacy for them. These people are not much fond of music or dances. However, they have dances for funereal occasions. As a result they have only flute, drum, one stringed fiddle as musical instruments. There is little dancing during harvests but the shield dance at funerals is very popular.

The Amri, Chenlong and Ronhang are the three major clans of the Mikirs. These clans are exogamous and they inter-marry. Their social status depends upon their rank

and property. Notwithstanding this segregation they do not mind attending common feasts. Marriages are normally solemnised after obtaining the consent of the would-be partners. Marriage price in kind is paid to the father of the bride. Divorce among the Mikirs is a rare phenomenon. Non-fertility is a cause for divorce. The Mikir girls are on the whole very particular about their chastity. In case a boy seduces a girl, he has to get married to her. Cases of adultery are also few. With a view to make the punishment exemplary the indulgent partners are exposed to public jeering.

The property in a Mikir family is inherited by sons alone. The eldest son, however, gets a slightly larger share. Women do not have any claim. An issueless widow may retain the property by getting remarried to a person belonging to her husband's tribal sect. Nevertheless, ornaments and other valuables offered to females at the time of their wedding are treated as their personal assets. The Mikirs continue to be governed by the joint family system. A widowed mother has to be collectively supported by all her sons living together. The Mikirs do not have any custom of adoption. In cases where there are no heirs the property goes to the brothers of the deceased. For want of brothers the nearest member of the family inherits the property. Village Council is the pivot in a Mikir village. Its members include all householders. The head of the Council is elected. The Council arbitrates in all disputes and is also empowered to fine the guilty. All the village heads in a region constitute the Greater Village Council, presided over by the Mauzadar, who is the senior most village council president. Matters serious in nature are invariably decided by this apex body.

1.3 Language

Assamese is a composite language into which words of both Indo-Aryan and Indo-Chinese origins have found their way. The Indo-Chinese group of languages is a large family divided into different sub-sections. The following list from Dr. S.K. Chatterji's *Kirata-jana-kriti* illustrates the distribution of the Tibeto-Burman speeches in Assam.

Tibeto-Burman:

- a) Tibetan and its dialects;
- b) the Himalayan group of dialects;
- c) the North-Assam group – Aka, Miri, Abor, Dafla, and Mishmi;
- d) the Assam-Burmese group.

The dialect of the Tibeto-Burman sub-family belongs to three distinct groups (1) Naga, spoken in the Naga Hills, (2) Kuki-Chin, spoken in the Manipur Hills, some parts of Cachar and the Lushai Hills, (3) Bodo comprises all the non-Aryan elements of the Assam Valley and North Cachar. The Ahoms, the Khamtis, the Turungs, the Phakials, the Noras and the like belong to the Siamese-Chinese group of languages. At present, the people belonging to this language group are all found in eastern Assam.

Of all the language groups obtainable in the state, the Tibero-Burman is by far the largest. The largest of this is the Bodo language group; the Kacharis, the Koches, the Rabhas, the Hojais, the Lalungs, the Garos, The Morans and the Chutiyas also belong to this great family of languages. Most of them speak different dialects, but all of them together contribute to the growth and formation of the Assamese language. The home of the Bodo language group is mainly in the Brahmaputra Valley. Almost all the hill tribes

with the exception of the Khasi-Synteng language group, are believed to have belonged to the Tibeto-Burman family of languages.

1.4 Economy

Economy of Assam is agrarian in nature and a traditional one. Even today, primitive type of farming i.e. jhuming covers most of the state's total area. Among the crops are rice which covers 68% of the total area. Cash crops cultivated in Assam are mainly tea, jute, sugarcane and tobacco with an area of 1,95,000 hectares. Tea plantations contribute about 20% of the state's total income. Jute and sugarcane also contribute to the state's economy. There are about 770 tea gardens in the state.

1.5 Transport and Communication

Among the seven states of North-east, Assam is relatively developed in transport and communication. The total length of the roads in the state is 32,466 km. (1983), of this the National Highway covered 1,496 km. The old state highway covered 3159 km. The National Highways mostly run east-west in the Brahmaputra valley and are linked to all the important towns. The state is well served by railways. Largest length of railways lines is 2,338 km including the B.S. line. The introduction of railway service from Balipora to Bralukpong (of a distance of 35 km.) recently is a step to link Assam with Arunachal Pradesh.

Many of the towns of Assam are linked by air to Calcutta and Delhi and also the capitals of some neighbouring states. There are eight airports in Assam of which

Lakpriya Gopinath Bordais airport at Borghaon (Guwahati) has recently been declared an international airport.

1.6 Literacy and Elementary Education

The 2001 census reveals that there has been an increase of literacy in the state. Presently the literacy rate of the State is 65.38%. Among all the districts, Jorhat has the highest literacy rate with 77.99%. While Dhubri has the lowest near about 49.86%.

Primary education along with literacy is considered vital to the development of education leading to the general socio-economic and political development of any state, district or block. According to the MHRD Annual Report of 1998-99, in Assam the Gross Enrolment Ratio for classes I-V for boys was 113.8 and 104.3 for girls as against the All India percentage of 97.5 for boys and 81.2 for girls. The drop-out rate for primary school children in Assam in 1998-99 was 40.87 per cent for boys, 42.43 for girls. The All India average was 38.23 for boys, 41.34 for girls and 39.58 as total. The total number of primary schools in the state as per the data given by the Directorate of Elementary Education, Government of Assam in the year 1996-97 was 30,145 with 78,287 teachers, 46,868 trained teachers. In the year 2000, the projected population of age group 6-10 years was 40.40 lakh boys and 19.41 lakh girls. In the age group 11-13 years there was 22.87 lakh boys and 10.99 lakh girls.

Assam's educational budget outlay has been adversely affected by its economic problems. Despite constraints its government has allocated about a quarter of its revenue budget for education and making Assam one of the major five Indian states belonging to this category. However, per capita budget expenditure in Assam is Rs.125, making it

higher than Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. But more than 90 per cent of Assam's educational budget is spent on salaries thus leaving very little for education development. In DPEP as much as nine districts of Assam have been included, out of which Karbi Anglong belongs to the first phase. It is expected that large central funds will be flowing into the districts for the quality improvement of the primary schools.

Although by the years 1998-99, the involvement of students in primary classes had increased by 5.5 times and its teachers by 4.5 times; the budget of elementary education per student to five times; dropouts, wastage and stagnation remain major issues of concern. The wastage in char area is as much as 86.96 per cent; with as much as 67.93 per cent stagnation. For the same years (as per the statistics given by the directorate of Elementary Education, Assam), the total stagnation of Assamese elementary school children was 46.19 per cent with as much as 62.32 per cent wastage though the dropout percentage had decreased to 16.13 per cent. However, the dropout percentage of ST students was as high as 24.91 per cent with 51.40 per cent stagnation and 75.90 per cent wastage. This problem is more acute among girls (54.87% stagnation and 69.78% wastage). In the tea gardens too as much as 20.91 per cent of elementary school children drop out of the formal system. Its stagnation was 46.88 per cent and wastage 67.79 per cent in the same year.

Quite apart from problem of dropouts, wastage and stagnation, the qualification of primary school teachers is also an issue of major concern for the state. Out of a total of 50618 (male) and 20877 (female) teachers, only 38226 (males) and 15065 (females) were qualified up to the secondary level. Their qualifications become less for higher levels of education. For example, only 8024 (males) and 3315 (females) had completed their

higher secondary level. At the graduate level, there were only 4339 (males) and 2497 (females) not to mention that at the post-graduate level only 29 males were employed in government primary schools. Lack of qualification among teachers is revealed in the data obtained from Karbi Anglong which is given in detail in Chapter III.

Assam till today follows the old structure of education which is 4+3+3+2, and hence only children up to 13 years are covered in its elementary education sector. The age of admission Class I is however, restricted to 6 years of age in all government schools.

Not only qualification of primary teachers but their training is also an important factor affecting the quality of primary education. In Assam, in the years 1998-98 only 2500 untrained lower primary and middle school teachers could get the benefit of training. The lack of pre-service training facilities in the State, attributes to the poor educational qualification of primary school teachers. At the primary level there are however 65.5 per cent trained teachers owing to the existence of 19 Basic Training Colleges, 18 DIETs and 7 normal schools.

In recent times new school textbooks have been prepared for school children belonging to classes I + II and hence instruction at the primary level is imparted in 10 languages in order to accommodate the different linguistic groups living in Assam State. Their preparation including the curriculum is till today in the hands of the SCERT, Assam which also prepares Teachers Guides and Hand Books. The ECCE Centres run by the Department of Social Welfare had in 1998-99 managed to give only 10 per cent of the 0-6 age-group of children education, though there exists pre-primary section in few

primary schools (only 439). The State also has 13509 NFE centers with an enrolment of 3 lakh children in its 121 projects covering 158 Community Development Blocks run by the State Government. There also exists several NGOs doing the same work.

As far as management of primary schools is concerned, the Assam Elementary Education Act of 1974 had decided to take over the financial responsibility of primary and middle vernacular schools. By 1977, the Government also took the responsibility of middle English schools in all districts. However, in Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills, their respective District Councils are still vested with this responsibility – Assam having 21 districts, 43 educational sub-divisions and 212 blocks under the management of the Directorate of Elementary Education and looked after by its 295 Sub-Inspector of Schools in charge of as many as 102 schools each. They range from 60 to 200 at different places.

Chapter II

DECENTRALISATION: CONCEPT AND PROCESS

2.1 Decentralisation in India Context

Decentralisation refers to “reversing the concentration of administration at a single center and conferring powers to local government”.¹ It involves the delegation of power to lower levels in a territorial hierarchy, whether the hierarchy is one of the government within a state or offices within a large-scale organization. It is different from delegation of powers to a subordinate authority. The subdivision of India’s vast territory into smaller areas and the creation of political and administrative institutions in those areas have been a continuing process along with its education system since the fifties. The philosophy of decentralization derives itself from the very concept of democracy which India has been striving for. The decentralization process takes cognizance of the ethics and norms of a democratic society. In this “all decisions which are to effect the lives of the people of a particular area of region, whether in economic, social or administrative areas, are to be based on the collective decision of all the people of that area or region.”² Democratic decentralization hence has its roots in the desire to associate more and more people with the work of the government at all intermediary levels in general and at the local levels in particular. It acknowledges “people’s right to initiate their own projects for local well being and the authority to execute and operate

¹ Smith B.C. , Decentralisation: The Territorial Dimension of the State, George Alen and Unwin, London, 1985, p.1.

² Ahmad, Nasir, “Decentralization – A Case for Administrative Federalism” *Journal of Rural Development and Administration*, Volume XXIII, No.2, Spring, 1991, p.26

them in an autonomous manner.”³ It aims at widening the area of people’s participation, authority and autonomy through dispersion of power from top to bottom levels in political decision-making, financial control and management and administrative operation to be exercised by people’s representatives. It is a necessary condition for development as it takes note of local circumstances in development plans and implementation.

The Indian Constitution provides for the formal division of powers between the Centre and the State Governments and lower levels of administration. The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee (1957) had recommended the constitution of statutory elected local bodies with the necessary resources, power and authority which became the basis of a centralized administrative system which came to be known as Panchayati Raj System. In India local governments which fall within the jurisdiction of the state have some notable variations in nomenclature.⁴ The Report of the Working Group on District Planning in its Seventh Five Year Plan document had accepted that “decentralization enables a better perception of the needs of the local areas.”⁵ It has been, therefore, accepted that “decentralized planning has become both necessary and possible”.⁶ The unique system of decentralization in North East India has been the District and Autonomous District Councils in that region provided by the Constitution of 1950.

³ Narian, Iqbal, “The Idea of Democratic Decentralization”, *Indian Journal of Political Science*, April-June, 1960, pp-184-85

⁴ Maheshwari, Shriram, *Local Governments in India*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1976, p.29.

⁵ Hooja, Rakesh, *District Planning: Concept, Setting and State Level Applications*, Aalekh Publishers, Jaipur, 1986, p.193.

⁶ Rao Hanumantha M., “Decentralised Planning: An Overview of Experience and Prospects”, *Man and Development*, Vol. XI, No.3, September 1989, p.17.

2.1 Decentralization in the North East: District Councils

2.1.1 Background

During British colonial rule the present North East India consisted of the Province of Assam and the two Princely States of Manipur and Tripura. Under the Government of India Act, 1935, the Hill Areas of Assam were divided into “Excluded” and “Partially Excluded Areas”. In the Excluded Areas the Provincial Ministry had no jurisdiction. The Governor of Assam as an agent or the Governor-General in Council was invested with authority over the excluded areas.

After independence, the recommendations of the Bardoloi Committee (which formed the basis of Sixth Schedule in the Constitution) advocated for the creation of District Councils in the Hill Areas of Assam. The basic consideration for providing District Councils was that “The areas are on the frontier and if the frontier is to be well protected the political aspirations of the people of this area should be satisfied. The only way by which this could be satisfied was by the creation of the district councils”.⁷

The idea behind the scheme contained in the Sixth Schedule was to “provide the tribal people with simple and inexpensive administration of their own which would safeguard their tribal customs and ways of life and assure them maximum autonomy in the management of their characteristically tribal affairs.”⁸ At the same time in no way affect the unity and integrity of the state. Autonomy was to be exercised in matters pertaining to the peculiar customs and institutions of the tribal people, without hindering

⁷ Rao, V. Venkata, *A Century of Tribal Politics in North East India 1874-1974*, S. Chand and Company, New Delhi, 1976, p. 186.

⁸ Ibid. pp.194-195.

the unity of administration or lessening the general responsibility of the State and Union Government to “secure to them the benefits of a progressive and liberal administration”.⁹

In 1952, the District Councils were constituted in all the districts excepting the Naga Hills where the demand was for complete independence. Besides the District Councils, Regional Councils were established for the Pawi-Lakhars, in the Mizo Hills. In 1972, by an amendment to the Constitution, District Councils were established for the Pawis and Chakmas in Mizoram and for the tribals in Manipur Hills. Thus, in all the tribal areas in North East India there are District Councils except for Tripura.¹⁰

2.2.2. Powers of the District Council

Broadly speaking the powers and functions of the District Council are four – legislative, executive, financial and judicial. The legislative power includes the power to make laws on the allotment, occupation or use or setting apart of land other than reserved forests. It has the power to make laws, regulation of the practice of Jhum or other forums of shifting cultivation, the establishment of town or village councils with special functions; others relating to village or town administration including town or village police, public health and sanitation, the appointment or succession of chief or headman, the inheritance of property, marriage and divorce, social customs, money-lending and trading by persons other than schedule tribes.¹¹ As regards the executive powers, the District Council has the power to establish, construct or manage primary schools, dispensaries, markets, cattle-pounds, ferries, fisheries, roads and waterways. It has also

⁹ Ibid. p.195

¹⁰ Ibid. p.196

the power to determine the language and the manner in which primary education should be imparted in the primary schools within its jurisdiction.¹²

The District Council has also powers of taxation such as assessing and collecting land revenue, levying taxes on lands and buildings, professions, trades, callings and employment, for the maintenance of schools, dispensaries and roads, licences or leases for the purpose of prospecting or for extracting minerals.

The judicial powers, include constitution of village courts for the tribal suits or cases in which both the parties are tribals. It makes for the appointment of suitable persons as members of the village courts, and such officers as may be necessary for the execution of laws made by the District Council.¹³

The Development Departments, transferred to the control of the District Councils, are agriculture, public works, flood control and irrigation, soil conservation, animal husbandry, veterinary services, fisheries, forests, Panchayati Raj and community development, cottage industries, roads and buildings, education primary to middle school, health and family planning and development. The district level officers are responsible to the state government for implementing schemes which had been transferred to the control of the District Council.¹⁴

¹¹ Ibid. p.281

¹² Ibid. pp.281-282

¹³ Ibid. p.284

¹⁴ Ibid. p.284

2.1.2 District Council and State Government

The only relationship existing between the Government of Assam and the various District Councils was the approval of the legislation by the Governor, in sanctioning of loans and grants to meet the normal cost of their administration or the expenditure for certain development works. Thus, the District Councils were functioning, more or less independent of the State Government and the Union Government, and were extremely jealous of their powers given to them by the Sixth Schedule and at the same time suspicious of even the best intentions of the State Government.¹⁵

The Governor has sledge hammer type of powers. He may, at any time annul or suspend any act or resolution of the District Council which is likely to endanger the safety of the country or is prejudicial to public order and take such steps as the suspension of the Council if necessary. He may assume to himself all or some of the powers of the Council during the period of suspension for a period of six months at a time. But he has no power to dissolve the Council without the recommendation of the Commission to be appointed under para 14 of the Sixth Schedule and hold fresh elections.¹⁶

Nevertheless the State Government, “did not exercise effective control over the District Councils. It allowed the District Councils to function as independent political

¹⁵ Ibid. p.300

¹⁶ Ibid. pp. 301-302

units and the administrative machinery brought into existence for the implementation of the decisions of the District Councils was adequate".¹⁷

2.2.4 Functions of District Councils

The District Council is a corporate body, having perpetual succession. The Council consists of representatives elected by adult franchise to administer the functions and exercise the powers entrusted to it. The District Council also consists of certain number of persons nominated by the Governor to represent the minorities and the unrepresented communities".¹⁸ The term of a Council is five years, with provision for extension for a period of one year at a time.

A member of Council must be a citizen of India, not less than 25 years of age and can vote at the election to District Council. No person can become a member of two District Councils. If a member is absent continuously for a period of 30 days he forfeits his seat in the council. Government servants, State of Central employees of the District Council, lunatics, undischarged insolvents, persons not citizenship of India etc. are excluded from membership of the district Council.¹⁹

The rights and obligations of the members of the District Councils are more or less the same as those of the members of any legislature. They should pay the dues to the District Council or the Government or corporative societies in due time, and evince interest in any contract made with the District Council. There is no provision for the

¹⁷ Ibid. p.308

¹⁸ Ibid. p.216

¹⁹ Ibid. pp.238-239

recall of members. Any question relating to disqualification is referred to the Governor and his decision is final. A member may resign at any time from the Council without assigning any reason.²⁰

A voter must be a resident in a constituency for not less than 180 days and must belong to a Scheduled Tribe. In case of non-tribal, he must have resided permanently for not less than 12 years. Any dispute relating to election, the decision of Governor is final.²¹

The first meeting of the newly elected District Council is fixed by the Governor and is presided over by the Deputy Commissioner (D.C.). Regular meetings after every 3 months and special meetings can also be called for. The quorum to constitute a meeting of the District Council is six members or one-third of the total strength of the Council whichever is greater.

2.3 Evolution of the Role of Local Authorities in Primary Education in India

The association of Indian local bodies with the administration of education in general and that of primary education in particular was the result of several factors.²² They were initially a fall out of the attempts of the East India Company officials to establish modern educational institutions and maintain them partly from voluntary grants-in-aid sanctioned by the Government. In this respect the Despatch of 1854 becomes significant. “Obviously, the establishment of local bodies and their association with the

²⁰ Ibid. pp.238-239

²¹ Ibid. p.244

²² *Committee on the Relationship between State Governments and Local Bodies in the Administration of Primary Education 1951*, Ministry of Education, New Delhi, 1954, p.7

administration of primary schools follow as a corollary from this order although the Despatch makes no specific reference to them”.²³

The second factor which helped the development was the ever present desire of British officials to introduce English precedents, through the implementation of Elementary Education Act of 1870. This act provided for elementary education of the masses by entrusting to local bodies power to levy rates and to enforce compulsory attendance.²⁴ The third factor was an attempt to check the evils of wasteful system of a centralized financial administration under Lord Mayo’s Decentralisation Order of 1870. “The decentralization that thus began on financial grounds soon came to stay as a measure of general administrative reform and the levy of local rates to meet a specific situation of financial stringency ultimately resulted in giving local bodies a share in the administration of education in general and or primary education in particular”.²⁵

The fourth and probably the most important factor was political. As Indian nationalism began to develop the British imperialists decided to utilize local bodies as a “half-way house” by “Indianizing” them on the one hand, and granting them larger powers and responsibilities. Large powers over the administration of primary education were transferred in local bodies soon after the Government of India Act, 1919. In other words, the local bodies represented “Self Government” for the people and were entrusted

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid. pp.7-8

²⁵ Ibid. p.8

with important tasks for social service, which among others, included primary education as well.²⁶

During the colonial days in the association of local bodies in the administration of primary education certain priorities were given. The primary aim was centralization of authority or the harnessing of local leadership to the cause of mass education. But neither were properly stressed. Decentralization started late and carried out slowly in a half-hearted manner. Moreover, real decentralization hardly materialized and soon the wheels turned back to centralized authority. Above all, the British administration maintained a bureaucratic character right to the end – a feature which made it difficult, if not impossible, to build up a non-official or local leadership in primary education.

Incidentally, it may be said that the two other minor aims of associating local bodies with the administration of primary education had “succeeded” fairly well. On the one hand local bodies had made a large financial contribution to the general spread of primary education, and even today their contribution is “fairly large” and important.

The second object partly fulfilled was political, viz., the desire to transfer as a method of diverting the public mind from direct political struggle; but this objective has naturally ceased to have any bearing on the problem in independent India.²⁷

Further, during the British rule the comparatively small scale and the half-hearted manner in which the experiment of associating local bodies with the administration of primary education seems to have been tried it was but natural that the experiment would

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Ibid p.36

yield only partial benefits to the local community. “Taking a bird’s eye view of the role of local bodies in the administration of primary education in India, as a whole, during the last hundred years, therefore, one cannot help feeling that the experiment has not had a fair trial”.²⁸

The problem of creating local bodies for administering primary education in rural areas had hardly been taken note of. Attempts to revive village panchayats date back to 1921, but the potential for independent administration of primary education had not been fully exploited anywhere. In other words, “the ideal method of harnessing local leadership in the cause of primary education in rural area is yet to be discovered”.²⁹

Throughout the last 100 years of British rule local bodies remained financially poor. The transfer of such a costly responsibility as that of primary education ought to have been accompanied by a simultaneous provision of sufficient resources to enable local bodies to discharge that responsibility, but no such steps were taken. At least liberal grants-in-aid ought to have been given, but even this was not done and government grants have been neither liberal nor granted on right principles. Moreover, proper training or guidance ought to have provided to the officials who were expected to manage local bodies. Therefore, “it may be said without fear of contradiction that the conditions laid down by Lord Ripon for the successful working of the experiment of local self

²⁸ Ibid. pp.36-37

²⁹ Ibid. p.37

government were never fully satisfied in practice, at least in so far as the administration of primary education is concerned”.³⁰

Finally, history has disproved the view commonly held in certain quarters that the cause of primary education has suffered by its association with local bodies and that the one panacea to ensure satisfactory progress is to “centralize” its control in the State Department of Education. It is not of course, our claim that local bodies did not commit any mistakes or that they always rose to the occasion and did their duty efficiently, “it is only suggested that to blame local bodies alone or even mainly for the slow progress of primary education is an over-simplification of a very complex problem and that it is not justified by history.”³¹

The Kher Committee suggested some reforms “with a view to improving the efficiency of administration and making the introduction and enforcement of universal, free compulsory primary education, easier and more fruitful”.³²

Several reasons may be advanced in favour of associating local bodies with the administration of primary education. Such association, it is argued, “brings the schools closer to the communities they serve; it harnesses local knowledge, local enthusiasm and local resources to the cause of mass education and furthers it materially; it brings in additional finances to support primary education which is neither possible nor desirable for the state governments to forego and the loss of which would result in giving a great set back to the spread of primary education; it creates a multiple source system of finance

³⁰ Ibid. pp.37-38

³¹ Ibid. p.38

which works much better in practice than a single source system”.³³ It leads to decentralization of authority which results in securing “greater effectiveness and economy”, especially when allied services like public health are decentralized and delegated to local bodies. It is democratic in principle and trains leadership for public administration of local and even higher levels.

Moreover a comparative study of the administration of primary education in the progressive countries of the world shows that the educational legislation of most nations leaves some room for initiative and activity on the part of local bodies. Hence the task of local bodies in the field of education is very important.

“In view of these cognate reasons which we generally accept and the widely prevalent practice of progressive nations we feel that in India also it would be an advantage to associate local bodies with the administration of primary education in some form or other.”³⁴

Therefore, the Kher Committee felt strongly that the interests of mass education should be the “only criteria” to decide whether authority over primary education should be delegated to local bodies and if so, to what extent. Emphasizing its importance the Committee stipulated, “we are recommending here that local bodies should be associated with the administration of primary education because we believe that such association

³² Ibid. p.39

³³ Ibid. pp.39-40

³⁴ Ibid. p.40

would further the cause of mass education and bring the goal of universal education nearer.”³⁵

The Kothari Commission’s recommendation was in agreement with the Kher Committee that local authority should be given the right to administer education as a privilege, subject to two conditions – promotion of the cause of education and good administration. This privilege would be withdrawn if either of these conditions is violated.

2.4 Karbi Anglong District Council

Tribal movement in different parts of India is a well-established fact since the second half of the eighteenth Century.³⁶ The grievances of the tribes of the north-east were no less vocal.³⁷ From 1931, the migration and encroachment of government and tribal land by erstwhile East Bengalis had led to many conflicts in the sphere of economics. This led to the shrinkage of original tribal habitat. The Karbi Anglong District formally known as Mikir Hills District is located at the junction of two geographically undemarcated segments of Assam popularly referred to as Upper Assam and Lower Assam.³⁸ On 23 June, 1952 as provided under para 2 of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, the Council with its headquarter at Diphu, was formally inaugurated by then Chief Minister of Assam (Late) Bishnu Ram Medhi.

³⁵ Ibid. p.40

³⁶ Nag, Sajal, “Multiplication of Nations, Political Economy of Sub-Nationalism”, *EPW*, July 17-24, 1993, p.1524

³⁷ Baishya, Prabin, ‘From Tribal Belt to Autonomous Councils: Genesis of the Leap’ in Gassah, L.S. (ed.) *The Autonomous District Council*, New Delhi, Omsons Publications, 1999, p. 104

The Karbi Anglong District Council is a corporate body consisting of a specified number of members both elected and nominated. In 1997, there were 26 elected and 4 nominated members. Its constituencies were: Dhar Amla, Amni, Chinthong, Socheng, Rongkhang, Dithung, Rengthema, Kapili, Marmnen, Amneng, Mowraghat, Longten, Phunalani, Longhin, Kankanthi, Mahamai, Nomati, Cochan Dhenta, Lumbajang, Dhansiri, Singhashen, Borjan, Sarupathar, Bokajan, Deapani, Nilip and Dharbagori. The nominated members were appointed by the Government of Assam with a view to providing representatives to the minorities who constitute a considerable section of the total population of the District. The tenure of the District Council is for five years and during March 2002 when the project team visited Diphu, an election was being held.

There is an Executive Committee with the Chief Executive Member at its head. In addition, 8 more members also discharge the functions of the Council and are called Executive Members in-charge of the different departments. The Chairman and the Deputy Chairman of the Council are not eligible to hold office either as Chief Executive Member or as a member of the Executive Committee. The Chief Executive Member is elected by the members of the Council. The Karbi Anglong District Council has some legislative functions but the Governor of Assam must give his consent to the laws enacted in the Council. The Council makes laws for the use of water resources in the settled agricultural fields and regulates the practice of Jhun cultivation. The Council establishes village and town committees and look after village and town administration including public health and sanitation. However, the Council has not framed any law regarding

³⁸ Athparia, R.P., 'Constitutional Background, Development, Powers and Functions of Karbi Anglong', Autonomous District Council, in Gassah, L.S. (ed.), Op. Cit., p.130

inheritance of property, marriage and social customs which are all along the traditional way.

The Karbi Anglong District Council is the highest administrative body in the district and a focal point for the aspiration of the local people not unlike that of Lai Autonomous District Council in Chhinnipui District of Mizoram. The Deputy Commissioner of Karbi Anglong district is the agent of the State Government concerned with the law and order of the district apart from supply and publicity. The Council has passed about 20 Acts till now, on issues like the transfer of lands, regulation on the moneylender, traders licence and share cropping. In 1970, agriculture, public works, flood control, irrigation, community development, tribal affairs, welfare of 'Backward Classes', soil conservation, health and family welfare, planning of forest, animal husbandry, veterinary, fishery, industries and general education were subjects which came under the administration of the Council.

Some specific items from which revenue is collected are identified in order to meet the Council's expenditure. They are: lands, buildings, entry of goods carried in ferries, maintenance of schools, dispensaries and roads, licence or lease for extracting mineral. The Council has the right to assess and collect revenue of all lands within its territorial jurisdiction. It also receives a good amount of revenue from its mineral resources and shares the royalties every year with the Government of Assam.

The District Council prepares budget for original and the transferred subjects which it obtained in 1970 from Assam Government as mentioned above. But it simply recommends for the transferred departments of which general education is one. These

recommendations are scrutinized by the State Government and then released. Accordingly the District Council also released the funds to the respective departments. Thus the District Council has practically no autonomy in the financial matters of general education barring allocation of funds to schools according to specific heads like building, classroom, furniture recruitment of teaching staff, recommending additional teaching staff, repairs etc. not even in its provision of teaching aids and mid-day meals. General education being one of the 'transferred subjects' after 1970 has little power, as far as the Council is concerned, which only acts as an intermediary between itself and the State Government.

The Council has also not exercised any judicial functions till 1996-97, as they entail heavy expenditure which cannot be met by the Council's Budget, traditional functionaries such as the village headman settle village disputes and the Karbi generally avoid going to the sub-divisional court.

The original objective of extending the Sixth Schedule to the hill people was so that they got "gradually assimilated with the national mainstream,"³⁹ but actually it became one of the means of ethnic assertion. Through the office of the Minister, Hill Areas Department, the Assam Government gets enough scope and power to exercise administrative control over the district. Hence, frequent tussels between the state government and the District Council are expressions of the socio-political aspirations of the Karbis. Matters relating to planning and budget became issues of content even as the subject of 'original functions' such as primary schools remained largely under state

³⁹ Baruah, Abhijit, 'State Government-District Council Relationship in Karbi Anglong District' in Gassah, L.S. (ed.) Opp.Cit. pp.140-48

control. The Council has not been empowered to make policies and fix priorities in its ‘transferred subjects’, on the contrary to the Lai Autonomous District council of Chhimtnipai in Mizoram has enjoyed the power to frame its own textbooks, impart learning in the mother tongue, conduct class IV board examination and introduce local specific curriculum such as district history, geography and Lai Charrel (local language). Moreover the Karbi Anglong Autonomous District Council cannot on its own transfer its offices. It would appear that there exists a “dual system of government” creating confusion and administrative complexities. It is upon the advice of the Minister, Hill Areas Department that the Governor acts in all matters relating to the District Council the latter having no direct access to the Governor.

Though in theory the budget of the District Council should be framed by the State Government after consulting the requirements of the Council as in the case of Lai Autonomous District Council of Mizoram, in practice it is solely prepared by the State with the Council receiving the draft budget only five minutes before the Council’s Budget Session with a note that the proposal from the Council should reach back Dispur on that very day.⁴⁰ The District Council hence has no right to suggest amendments to its own budget despite the existence of a Hill Planning Board which sits annually to discuss the district’s plan and budget, albeit irregularly.

The State Government it seems give practically nothing to the district from its own coffer because the money given to the Council is mostly the revenue collected by it from the district. The State Government does receive grants-in-aid from the Centre

⁴⁰ Interview with J. Rongpi, M.P. and ASDC Leader by Boro Panel as recorded by G.S. Kalita, *The Sentinel*, 9-14 September, 1991

annually on behalf of the district council, however, the Centre leases these funds very late thereby forcing the State Government to also do the same. Thus often only at the fag end of the financial year, funds are released to the Council provided it is on good terms with the State authorities. Further, the State Government can dissolve the Council when it finds it unsatisfactory.

Chapter III

KARBI ANGLONG

3.1 Historical Background of Karbi Anglong District – “People of the Hills”

It is difficult to trace the history of early settlement in the district on account of the absence of any authentic written documents and other evidence like archaeological remains and hence one has to depend on old chronicles and occasional references here and there made by different scholars and eminent historians. The folk tales and folklores of the Karbi society remain the only source of their early history. In British times, it was a part of Nowgong district and it was re-constituted as Mikir Hills by Assam Frontier Tract Regulation, 1884. In 17th November, 1951, it became united with North Cachar through the promulgation of Assam Regulation Act of 1951. It is an Autonomous district with its Head Quarter at Diphu. It has two other sub-divisions: Hamren and Bokajan. The Hamren sub-division is separated from Diphu sub-division by the southern part of the Nowgong District.

By a Government of India Order of 1936, the then Mikir Hills (now partially Karbi Anglong) came under ‘Partially Excluded Area’. The basic point in governing of these two areas was that the authority of the provincial legislature were not extended to these areas. The excluded areas were to be administered by the Governor himself by his discretion, while the ‘Partially Excluded Areas’ were to be his special responsibility. The provisions contained in the Government of India Act, 1935, dealing with these areas were by and large retained by the Indian (Provisional Constitution) Order 1947, except the

discretionary powers of the Governor with regard to the administration of the 'Excluded Areas'.

Constituent Assembly considered with much seriousness the future provisions for dealing with these areas, and Bordoloi Committee was appointed to report on the North East Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Areas and submit that to the Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights. Report on Minorities and Tribal and Excluded Areas were placed in the Constituent Assembly for consideration. The recommendation of Bordoloi Sub-Committee were incorporated in the VIth Schedule of the Constitutions of India. And the district was formally inaugurated on the 17th November, 1951 under the Government notification No. TAD/R-31/503209 dt. 3.11.1950 by taking the areas inhabited by the Karbis from Nowgong, United Khasis and Jaintia Hills and Sibsagar districts and added to North Cachar Hills Sub-Divisions and thereby constituting united Mikir and North Cachar Hills District.

The Karbi Anglong district was declared as autonomous ever since its creation in 1952. However, the Karbis feel that the power has remained vested in the hands of the Assam government and that Karbi Anglong is only autonomous by name thereby making the erstwhile District Council powerless as far as the welfare and other developmental programme of the people are concerned. The Karbis till today claim that the Assam government has not given financial assistance to the autonomous district while more autonomous power was developed to Meghalaya when it was carved out of the State.

When the reorganization of Assam was taking place in 1969, the Mikir Hills and the North Cachar Hills were given the right to join the proposed Meghalaya sub state

which was being constituted with Khasi and Jaitia Hills and Garo Hill districts. However, the two Hill districts did not join the proposed state because the two districts were neither economically and educationally advanced nor at the same level of development as the other hill districts. Simultaneously, the Mikir Hills were strongly persuaded by the Assam government to remain within the territory of Assam state with promise that they would be given equal facilities as the Meghalaya state in developmental matters.

In the name of fulfillment of the promise the State government transferred certain development schemes to the administrative control of the District Council under the provision of the paragraph 6 (2) of the 6th Schedule to the Constitution with effect from 16th September 1970. The Schemes which were transferred came to be known as the 'Transferred Subjects' in the District Council. Some of these items include matters related to Agriculture, Minor Irrigation, Soil Conservation, Animal Husbandry, Dairying, Milk Supply, Forest, Fisheries, Road and Building, General Education, Water Supply, Health and Family Planning, Social Welfare, Cottage Industries and Community Development Programmes including panchayat. Such an arrangement was sought to be equated with larger powers to the District Councils. But these schemes continued to be administered by the officers of Assam government as before and because of absence of independent terms and conditions as also the cumbersome procedures that were laid down, neither the powers of the District Council nor the scope of the area were enhanced. In fact, much of the Council's autonomy was "robbed of" as a result of the amendments in the 6th Schedule. The central grants under Art. 275 have always been misused, apart from uniform mismanagement and continuous negligence in all the levels of

administration. Thus, the District Council felt dubious of the success of the scheme from the very start but the Assam government continued to assure them that suitable changes would be made in terms and procedures in course of the actual implementation of the scheme. The Assam government has failed to keep their promise which has made the people of Karbi Anglong and the North Cachar hill districts raise their voices for autonomy.

While a feeling of discontent has mounted because of the various reasons cited above, the issue of medium of instruction of the Assamese language as compulsory in all levels of education has added much to their discontentment. Due to these developments, the people of the two districts have been feeling that it has been an “act of atrocity on the people of linguistic minorities”. For example, the Assam Gana Parisad does not recognize schools in the hill areas unless Assamese subject are taught throughout the State and does not provide grants for the appointment of non-Assamese teachers. Further, the people of the districts in which the regional language would be English are not allowed to go to the North Eastern Hill University of Shillong. Incidences of outsiders exploiting natural resources of both two-hill districts are also quite common. Their actions have brought “untold miseries to the people of the hills”. Exploitation of bamboo, timbers, coal, limestone etc coupled with unplanned and anti-native oriented tea industry have deprived many tribal families of their livelihood and have added a new dimension to the problem, disturbing the demographic balance of the place. The alarming entry of the non-Karbhis (in case of Karbi Anglong) into the district has reduced the original population into a minority community. The native tribes are left without any economic benefit and are being drained out. In these circumstances, the tribes of the two

districts strongly feel that unless self government is granted and the controlling authority of all the natural resources restored to the hill people, their life is at stake. In the context of these developments, leaders of the two hill districts have decided to reiterate their demand for a separate autonomous state with the two hill districts with an immediate effect. A series of memorandums have been submitted to the government of India for granting the status of an autonomous state. The first memorandum was submitted during the Prime Ministership of Indira Gandhi. In the memorandum submitted, the leaders of the two hill districts highlighted the necessary reasons for the creation of an autonomous state. The conditions include the geographical and historical background of the two hill districts, backwardness of the people, failure of the promises made by the Assam government pertaining to various developmental measures, backwardness of the people, the issue of medium of instruction, misuse of authority by the officials of Assam government, exploitation of natural resources by the outsiders etc. The content of the memorandum is highlighted in the details given in the next page.

To,

The Prime Minister Of India, New Delhi

Sub: - Memorandum demanding a separate state comprising the Mikir Hills, North Cachar Hills and the contiguous tribal areas in Assam

Respected Madam,

In pursuance of the resolution at the meetings of the Mikir Hills and North Cachar Hills Leaders Conference at Diphu on 18.2.73 and the resolution adopted by the Action Committee of the Said Conference on 7.3.73 and 5.5.73 at Diphu and Haflong respectively to submit a memorandum demanding the creation of a separate State comprising the aforesaid two autonomous hill districts and the contiguous tribal areas in Assam and with the approval of this memorandum received in the meeting of the Action Committee held on 1.6.73 at Haflong . The Mikir Hills and North Cachar Hill Leaders' Conference, most humbly and respectfully submit this memorandum for your kind consideration and implementation.

Yours Faithfully,

(P.K. Gorlosa),

(S.R. Thaosen) President, Action

Committee

Secretary
(Action Committee)

Mikir Hills and North Cachar Hills Leaders Conference, Haflong⁴¹

A series of memorandums were sent to the successive governments demanding the creation of separate statehood for the minority ethnic groups. A memorandum was sent to during the Prime Ministership of Rajiv Gandhi stating the urgent need for the grant of statehood to the two hill districts. The laborious attempt of the leaders for demand of statehood included the feasibility, viability and reasons for creation of a new state by highlighting the case of other states and the grounds for which these states had been created. These states include Tripura having an area of 10416 sq. km. with a

population of 20,53058. Nagaland, with a population of 774930 having an area 16572 (1982 Census), Lakshadweep with an area of 26.6 sq. km., having a population of 40,249, Andaman and Nicobar having an area of 8,293 sq. km. with a population of 188,741, Dadra and Nagar Haveli having an area of 491 sq.km., with a population of 174,170., Pondicherry with a 480 sq. km., having a population of 471,707. In this context, the leaders of the two districts asserted that the proposed new state satisfied the prerequisite conditions for the granting of a separate statehood. The two districts have about 17,00,000 population with an area of 15,222sq. km.

Such efforts suffered a setback when the Assam government exchanged dialogue with the leaders of the two hill districts along with Union Home Minister in 1992. The Assam Government wanted to uphold the integrity of the State and efforts were made in the direction of finding a solution within the framework of 6th Schedule of the Indian Constitution. The outcome of the dialogue was that Autonomous District Councils of the two hill districts were renamed as Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council and the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council.

The memorandum of Understanding was signed at New Delhi on April 1, 1995 by Dhorom Sing Teron, Chairman, A.S.D.C., Robindra Rongpi President (Karbi Students Association), Prakanto Warisa, President (NCHSF), Joithon Longmailai President D.S.U, Holiram Terang, Spokesman, A.S.D.C. and Jayanta Rongpi, Spokesman A.S.D.C. Hiteshwar Saikia, Chief Minister of Assam was present along with Hon'ble Union Home Minister Shri S. B. Chavan, at New Delhi.

⁴¹ Rongpi, Nilambar, *State Democracy Compiler & Committee*, Diphu, Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council 2001, pp.10-11

The Karbis form one of the major ethnic groups in the hill areas of Assam. Present Karbi Anglong district known earlier as Mikir Hills district in former Assam was formed through a major Balkanisation of the region in 1951 when the Government of India granted autonomy to the district under a District Council and renamed it as Karbi Anglong district. Karbis are the main inhabitants of the district now.

According to oral history the Mikirs went to the Jaintia Hills to escape the imperative of providing the Kachari Raja with a daily ration of six seers of milk. They also left because they did not like the matriarchal pattern of inheritance in force there. They live in small hamlets near the crops of rice, cotton, and chillies, which they raise on the hill-side. Their houses are large and strongly built on raised platforms above the ground. Rice is their staple food, but they also eat fowls and pork and consume large quantities of fermented liquor.

Of all the tribes that inhabit Assam, Mikirs occupy a prominent place. They have made an impact on the life of the State through their rites, customs and way of belief. It has been observed by scholars that all the tribes including those of Arunachal Pradesh have come in different waves of migration from South East Asia and they belong to Tibeto Mongolian group. Edward Stock in his book 'The Mikirs' says that they are the connecting link between Nagas and Kukichin who were originally inhabitants of Arakan range. Grierson classifies them as intermediate between Bodos and Western Nagas on linguistic grounds. Scholars who have made extensive research in this field have tried to conclude that since they were in Khasi Jaintia Hills their affinities to Kuki-Chin may be

somewhat different. It is believed that they belong to the same stock to which Bodos and other tribes belong thus comprising the original Kirata people. Kirata is a generic name for the vast tribal population of Eastern region. References to Kirata is available in ancient texts. They have richly contributed towards the evolution of a complex Indian culture. It is to be noted while they were transmitters of culture adopting and adjusting to the culture of others, they have also contributed to the process of 'Sanskritization' in Assam, as has been pointed out by Prof. M.N. Srinivas. This has affected the religious practice of the tribes. The Kiratis it is believed had come from South-East Asia but there are some scholars who say that they have come from Central Asia, though the latter theory is highly doubtful in view of their racial characteristics and language.

3.2 Socio-Economic Aspects

The social set up of the Karbis is like that of any other tribal people. Broadly speaking, they are divided into four sub-divisions - Ingti, Terang, Lekti and Timung which are again sub-divided into several sub-groups such as Lekhar, Hanche, Takvi. They have their own customs, marriage and funeral rites which they had inherited from their ancestors. Their social customs and such other things have been influenced by the place and environment in which they live. This has largely affected their religious creed and faith. Although some tribal population converted into other religions, mostly Christianity or Buddhism and Hinduism, they by and large maintain their traditional way of living and faith, the Karbis being no exception in retaining their own identity. Their educational backwardness has been attributed often to this fact that is they are not as influenced by the work of Christian Missionaries as for example the Mizos. Although many changes have come about in the tribal belt after independence with better

communication, educational facilities, roads, improvements of villages, etc., very little change has taken place in their social rites, customs, etc.

The population of Karbi Anglong district is dominated by the Karbis. It also comprises other tribals such as Laloong, Dimasa – Kachari, Kuki, Boro, Hmar, Khasi Nagas etc. and among non-tribals the Assamese, Bengali, Nepali, Bihari, Marwari, Punjabi etc. Being a tribal dominated society there is no strong bias against women, and the progress made in education reveals this. However, girl education in the districts is not adequate. Next to the Karbi group, the ‘Boro Kacharis are the largest tribal group and their ‘Kachari Samaj’ in the district has been representing its case for the removal of area restriction. Since this group enjoys educational and economic benefits their demand is for more political rights despite having the right to vote and elect executive members to the council.⁴²

The villages are inhabited mainly by Schedule Tribe and OBC population with small numbers of households. Karbi Anglong is predominantly inhabited by S.T. population, scattered in different parts of thinly populated 3033 number of habited villages.

Bounded in the North by Nowgong and Golaghat districts of Assam, by the State of Meghalaya and North Cachar Hills Autonomous District. Golaghat district and the State of Nagaland are in the East of this district and States of Meghalaya and Nagland are in the West. The local area of Karbi Anglong district is 8000 sq.miles with population of 7,07900 approx. in 1986 out of which the total tribal population was 58.00 per cent.

In 1986, the total growth of the population was 55.45 per cent. According to 1971 Census data there were only 944 primary schools, 4 Government and 34 non-Government High Schools with as little as 94 Middle Schools. According to the Statistical Hand Book of Assam, there was only one General College of Education and no technical college. There were, however, 12 pre-primary centers. There also exists one non-Government General College.

The agricultural products include paddy, cotton, mustard, lemon, till, ginger, sugarcane, potato, bananas, orange, pineapple and coffee, and are generally used for domestic consumption. But the district is not economically self-sufficient. The small scale tea industry is controlled by Assam Tea Company. Its minerals include limestone, coal, oil and porcelain clay. Its per capita income and expenditure is far below other hill areas of the region. The women-folk are engaged in both household and agricultural activities. Young girls, mostly school drop-outs, earn by selling rice-beer, while some do weaving. These add to the family income. The farmers cultivate different crops. The practice of jhuming cultivation is still prevalent in the Karbi Anglong District. The people who practice jhuming cultivation cannot live permanently in one particular area. They have to migrate from place to place in search of fertile land. As the “jhuming” cultivation requires a high degree of hard work and labour, the family members compel their young children of the age group of 6-14 to get involved. This is one of the reasons for the increase in school drop-out rates. Further, the migratory nature of the people contribute to the increase of drop-out rates of the district. The forest products are

⁴² Thakur, Sharma, G.C., Area Restriction – The Constitutional Constraint of Tribal Development in the Autonomous District Council of Karbi Anglong in Gassah, L.S. (ed.), Op. Cit., pp.149-151

bamboo (used generously for buildings, fencing and furniture), various types of timber, grass, barks and medical herbs.

The perennial and navigable rivers such as Kopili, Diyung, Dhansiri, Yamuna, Longting and Mathur provide small quantities of local fish among which the 'Rahu' is famous. A variety of wildlife is found in the district which includes the tiger, bear, leopard, deer, banking deer, spotted deer, wild buffalo and monkeys. Its rainfall varies from 100" to 40" with a maximum of 25.8 degree and minimum of 17.2 degree centigrade.⁴³

The Karbis believe in pantheism, they call it 'Arnam Kethe' or Hemphu. Sri Jaysing Terang termed the religion of Kabris as 'ancestor worship' similar to that Shintoism of Japan which they call 'Char Anthak'. The ancestor worship is not done regularly or annually but in every five or six years. There are many gods, for example, Peng a household god, Rekaglong (the mountain of the community) or Chejun. They are attached to their ancestors and they worship 'Charanthak' before they go to worship others. But, above all, Hemphu or Arnam Paro stands 'Supreme' which can be compared with the vedic concept of Brahma. Karbis always revert back to that 'Supreme Being'. A big segment of Karbis are now trying to rationalize their ancestral beliefs.

Assamese is the principal *lingua franca* in their villages, but the number of speakers are less. Only a few of the Dimasas can speak Assamese language. Not only the Karbis but also others speak Karbi as they have been absorbed into the main linguistic stream.

⁴³ Rongpi, Nilambar, Opp.Cit., pp.34-35.

The Dimasas of the villages are mostly agriculturalists and only a few are engaged in government services and other sectors. The Biharis, Nepalis, Bengalis residing in this villages are mostly engaged in trade and commerce. Among the Dimasas, there are landless labourers who earn daily wages.

3.3 Education

The present literacy rate in 2001 (58.83%) in Karbi Anglong District is less than the state average of 65.38%. It indicates the backwardness of the District in terms of literacy. The root cause of this backwardness can be attributed to poverty, ignorance, lack of awareness, social disparities, geographical isolation, poor communication system and an imbalance in resource utilization. Out of 812320 people in the district, 237761 males and 154828 females are literate as per 2001 Census data.⁴⁴ According to the same report there are 38972 literate persons out of whom 22268 are males and 16704 females at Diphu, thereby making Diphu the highest literacy urban area in the district.

Keeping in view the NPE and (POA) 1992, it was proposed to step up assistance to the State government to achieve UEE by 2000 A.D. through a new programme which was area-intensive and holistic titled the District Primary Education Programme. It was proposed that the districts with low female literacy such as Karbi Anglong (48.65%), as against the state average of 54.16%, would be given priority for the upliftment of primary education. Though the DPEP programme had been introduced in India from 1994, however, due to unavoidable circumstances Karbi Anglong started benefiting from it only from 1997 onwards. Hence, its progress cannot be compared with the progress of other

⁴⁴ Directorate of Census Operations, Assam, *Provisional Population Totals*, Series 19, p.67

DPEP districts in Assam, not to mention states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra and many others.

3.3.1 Enrolment

Table I
Enrolment Across the Years at the Primary level in DPEP Districts
Enrolment Across the Academic Year (Overall)

Districts	1999-2000		2000-01	
	Girls	Total	Girls	Total
Darrang	69630	146474	65871	130864
Dhubri	106336	219772	87257	181102
Morigaon	41751	83870	39240	78096
Karbi Anglong	45675	96190	47278	98674
Phase-I	263392	546306	239646	495936
Barpeta	89733	1866665	79267	165583
Bongaigaon	52713	109432	47979	98720
Goalpara	54061	110469	46317	94309
Kokrajhar	51188	107117	39540	82710
Sonitpur	64887	137383	63613	133276
Phase-II	312582	651066	276716	574598
State	575974	1197372	516362	1070534

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

Karbi Anglong district had a total enrolment of children 96190 with 45675 girls in 1999-2000 and this has grown very marginally to 47278 (girls) as against only 98674 for boys in 2001 as is given in Table I. Tables II & III also shows that the enrolment of socially and economically weaker sections, the SC/ST students are also faring badly for the same years despite the DPEP intervention, which is meant for socio-economically and educationally backward children especially the girl child.

Table II
Enrolment Across the Years at the Primary level in DPEP Districts
Enrolment Across the Academic Years (SC)

Districts	1999-2000		2000-01	
	Girls	Total	Girls	Total
Darrang	6027	12964	5701	12814
Dhubri	4402	9252	3775	8037
Morigaon	6073	12735	5549	11447
Karbi Anglong	5210	11265	5405	11681
Phase-I	21712	46216	20430	43349
Barpeta	6549	13866	5934	12679
Bongaigaon	7041	15134	6163	13206
Goalpara	2788	5713	2852	5884
Kokrajhar	3189	6746	2253	4642
Sonitpur	7208	15493	6642	14096
Phase-II	26775	56952	23844	50507
State	48487	103168	44274	93856

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

Table III
Enrolment Across the Years at the Primary level in DPEP Districts
Enrolment Across the Academic Year (ST)

Districts	1999-2000		2000-01	
	Girls	Total	Girls	Total
Darrang	16200	31657	14716	29799
Dhubri	3376	6951	3085	6339
Morigaon	7019	14537	6765	13922
Karbi Anglong	31484	65678	31550	65010
Phase-I	58079	118823	56116	115070
Barpeta	6740	13684	5994	12076
Bongaigaon	8385	17161	7913	16198
Goalpara	14125	28733	12774	26176
Kokrajhar	18244	37768	13952	29011
Sonitpur	10053	20919	9925	20540
Phase-II	57547	118265	50558	104001
State	115626	237088	106674	219071

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

Table IV
Enrolment Across the Years at the Primary level in DPEP Districts
Percentage of Enrolment Across the Academic Year (SC)

Districts	1999-2000		2000-01	
	Girls	Total	Girls	Total
Darrang	8.66%	8.85%	8.65%	8.82%
Dhubri	4.14%	4.21%	4.33%	4.44%
Morigaon	14.55%	15.18%	14.14%	14.66%
Karbi Anglong	11.41%	11.71%	11.43%	11.84%
Phase-I	8.24%	8.46%	8.53%	8.74%
Barpeta	7.30%	7.43%	7.49%	7.66%
Bongaigaon	13.36%	13.83%	12.85%	13.38%
Goalpara	5.16%	5.17%	6.16%	6.24%
Kokrajhar	6.23%	6.30%	5.70%	5.61%
Sonitpur	11.11%	11.28%	10.44%	10.58%
Phase-II	8.57%	8.75%	8.62%	8.79%
State	8.42%	8.62%	8.57%	8.77%

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

Table V
Enrolment Across the Years at the Primary level in DPEP Districts
Percentage of Enrolment Across the Academic Year (ST)

Districts	1999-2000		2000-01	
	Girls	Total	Girls	Total
Darrang	23.27%	21.61%	22.34%	21.58%
Dhubri	3.17%	3.16%	3.54%	3.50%
Morigaon	16.81%	17.33%	17.24%	17.83%
Karbi Anglong	68.93%	68.28%	66.73%	65.88%
Phase-I	22.05%	21.75%	23.42%	23.20%
Barpeta	7.51%	7.33%	7.56%	7.29%
Bongaigaon	15.91%	15.68%	16.49%	16.41%
Goalpara	26.13%	26.01%	27.58%	27.76%
Kokrajhar	35.64%	35.26%	35.29%	35.08%
Sonitpur	15.49%	15.23%	15.60%	15.41%
Phase-II	13.41%	18.16%	18.27%	18.10%
State	20.07%	19.80%	20.66%	20.46%

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

However, in terms of percentage of enrolment in Karbi Anglong district which was the part of Phase-I DPEP districts, the SC/ST students have done well both for year 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 as compared to the total Phase-I districts of Assam which was only 8.24% girls in 1999-2000 and 8.53% girls in 2000-2001 belonging to the SC category. In Karbi Anglong there were 11.41% girls enrolled at the primary stage for the years 1999-2000 and 11.43% girls for the years 2000-01 in the SC category. The same is the case for ST students but in the case of this category they belong to the majority community of the population Tables IV & V above point out the difference in enrolment percentage in all the DPEP districts of Assam both in Phase-I & Phase-II. The

percentage of ST girls enrolled in Karbi Anglong rose 68.93% in 1999-2000, but was reduced to 66.73% in 2000-01 the reason of which are still to be probed into.

3.3.2 Teachers

Table VI

Teachers By Caste (OBC Female) in DPEP Districts

Districts	1999-2000	2000-2001
Darrang	262	286
Dhubri	197	204
Morigaon	183	178
Karbi Anglong	131	127
Phase-I	773	795
Barpeta	121	123
Bongaigaon	283	297
Goalpara	109	109
Kokrajhar	161	141
Sonitpur	501	535
Phase-II	1175	1205
State	1948	2000

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

Table VII

Teachers By Caste (OBC All) in DPEP Districts

Districts	1999-2000	2000-2001
Darrang	1135	1214
Dhubri	641	627
Morigaon	641	659
Karbi Anglong	398	395
Phase-I	2815	2895
Barpeta	494	498
Bongaigaon	1084	1087
Goalpara	407	441
Kokrajhar	697	655
Sonitpur	1586	1616
Phase-II	4268	4297
State	7083	7192

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

As Tables VI and VII indicate there were a little as 131 OBC female teachers in 1999-2000, decreasing to 127 in 2000-2001 out of total OBC teachers 398 in 1999-2000 and 395 in 2000-2001. This decrease could be because OBC may have moved among from districts. Tables VI and VII also indicate that out of 773 OBC female teachers in Assam in 1999-2000 in Phase I districts only 131 were in Karbi Anglong. In fact, the low percentage of all OBC teachers in Karbi Anglong district (398) for the same years indicate that OBC category are generally not found in school teaching. Our sample study also reflected the same.

Table VIII

Teachers By Caste (ST) in DPEP Districts

Districts	1999-2000	2000-2001
Darrang	1036	1009
Dhubri	277	274
Morigaon	289	279
Karbi Anglong	2184	2308
Phase-I	3786	3870
Barpeta	622	617
Bongaigaon	708	642
Goalpara	756	767
Kokrajhar	1732	1404
Sonitpur	558	550
Phase-II	4376	3980
State	8162	7850

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

Table IX
Teachers By Caste (ST Female) in DPEP District

Districts	1999-2000	2000-2001
Darrang	265	252
Dhubri	50	54
Morigaon	77	76
Karbi Anglong	777	817
Phase-I	1169	1199
Barpeta	143	140
Bongaigaon	252	213
Goalpara	209	217
Kokrajhar	554	353
Sonitpur	114	114
Phase-II	1272	1037
State	24441	2236

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

The ST teachers are in a majority in the district (2184 in 1999-2000) and 2308 in 2000-2001). One of the reasons for this being the remote tribal area, generally even under-qualified tribal teachers impart education, majority of whom belong to the female category in primary classes (see Tables VIII and IX).

Table X
Teachers By Caste (ST Male) in DPEP District

Districts	1999-2000	2000-2001
Darrang	771	757
Dhubri	227	220
Morigaon	212	203
Karbi Anglong	1407	1491
Phase-I	2617	2671
Barpeta	479	477
Bongaigaon	456	429
Goalpara	547	550
Kokrajhar	1178	1051
Sonitpur	444	436
Phase-II	3104	2943
State	5721	5614

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

The category of teachers belonging to Other Backward Classes in the district is not as high as in the other DPEP districts. Therefore, those who are female teachers in the same category is also fewer except for the district of Goalpara in Phase-II DPEP (Table VI & VII gives details). Since the area of the district of Karbi Anglong is predominantly tribal, it is not surprising that both male and female ST teachers have also been more between 1999 and 2001 as compared to other DPEP districts. In the SC category however the district has less SC teachers as can be seen in Tables XI – XIII.

Table XI
Teachers By Caste (SC) in DPEP District

Districts	1999-2000	2000-2001
Darrang	204	208
Dhubri	195	198
Morigaon	232	206
Karbi Anglong	117	122
Phase-I	748	734
Barpeta	254	263
Bongaigaon	214	201
Goalpara	143	144
Kokrajhar	96	92
Sonitpur	282	247
Phase-II	989	947
State	1737	1681

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

Table XII
Teachers By Caste (ST Female) in DPEP District

Districts	1999-2000	2000-2001
Darrang	48	49
Dhubri	49	51
Morigaon	44	40
Karbi Anglong	27	39
Phase-I	168	179
Barpeta	43	45
Bongaigaon	51	47
Goalpara	33	38
Kokrajhar	22	17
Sonitpur	70	55
Phase-II	219	202
State	387	381

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

As far as the quality of teachers are concerned in primary schools they have generally been appointed long back, with qualification often as low as non-matriculation which was obvious from the field visit Diphu in March this year. It is, therefore, not surprising to find them largely untrained in the study sample, especially among the females of the district. Female teachers receive training only after 1999 and, therefore, the figures of 2000-2001 shows that they have been more trained than before. In fact, the real training of teachers probably took place only in the year 2000. The field visit around Dhipu indicated in visits to school and interviews with school teachers members of Village Education Committee and the present incharge of DPEP Cell Mr. Terang, revealed that their teachers are in urgent need of training both in pedagogy as well as institutional planning and management of primary schools. This should be done for a far greater period than the few days short training in the workshop method which had been the practice in the field.

Table XIII
Teachers By Caste (SC Male) in DPEP District

Districts	1999-2000	2000-2001
Darrang	156	159
Dhubri	146	147
Morigaon	188	166
Karbi Anglong	90	83
Phase-I	580	555
Barpeta	211	218
Bongaigaon	163	154
Goalpara	110	106
Kokrajhar	74	75
Sonitpur	212	192
Phase-II	770	745
State	1350	1300

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

In the entire Phase I districts of DPEP in Assam, there were only 90 SC male teachers in 1999-2000; these numbers having decreased to 83 in 2000-01. The investigation found no reasons for this except for the fact the SC category of people (males) are employed in household labour and in repairing roadways.

Table XIV**Deemed trained Teachers Across The Academic Year (Male) in DPEP District**

Districts	1999-2000	2000-2001
Darrang	203	229
Dhubri	275	267
Morigaon	153	176
Karbi Anglong	532	595
Phase-I	1163	1267
Barpeta	430	445
Bongaigaon	182	196
Goalpara	114	138
Kokrajhar	268	255
Sonitpur	172	169
Phase-II	1166	1203
State	2329	2470

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

In Karbi Anglong there are as many as 595 deemed male teachers in 2000-2001; the figure having risen from 532 in 1999-2000. When compared with other Phase districts their number is large and nearly half of the entire phase I districts. In interviews held at Diphu with such teachers, it became clear that they, being mostly local tribals, employed without proper qualification and training, could not be absorbed into the main category of teachers which was their demand so that they could benefit from receiving a proper salary scale.

Table XV

Untrained Teachers Across the Academic Year (Female) in DPEP District

Districts	1999-2000	2000-2001
Darrang	1594	380
Dhubri	939	228
Morigaon	820	237
Karbi Anglong	1503	553
Phase-I	4856	1398
Barpeta	1519	471
Bongaigaon	1199	359
Goalpara	850	248
Kokrajhar	1148	178
Sonitpur	1337	399
Phase-II	6053	1655
State	10909	3053

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

There are as many as 1503 untrained female teachers in 1999-2001 next only to Darrang district. However, with DPEP Cell conducting short term courses on pedagogical issues, their number have decreased (553 in 2000-2001). However, as pointed out earlier, that unlike district of Darrang, Dhubri and Morigaon; Karbi Anglong has been a neglected area as far as teacher training and refresher courses are concerned. The sheer physical distance from Gauhati to Diphu and life amidst harsh surroundings, have often led to postponement of the training programmes which became evident in our interviews.

Table XVI
Untrained Teachers Across the Academic Year (Male) in DPEP Districts

Districts	1999-2000	2000-2001
Darrang	0	1164
Dhubri	0	518
Morigaon	0	495
Karbi Anglong	0	973
Phase-I	0	3150
Barpeta	0	1148
Bongaigaon	0	632
Goalpara	0	631
Kokrajhar	0	503
Sonitpur	0	707
Phase-II	0	3621
State	0	6771

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

However, as far as male teachers go, the situation is better when compared with Darrang's untrained male teachers in 2000-2001 (Darrang 1164 and Karbi Anglong only 973). It also appears from Table XVI that no untrained teacher existed in both DPEP Phase I and II districts in the years 1999-2000. Perhaps due to late recruitment of teachers in 2000-2001, many of the untrained males were employed due to the necessity of opening up of schools in remote areas and deployment of a second or third teacher in existing schools.

Table XVII**Deemed trained Teachers Across the Academic Year in DPEP Districts**

Districts	1999-2000	2000-2001
Darrang	270	332
Dhubri	338	334
Morigaon	188	219
Karbi Anglong	793	920
Phase-I	1589	1805
Barpeta	493	507
Bongaigaon	221	240
Goalpara	160	189
Kokrajhar	325	297
Sonitpur	243	253
Phase-II	1442	1486
State	3031	3291

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

There are as many as 920 deemed trained teachers in Karbi Anglong in the years 2000-01 though at the investigation conducted during the field visit revealed that they exist mainly in Diphu. The reason for this is that schools in Diphu are growing at a rapid pace and require more male and female teachers, though they are still termed as 'Deemed' and perhaps receive a proper salary (see Tables XVII and XVIII).

Table XVIII**Deemed trained Teachers Across the Academic Year (Female) in DPEP Districts**

Districts	1999-2000	2000-2001
Darrang	67	103
Dhubri	63	67
Morigaon	35	43
Karbi Anglong	261	325
Phase-I	426	538
Barpeta	63	62
Bongaigaon	39	44
Goalpara	46	51
Kokrajhar	57	42
Sonitpur	71	84
Phase-II	276	283
State	702	821

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

Table XIX
Teachers Across the Academic Year (Total) in the DPEP Districts

Districts	1999-2000	2000-2001
Darrang	4500	4537
Dhubri	3648	3559
Morigaon	2344	2327
Karbi Anglong	2861	2954
Phase-I	13353	13377
Barpeta	4762	4827
Bongaigaon	3106	2913
Goalpara	2493	2553
Kokrajhar	3506	2762
Sonitpur	4397	4333
Phase-II	18264	17388
State	31617	30765

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

As given in Tables XIX, XX, XX1, XXII, XXIII, XXIV, XXV Karbi Anglong have as many as 2954 teachers in the district majority of whom are males (1928) as against 1026 females in the year 2000-2001. The percentage of trained teachers was as poor as 17% in the same years as compared with 70% in Dhubri district which was also part of Phase-I DPEP. The percentage of female teachers was only 15% and males 19% for the same year. This shows that when compared to Darrang, Dhubri and Morigaon districts of Assam in the DPEP Phase-I period not much attention was paid to teachers training in Karbi Anglong.

Table XX
Teachers Across the Academic Year (Male) DPEP Districts

Districts	1999-2000	2000-2001
Darrang	3465	3477
Dhubri	2887	2820
Morigaon	1751	1778
Karbi Anglong	1867	1928
Phase-I	9970	10003
Barpeta	3014	3892
Bongaigaon	2226	2141
Goalpara	1883	1952
Kokrajhar	2518	2157
Sonitpur	2912	2823
Phase-II	12553	12965
State	22523	22968

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

Table XXI
Teachers Across the Academic Year (Female) in DPEP Districts

Districts	1999-2000	2000-2001
Darrang	1035	1060
Dhubri	761	739
Morigaon	593	549
Karbi Anglong	994	1026
Phase-I	3383	3374
Barpeta	1748	935
Bongaigaon	880	772
Goalpara	610	601
Kokrajhar	988	605
Sonitpur	1485	1510
Phase-II	5711	4423
State	9094	7797
In %	29%	25%

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

Table XXII

Enrolment Across the Years at the Primary level in DPEP Districts

Trained Teachers Across the Academic Year

Districts	1999-2000	2000-2001	In %
Darrang	2636	2661	59%
Dhubri	2371	2479	70%
Morigaon	1336	1376	59%
Karbi Anglong	547	508	17%
Phase-I	6890	7024	53%
Barpeta	2749	2701	56%
Bongaigaon	1686	1680	58%
Goalpara	1483	1485	58%
Kokrajhar	1684	1784	65%
Sonitpur	2765	2974	69%
Phase-II	10367	10624	61%
State	17257	17648	57%

Source:SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

Table XXIII**Trained Teachers Across the Academic Year (Female) in DPEP Districts**

Districts	1999-2000	2000-2001	In %
Darrang	562	578	55%
Dhubri	430	472	64%
Morigaon	322	312	57%
Karbi Anglong	146	150	15%
Phase-I	1460	1512	45%
Barpeta	468	495	53%
Bongaigaon	381	393	51%
Goalpara	307	314	52%
Kokrajhar	371	396	65%
Sonitpur	950	1027	68%
Phase-II	2477	2625	59%
State	3937	4137	53%

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

The percentage of female trained teachers in 2000-2001 was only 15 per cent as compared with Dhubri which was 64 per cent for the same years. It may be mentioned here there still does not exist a District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) in Karbi Anglong for imparting both pre- and in-service training to elementary school teachers.

Table XXIV**Trained Teachers Across the Academic Year (Male) in DPEP Districts**

Districts	1999-2000	2000-2001	In %
Darrang	2074	2083	60%
Dhubri	1941	2007	71%
Morigaon	1014	1064	60%
Karbi Anglong	401	358	19%
Phase-I	5430	5512	55%
Barpeta	2281	2206	57%
Bongaigaon	1305	1287	60%
Goalpara	1176	1171	60%
Kokrajhar	1313	1388	64%
Sonitpur	1815	1947	69%
Phase-II	7890	7999	62%
State	13320	13511	59%

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

Table XXV
Untrained Teachers Across the Academic Year DPEP Districts

Districts	1999-2000	2000-2001
Darrang	1594	1544
Dhubri	939	746
Morigaon	820	732
Karbi Anglong	1503	1526
Phase-I	4856	4548
Barpeta	1519	1619
Bongaigaon	1199	991
Goalpara	850	879
Kokrajhar	1148	681
Sonitpur	1337	1106
Phase-II	6053	5276
State	10909	9824

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002

3.3.3 Management of Primary Schools

Table XXVI
Distribution of Schools Across the Years by Management

Districts	Edu. Deptt	Tribal Welfare	2000-2001			
			Local Body	Private Aided	Private Unaided	Others
Darrang	1547	143				10
Dhubri	1501					0
Morigaon	846					2
Karbi Anglong	0		1390			1
Phase-I	3894	143	1390	0	0	13
Barpeta	1877					1
Bongaigaon	997					0
Goalpara	983					1
Kokrajhar	1092					0
Sonitpur	1385					2
Phase-II	6334	0	0	0	0	4
State	10228	143	1390	0	0	17

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002

In terms of management the local body of Karbi Anglong which is the District Council has all primary schools excepting for one both in rural and urban areas in 2000-2001. This is not generally the pattern in other Autonomous District Councils such as the Lai Autonomous District Council of Chhimituipui district in Mizoram where, due to private enterprise, a small group of private schools have sprung up as denomination schools. Despite the data given by SCERT Assam on management of school our field visit revealed the existence of secondary schools belonging to Christian Missionaries which had primary sections, but since this study was limited to schools run by local bodies, the team did not visit them. Thus as many as 1390 primary schools in Karbi Anglong were managed by the Karbi Anglong Autonomous District Council.

3.3.4 Underage and Overage Enrolment

Table XXVII
Under Age Enrolment Across the Academic Year (Overall)

Districts	2000-2001		
	Boys	Girls	Total
Darrang	4486	4351	8837
Dhubri	7237	6489	13726
Morigaon	0	0	0
Karbi Anglong	4325	4121	8446
Phase-I	16048	14961	31009
Barpeta	1289	1085	2374
Bongaigaon	2787	2763	5550
Goalpara	2127	2087	4214
Kokrajhar	73	86	159
Sonitpur	4798	4442	9240
Phase-II	11074	10463	21537
State	27122	25424	52546

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002

In general, the underage enrolment of boys and girls was almost equal in Karbi Anglong in the years 2000-2002. Tables XXVII and XXVIII reflects that there are many under-age and over-age enrolment in Karbi Anglong in the academic year 2000-2001, though the number of girls fewer.

Table XXVIII
Over Age Enrolment Across the Academic Year (Overall)

Districts	2000-2001		
	Boys	Girls	Total
Darrang	310	260	570
Dhubri	842	852	1694
Morigaon	0	3	3
Karbi Anglong	1363	1227	2590
Phase-I	2515	2342	4857
Barpeta	261	267	528
Bongaigaon	546	524	1070
Goalpara	416	437	853
Kokrajhar	300	293	593
Sonitpur	645	574	1219
Phase-II	2168	2095	4263
State	4683	4437	9120

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002

3.3.5 Rural Schools

Table XXIX
Distribution of Schools Across the Years by Rural/Urban

Districts	Rural		Total Schools		% of Rural Schools	
	1999-2000	2000-001	1999-2000	2000-01	1999-2000	2000-001
Darrang	1688	1660	1700	1700	99.29%	97.65%
Dhubri	1394	1403	1499	1501	93.00	93.47%
Morigaon	844	836	848	848	99.53%	98.58%
Karbi Anglong	1332	1370	1357	1391	98.16%	98.49%
Phase-I	5258	5269	5404	5440	97.30%	96.86%
Barpeta	1867	1808	1881	1878	99.26%	96.27%
Bongaigaon	984	930	998	997	98.60%	93.28%
Goalpara	952	953	983	984	96.85%	96.85%
Kokrajhar	1059	1043	1095	1092	96.71%	95.51%
Sonitpur	1400	1372	1409	1387	99.36%	98.92%
Phase-II	6262	6106	6366	6338	98.37%	96.34%
State	11520	11375	11770	11778	97.88%	96.58%

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

Karbi Anglong being a rural area with no electricity and water facilities barring at its Headquarter at Diphu, had as many as 98.16 per cent rural schools in 1999-2000 out of 1332 rural schools. The rural schools which had increased to 98.49 per cent in 2000-01 also indicate the lack of urbanization in the area. In this way this district reflects the same rural bias as Darrang, Dhubri and Morigaon.

Table XXX
No. of School Across the Academic Year

Districts	1999-2000	2000-2001
Darrang	1700	1700
Dhubri	1499	1501
Morigaon	848	848
Karbi Anglong	1357	1391
Phase-I	5404	5440
Barpeta	1881	1878
Bongaigaon	998	997
Goalpara	983	984
Kokrajhar	1095	1092
Sonitpur	1409	1387
Phase-II	6366	6338
State	11770	11778

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

Despite DPEP intervention, All the Phase I districts have not opened primary schools in any substantial sense. Hence only Dhubri and Karbi Anglong shows a marginal increase from 1999-2000 to 2000-2001 (see Table XXX for details).

3.3.6 Gender Dimension

Table XXXI
Gender Gap in Population & Enrolment (Overall)

Districts	Population	2000-01	
		Enrolment	Gap
Darrang	4.00%	4.58%	-1%
Dhubri	2.48%	3.64%	-1%
Morigaon	3.06%	-0.49%	4%
Karbi Anglong	4.90%	4.17%	1%
Phase-I	3.42%	3.36%	0%
Barpeta	3.28%	4.26%	-1%
Bongaigaon	3.08%	2.80%	0%
Goalpara	2.72%	1.78%	1%
Kokrajhar	3.08%	4.39%	-1%
Sonitpur	3.08%	4.54%	-1%
Phase-II	3.08%	3.68%	-1%
State	3.24%	3.53%	0%

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

In general, the tribal societies of North-East do not reflect any gender bias as far as their activities (Jayshree Roy Jalali 'Development of Elementary Education in the North-East : A Historico Comparative Study', Ph.D Thesis 2002). Hence, though even it is a patriarchal society like the Nagas and Mizos, girls are encouraged to be educated and act as equal economic partners. The 'Gender Gap' is seen in the poor enrolment. As Table XXXI indicates there is only 4.17 per cent and 1 per cent gap between males and females in enrolment at we the primary level in 2000-2001 in Karbi Anglong district. In the field visit conducted, we found that even in remote areas female teachers dominate.

Table XXXII
Gender Gap in Population & Enrolment (SC)

Districts	Population	2000-01	
		Enrolment	Gap
Darrang	4.22%	6.42%	-2%
Dhubri	2.48%	6.06%	-4%
Morigaon	3.85%	3.05%	1%
Karbi Anglong	4.96%	7.46%	-2%
Phase-I	3.67%	5.74%	-2%
Barpeta	4.42%	6.40%	-2%
Bongaigaon	4.86%	6.66%	-2%
Goalpara	2.72%	3.06%	0%
Kokrajhar	4.05%	2.93%	1%
Sonitpur	4.86%	5.76%	-1%
Phase-II	4.39%	5.58%	-1%
State	4.08%	5.66%	-2%

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

The same pattern exists with regard to the SC children (Table XXXII, -2 per cent gender gap between male and female students for the same level and for the same years). However, Karbi Anglong ST population is substantial with females and the girl child engaged in domestic work due to the existence of 'large families'. The gender gap is slightly more in this category (-2 per cent in 2000-01) as compared to Dhubri and Darrang which reflect '0' per cent. (see Table XXXIII)..

Table XXXIII
Gender Gap in Population & Enrolment (ST)

		2000-01	
Districts	Population	Enrolment	Gap
Darrang	0.96%	1.23%	0%
Dhubri	2.48%	2.67%	0%
Morigaon	0.48%	2.82%	-2%
Karbi Anglong	4.96%	2.94%	2%
Phase-I	31.5%	2.47%	1%
Barpeta	-0.12%	0.73%	-1%
Bongaigaon	0.79%	2.30%	-2%
Goalpara	2.72%	2.40%	0%
Kokrajhar	1.89%	3.82%	-2%
Sonitpur	0.79%	3.36%	-3%
Phase-II	1.39%	2.77%	-1%
State	2.25%	2.61%	0%

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

3.3.7 Schooling Facilities

Table XXXIV

No. of School Not Having Facilities:

Districts	Drinking Water	Black Board	Toilet	Girls Toilet
	2000-01	2000-01	2000-01	2000-01
Darrang	714	7	1326	1589
Dhubri	793	0	1135	1477
Morigaon	249	14	566	817
Karbi Anglong	872	4	1162	1305
Phase-I	2628	25	4189	5188
Barpeta	837	0	1648	1862
Bongaigaon	353	0	736	918
Goalpara	403	9	694	759
Kokrajhar	474	79	985	1049
Sonitpur	448	4	1072	1318
Phase-II	2515	92	5135	5906
State	5143	117	9324	11094

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

Out of a total number of primary schools in Karbi Anglong in the year 2000-1 (1391) as many as 872 had drinking water, 4 had blackboards, 1162 had toilets and 1305 had girl's toilet. Thus as Tables XXXIV and XXXV indicate that 62.69 per cent of such schools have drinking water; 0.3 per cent blackboards; 83.5 per cent toilets and 93.8 per cent girls toilet. The visits to schools in this study, however, do not reflect this data except for the lack of blackboards which is surprising since the scheme of Operation Blackboard requires every school to have this limited facility. When drinking water is mentioned in great abundance, it is generally supplied by the local people or school teachers if the school is located near a well or a small river. Toilets are few and children go to the fields, therefore, the data may be somewhat incorrect.

Table XXXV**Percentage of School Not Having Facilities:**

Districts	Drinking Water	Black Board	Toilet	Girls Toilet
	2000-01	2000-01	2000-01	2000-01
Darrang	42.00%	0.4%	78.0%	93.5%
Dhubri	52.83%	0.0%	75.6%	98.4%
Morigaon	29.36%	1.7%	66.7%	96.3%
Karbi Anglong	62.69%	0.3%	83.5%	93.8%
Phase-I	48.31%	0.5%	77.0%	95.4%
Barpeta	44.57%	0.0%	87.8%	99.1%
Bongaigaon	35.41%	0.0%	73.8%	92.1%
Goalpara	40.96%	0.9%	70.5%	77.1%
Kokrajhar	43.41%	7.2%	90.2%	96.1%
Sonitpur	32.30%	0.3%	77.3%	95.0%
Phase-II	36.68%	1.5%	81.0%	93.2%
State	43.67%	1.0%	79.16%	94.19%

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

Table XXXVI
School Buildings And Single Teacher Schools

Districts	Total Schools	No Building	Tent Schools	Single Teacher School	Single Class Room	Two Teacher Schools
	2000-01	2000-201	2000-01	2000-01	2000-01	2000-01
Darrang	1700	0	0	313	74%	583
Dhubri	1501	33	0	263	69%	772
Morigaon	848	0	0	80	69%	409
Karbi Anglong	1391	0	31	479	86%	402
Phase-I	5440	33	31	1135	74%	2166
Barpeta	1878	185	0	288	60%	902
Bongaigaon	997	28	10	101	67%	336
Goalpara	984	32	3	179	66%	414
Kokrajhar	1092	66	24	111	75%	549
Sonitpur	1387	29	0	152	45%	535
Phase-II	6338	340	37	831	62%	2736
State	11778	373	68	1966	68%	4902

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

It is true that every Karbi school has a 'make shift' building, but their conditions are poor. Money obtained from Assam Government and efforts made by District authorities have contributed to construction of pucca or semi-pucca buildings, though the roofs leak during monsoon. There are only 31 tent schools, 479 single teacher schools, many (86 per cent), single classrooms are often not partitioned. Two teacher schools have only 402 pupils in number. Some schools have more than two teachers. See Table XXXVI for details and comparison with other DPEP Phase I districts.

3.3.8 Teacher-Pupil Ratio

Table XXXVII
Teacher-Pupil Ratio

Districts	PTR	PTR Above 40:1	PTR Above 60:1
	2000-01	2000-01	2000-01
Darrang	30	531	242
Dhubri	51	989	551
Morigaon	34	300	117
Karbi Anglong	33	406	143
Phase-I	37	2226	1053
Barpeta	34	805	370
Bongaigaon	34	365	132
Goalpara	37	412	193
Kokrajhar	30	302	128
Sonitpur	31	503	196
Phase-II	33	2387	1019
State	35	4613	2072

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

The teacher pupil ratio is satisfactory as per Assam norms and in fact is better in Karbi Anglong when compared with Dhubri. The DPEP intervention in the districts has certainly improved the situation, as reflected in both Phase I and Phase II districts in Table XXXVII in 2000-01. However, the fact that remains as many as 406 school still have a 40:1 and 143 60:1 teacher-pupil ratio makes one conclude that the vacant teacher positions need to be filled up for effective teaching learning environment in Karbi Anglong.

3.3.9 Other Educational Facilities

Table XXXVIII
School Having Facilities in 2000-2001 in DPEP Districts

Districts	Bell	Book Bank	Boundary Wall	First Aid	Medical Check	Playground	Wall Clock
Darrang	69%	25%	5%	7%	9%	0%	49%
Dhubri	92%	47%	6%	11%	15%	0%	60%
Morigaon	71%	85%	3%	11%	10%	0%	79%
Karbi Anglong	94%	56%	7%	11%	14%	0%	67%
Phase-I	82%	48%	5%	10%	12%	0%	61%
Barpeta	78%	65%	3%	16%	7%	0%	56%
Bongaigaon	63%	48%	4%	8%	8%	0%	53%
Goalpara	93%	59%	9%	10%	13%	0%	64%
Kokrajhar	59%	41%	3%	7%	14%	0%	38%
Sonitpur	80%	63%	10%	8%	16%	0%	57%
Phase-II	75%	57%	5%	10%	11%	0%	54%
State	78%	53%	6%	10%	12%	0%	57%

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

Almost all Karbi schools have bells (94 per cent), which is better than other DPEP phase I districts. However, there are only 56 per cent ‘book banks’; 7 per cent boundary walls, 11 per cent first aid kits; 14 per cent medical check ups. When 0 per cent was mentioned as playground, it was pointed out by the investigator that the schools usually had huge uncultivated land/ground located next to them that could be easily utilized with permission of children’s parents. Sixty seven per cent schools do have wall clocks (see Table XXXVII).

3.3.10 Medium of Instruction

Table XXXIX

Medium Wise Schools

Districts	Assamese	Bodo	Bengali	Hindi	Mixed	Reva	Others	Total
Darrang	1328	252	12	6	102		0	1700
Dhubri	1337	77	29	17	36		3	1499
Morigaon	821	11	5	3	8		0	848
Karbi Anglong	886	38	19	31	61		322	1357
Phase-I	4372	378	65	57	207	0	325	5404
Barpeta	1684	109	8	1	79		0	1881
Bongaigaon	699	192	27	0			0	998
Goalpara	751	40	1	1	0	139	51	983
Kokrajhar	455	423	36	9	172		0	1095
Sonitpur	1228	93	29	11	48		0	1409
Phase-II	4817	857	101	22	379	139	51	6366
State	9189	1235	166	79	586	139	376	11770

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

Assamese being the ‘official language’ of the State, though resented by (Karbi people) it is not surprising to find 885 schools imparting the language out of a total of 1357. However, due to the demands of ‘ethnic minorities’ living in Karbi Anglong, there are also 38 Boro; 19 Bengali; 31 Hind and 61 mixed schools. The Bengali and Hindi schools have been founded by the people of their own communities. The category ‘others’ refers to Tamil, Naga, Andhra and other community schools including the English medium schools. Table XXXIX gives a comparative picture of Karbi Anglong district with others both in Phase I and Phase II.

Table XXXX
Medium Wise Teachers

Districts	Assamese	Bodo	Bengali	Hindi	Mixed	Others	Total
Darrang	3799	674	48	16	0	0	4537
Dhubri	3138	175	118	51	0	8	3490
Morigaon	2227	31	20	10	0	0	2288
Karbi Anglong	1793	100	89	90	153	654	2879
Phase-I	10957	980	275	167	153	662	13194
Barpeta	4139	622	33	2	0	0	4796
Bongaigaon	2407	478	123	27	134	0	3169
Goalpara	2048	151	8	3	238	61	2509
Kokrajhar	1044	1174	126	31	258	0	2633
Sonitpur	3781	279	168	40	0	0	4268
Phase-II	13419	2704	458	103	630	61	17375
State Total	24376	3684	733	270	783	723	30569

Source: SCERT, Assam, Guwahati, 2002.

Since Assamese is the medium of instructions, Assamese medium teachers are also in large numbers though they may not always be Assamese in origin. For example in the investigation it was found that several Nagas and Bengalis including Biharis taught Assamese. The Boro, Bengali and Hindi medium school teachers usually imparted teaching in their own languages in their community schools. The mixed medium schools are often multi-lingual as they comprised of several linguistic groups including Nepalese students.

Table XXXXI**Summary Indicators Across the Years in Karbi Anglong**

Particulars	Karbi Anglong			
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-001
Enrolment	86596	89102	96190	98674
GER	92.80%	92.8%	97.74%	97.62%
% Girl's Enrolment	48%	48%	47%	48%
% SC Enrolment	13%	12%	12%	12%
% SC Population	4%			
% of ST Enrolment	66%	64%	68%	66%
% ST Population	67%			
Repeaters (Avg of All Grades)	13%	13%	18%	16%

Source: DPEP Cell, DIPU, Karbi Anglong Assam, March 2002.

To sum up the progress of the district of the Karbi Anglong, the data obtained in March 2002 goes to point out that since the DPEP intervention in 1997-98 to 2000-01 the Gross Enrolment Ratio has gone up from 92.80 per cent to 97.62. However there is no difference in the percentage of girls' enrolment (48 per cent). The decrease in the percentage of SC enrolment could be due to the migration of SC labour to other districts or States of Nagaland and Meghalaya. The ST enrolment also indicates no progress between 1997-98 and 2000-01. There is a slight drop in the percentage of repeaters in all grades (Table XXXXI gives details).

Table XXXXII**Repeaters Profile in Karbi Anglong 2001**

District	Class	2000-01			Repeaters			Repetition Rate		
		Enrolment	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Karbi Anglong	I	23752	22595	46346	7207	6765	13972	30.34%	29.94%	30.15%
	II	11647	10733	22380	641	521	1162	5.50%	4.85%	5.19%
	III	9061	7909	16970	357	336	693	3.94%	4.25%	4.08%
	IV	7253	6358	13611	287	210	497	3.96%	3.30%	3.65%

The rate of 'Repeaters' in total (30.15 per cent) are among both boys and girls is high in Class I, though it decreases as the classes increase. For example in the year 2001 there were as few as 3.65 per cent 'Repeaters' in Class IV from 5.19 per cent in Class II. The repetition rate of boys and girls do not show a great difference.

Chapter IV

THE STUDY – LUMBAJONG BLOCK

4.1 A Description

Karbi Anglong, and more specifically the Lumbajong block surrounding Diphu, where the headquarters of Autonomous Council is situated, has been described as one of unending green hills, embellished with dancing streams, streamlets, unruffled meadows of wild splendour. Karbi Anglong is inseparable navel limb of mother Assam. The radiance of this lotus navel was never displayed as much as it is today. It is the physical barricade that has shadowed its brilliance and has kept the country obscure for so long.⁴⁵ It is the second biggest district of Assam.

Seven development blocks namely: (1) Bokajan; (2) Howraghat; (3) Lumbajong; (4) Nillip; (5) Amri; (6) Sochang and (7) Rongkhang. Lumbajong block the study area covers 590,060 acres of land with Manja as its headquarters. In the sixties it had 288 villages which have grown substantially though the exact data was not available at Diphu in March 2002. Diphu, the district headquarters, situated eleven to twelve hours by road from Gauhati is the only educational and socio-cultural seat of the district. Lumbajong like other blocks, such as, Howraghat, Bokajan and Nillip, belong to the eastern lobe of the district. The atmosphere is sultry leading to high humidity. The monsoon period comprising the months from April to August is its wettest season. Winter is dry with fogs invading the region from the Brahmaputra plain, the soil is shallow with a thin layer

⁴⁵ Barthakur, M., 'Geography of Karbi Anglong' in *Souvenir Silver Jubilee Karbi Celebrations of Anglong Districts*, Government of Assam, Karbi, Stars Dazzling

of fertile soil but liable to erosion. The district is however, congenial for the growth of luxuriant vegetation which includes edible crops, but during the field visit one hardly found anything growing except for a small quantity of paddy and local variety of spinach, pumpkins, few vegetables and fruits such as Singaporean bananas and pineapples.

Karbis belong to the Tibeto-Burman stock with “Arleng” as their local language. Lumbajong’s proximity to Dimapur in Nagaland has made it the home of the Rengma tribe for three centuries. The other categories of population came from Assam, former East Bengal (now Bangladesh). Marwari and Punjabi traders, Nepalis employed in several government jobs and Biharis also exist in sizeable numbers thereby threatening the Karbi economy, and promoting a movement away from the traditional Karbi Jhumming cultivation unlike the situation in Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland. Neither the Karbis nor the outsiders have adopted terrace cultivation, though Assamese and Marwaris own small tea plantations. Rubber plantation, so common in Tripura has yet to make its inroads into the region. The other local crops grown in small quantities are for local consumption. They are maize, sesame cotton, ginger and castor. Almost nothing is exported outside the district, except for the Karbi shawls woven locally at people’s homes.

Lumbajong block benefits educationally from a Government Degree College, a Hindi Training Centre and an Industrial Training Centre. The absence of teachers training in the district is largely responsible for the large number of employed untrained teachers at the elementary level. Despite the existence of a well-equipped hospital, medical training is wanting. In fact, most of the graduates of class X and XII have to look for academic and professional or vocational training outside their district. Manja the

block headquarters is lagging behind in development which has taken place in Bokajan, Howraghat etc., the reasons for which remain to be investigated, especially since Manja is close in physical proximity to Diphu. There is practically no electricity or water supply in the block.

According to the B.N. Bordolai,⁴⁶ the Dimasas constitute an important ethnic group in Karbi almost Anglong district. Numerically, they may be almost next to the Karbis, but they are not found in such large numbers in Lumbajong block. Their origin is difficult to trace. As the Kacharis do not call themselves by this term, the name 'Kachari' may have been given to them by outsiders. Both 'Boro Kachari' and 'Dimasa Kachari' are of the same stock speaking the same language. They may have migrated from western China near the Jang-te-Kiang and Mowargho river.

4.2 Primary Education in the Block

In 1997-98 the District Primary Education Programme was started in Karbi Anglong which benefited the Lumbajong Block as well as Rongkhang, Howraghat and Bokahan. In 1997-98, the Lumbajong block had as many as 150 primary schools, which rose to 161 in the years 1998-99; 173 in 1999-00 and finally to 178 in 2000-01. This gradual rise is also reflected in the district as a whole, which had only 1275 primary schools in 1997-98 and as many as 1392 in the years 2000-01. Though Howraghat block shows a consistent rise in the number of primary schools between 1997-98 and 2000-2001 yet compared to Bokajan, an economically and educationally advanced blocks, Lumbajong's performance is not bad. In fact, the situation in other advanced block like Rongkhang (198 schools in

1997-98 and 192 in 2000-2001), reveals that Lumbajong block is more conscious of its need to develop primary educational facilities than even some advanced blocks. It has utilised most of its funds allotted for primary educational facilities such as opening up of schools.

4.2.1 *Enrolment*

It is not surprising, therefore, to find the block having higher enrolment of school children between 1997-98 and 2000-01. In 1994, there were only 4097 children enrolled in Lumbajong block as compared to 8350 in Howraghat and 7116 in Bokajan.⁴⁷ However, by 1997-98 the student enrolment in primary classes was as much as 12012; which rose to 13734 by 2000-01, once again beating Bokajan (12689 for 2000-01). Howraghat a small economically viable block had its enrolment constantly rising from 18759 in 1997-98 to 21377 in 2000-01. Blocks such as Nilip, Amri, and Rongmongve remain almost stagnant in the opening of schools between the years 1997-98 and 2000-01. Nilip's poor performance in student enrolment in these years could also be due to its remote location.

4.2.2 *Classrooms, Number of Sections and Teachers*

Lumbajong which has as little as 177 classrooms in 1997-98 with 551 sections multiplied itself to having 259 classrooms with 545 sections. In the study sample we show that several rural schools conducted all the four classes in one hall without any partition. It was only the schools situated around Diphu such as Binopani and where

⁴⁶ Bordolai, B.N. 'The Dimasa Kacharis of Karbi Anglong, in *Souvenir Silver Jubilee Karbi Celebrations*, Opp.Cit., p.94.

CRC and BRC's existed we found all the four classes had separate rooms, often even separate classrooms for its two sections. Amri from 95 classrooms with 159 sections as late as 1999-00 graduated to 104 classrooms with less sections (107). Nilip remains static having only 109 classrooms with 291 sections in 1997-98 and 110 classrooms in 2000-01. However its sections have decreased from 291 in 1997-98 to 177 in 2000-01 in view of the paucity of students enrolled into each class.

As far as teachers are concerned, Lumbajong had 312 teacher in 1997-98 which rose marginally to 397 in 2000-01. Once again this reflects a bias against the deployment of teaching staff as is reflected in almost all the blocks of the district. For a detailed comparison of the number of schools, students, teachers, classrooms and sections across the years 1997-98 to 2000-01 in all blocks (see Tables XXXXIII to XXXXVI).

Table XXXXIII

Block / Mandal / Taluk Selected Educational Statistics
(Primary Classes)

District Karbi Anglong

Year: 1997-98

Block	No.of schools	Students	Teachers	Class rooms	No. of Sections
AMRI	80	3252	110	114	256
BOKAJAN	157	13408	345	245	597
CHINTHONG	134	5330	195	171	419
HOWRAGHAT	187	18759	478	250	722
LUMBAJONG	150	12012	312	177	551
NILIP	85	3677	155	109	291
RONGKHANG	198	14217	369	256	731
RONGMONGVE	70	2418	100	116	243
SAMELANGSO	141	9977	281	162	525
SOCHENG	73	4814	78	75	196
Total	1275	88253	2423	1675	4531

Source: DPEP Cell, Diphu, Karbi Anglong, April , 2002

⁴⁷ Government of Assam, 'District Primary Education Programme, Revised District Plan with Work Plan for 1994-95', April 1994, p.5

Table XXXXIV**Block / Mandal / Taluk Selected Educational Statistics
(Primary Classes)****District Karbi Anglong****Year: 1998-99**

Block	No.of schools	Students	Teachers	Class rooms	No. of Sections
AMRI	83	3296	117	100	263
BOKAJAN	158	12676	369	213	588
CHINTHONG	135	6129	206	158	448
HOWRAGHAT	197	19541	498	262	734
LUMBAJONG	161	12681	329	236	577
NILIP	84	3499	148	91	271
RONGKHANG	200	15496	388	252	677
RONGMONGVE	71	3369	96	85	269
SAMELANGSO	149	9832	307	189	543
SOCHENG	72	5120	80	75	199
Total	1310	91639	2538	1661	4569

Source: DPEP Cell, Diphu, Karbi Anglong, April , 2002

Table XXXXV**Block / Mandal / Taluk Selected Educational Statistics
(Primary Classes)****District Karbi Anglong****Year: 1999-00**

Block	No.of schools	Students	Teachers	Class rooms	No. of Sections
AMRI	86	3600	133	95	159
BOKAJAN	164	12764	406	212	596
CHINTHONG	145	7234	239	172	502
HOWRAGHAT	210	21661	588	291	270
LUMBAJONG	173	13708	389	268	229
NILIP	90	4250	178	102	105
RONGKHANG	183	13673	378	215	643
RONGMONGVE	71	3253	110	72	253
SAMELANGSO	156	10371	333	174	179
SOCHENG	80	6099	136	94	285
Total	1358	96613	2890	1695	3221

Source: DPEP Cell, Diphu, Karbi Anglong, April , 2002

Table XXXXVI**Block / Mandal / Taluk Selected Educational Statistics
(Primary Classes)****District Karbi Anglong****Year: 2000-01**

Block	No.of schools	Students	Teachers	Class rooms	No. of Sections
AMRI	86	3569	133	104	107
BOKAJAN	164	12689	394	224	182
CHINTHONG	147	7364	244	160	307
HOWRAGHAT	213	21377	578	305	777
LUMBAJONG	178	13734	397	259	545
NILIP	90	4397	178	110	177
RONGKHANG	192	15407	402	224	597
RONGMONGVE	75	3457	118	100	231
SAMELANGSO	158	10367	365	178	218
SOCHENG	89	6947	153	105	311
Total	1392	99308	2962	1769	3452

Source: DPEP Cell, Diphu, Karbi Anglong, April , 2002

4.2.3. *Category-wise Enrolment of Primary Students*

In Lumbajong Block there existed 13.43 per cent of SC students in Class I (1999-98) decreasing to 10.13 per cent in the year 2000-01 possibly because of the migration of its population due to economic reasons, as explained earlier. However, for the same Class ST students enrolment becomes higher from 65.53 per cent in 1997-98 to 66.82 in 2000-01. Lumbajong block being essentially a tribal area with rising family sizes, it is not surprising to find this slight increase in the enrolment of tribal children. However, the tribal children are also dropouts so far the formal system goes. In the year 2000-01 only 58.34 ST students attended Class IV. Among the OBC as little as 9.79 per cent of students attended Class I in 1997-98, their numbers decreasing to 2.86 per cent in 2000-

01, once again for economic and social reasons, though populationwise the OBCs form a small category in the block.⁴⁸

According to the DPEP Cell, Diphu, Karbi Anglong (as per their data given in April, 2002), there were as many as 233 students primary school children below 6 years of age out of which were 122 boys and 111 girls, though nobody belonged to the SC or OBC categories. However, being a tribal block, Lumbajong had as many as 208 ST students consisting of 107 boys and 101 girls. The underage enrolment increased both in total and for boys and girls in 2000-01 from 1997-98. In 1997-98, there was only one SC girl, 47 ST girls. The SC girls who were under aged (660 total) in 2000-01 did not enrol in primary school. However, out of 4066 ST girls belonging to below 6 years of age group population, only 101 were enrolled.

As far as data in repeaters goes, the information available does not include a category-wise break-up. Out of a total of 20.82 per cent repetition rate for Class I students in 1997-98, there are as many as 20.08 per cent girls and 21.56 per cent boys. This figure rose to 28.61 per cent in total in 1999-2000 with 28.90 per cent girls and 28.33 per cent boys for the same class, out of a total 15.17 per cent repetition rate for all four classes. The repetition rate decreased as the classes progressed. Thus whereas in 1997-98 out of a total of 13.33 per cent repetition rate in Class II, 11.52 per cent were girls and 15.14 boys decreasing to 10.59 boys in Class IV for the girls, however, there was an increase to 11.97 in the same class for the same years. This repetition rate becomes less over the years on account of DPEP intervention and one only finds 4.74 per cent boys and 5.60 per cent girls repeating in Class IV in the year 1999-2000.

⁴⁸ Karbi Anglong, DPEP Cell, Diphu, April 2002

4.3 Teacher Profile

The DPEP has offered training to the males for rural primary schools. Hence their number has increased from 68 in 1997-98 to 82 in 1999-00. Same is the case with the 'deemed trained' which rose from 58 in 1997-98 to 77. However, the untrained teacher remains a major factor even today, the number of untrained teachers rose from 185 in 1997-98 to as many as 219 in 1999-00. This data includes the teachers of primary sections in other schools in the same block. Out of a total of 346 trained, deemed trained and untrained teachers in the year 1997-98, the figure rose to 397 in 2000-01. The rural bias in deployment and training of teachers is also reflected in the data for the two years. Whereas in 1997-98 there were only 4 such category of teachers serving in urban schools, their numbers increased to only 46 in 2000-01. Karbi Anglong and also Lumbajong block being rural areas, this rural bias is but natural.

In 1997-98 out of a total primary school teaching strength of 346 teachers there are as many as 152 belonging to the SC category with 149 serving in rural primary schools and three in urban areas. For the same year there were 95 ST teachers all serving in rural areas both in primary schools or in schools having primary sections. Only 24 'OBC' category of teachers existed in rural primary schools, though there were 39 teachers, belonging to the general category consisting of 31 rural and 1 urban primary school and 1 rural upper primary school with a primary section. Out of 112 Headteachers as many as 111 served in the rural areas and only one in urban area. And out of 72 teachers, 69 served in rural areas and three in urban area. All 158 Assistant Teachers were deployed in rural areas. There were as few as 3 stipendary teachers receiving a nominal consolidated salary of Rs.600/- to 800/- per month.

By 2000-01, the total teaching strength had increased to 397 with as many as 46 serving in urban primary schools. However, only 15 'SC' category of teachers existed in rural areas. However, as many as 305 'ST' teachers served in primary schools and 41 in urban areas. The tendency of deploying teachers from among the local community, as reflected in all tribal areas in India, is also present here though one does not know why the number of 'SC' teachers had decreased. Among the 'OBCs' there is a marginal increase to 39 teachers out of whom only 1 serves in the urban area. In the 'general category' the primary teachers had decreased to 34 with 4 serving in urban areas. Hence with the expansion of rural primary schools the ST teachers benefit, though often with less qualification. As many as 177 Headteachers were found in primary schools once again reflecting the rural bias as only 9 were in the urban schools. This is a rise from 1997-98 data. Though there existed zero number of the category of teachers in 2000-01, yet the Assistant teachers were as many as 204 out of whom 37 were in urban primary schools. It does appear, from this data, that several of the category of 'teachers' have been now promoted to the category of 'Assistant Teacher'. The stipendary teachers also decreased in number to only 2 (from 19 in 1997-98), all due to the DPEP's insistence of employing regular and additional teachers.

In 1997-98, there were as few as 68 trained teachers in rural schools which had increased to 76 in 2000-01. However, the increase is in urban primary schools which from zero in 1997-98 had risen to 10 in 2000-01. The 'deemed trained' had also increased from 58 (56 rural and 2 urban) in 1997-98 to 108 (85 rural and 23 urban). The number of untrained teachers were as many as 213 in 2000-01 from 185 in 1997-98, the numbers increasing from 179 to 200 in rural schools and from 2 to 13 in urban areas.

4.4 Management of Primary Schools

In 1997-98, 50 primary schools and 3 upper primary schools with primary sections were managed by the Department of Education, Government of Assam. The Department of Tribal Welfare of the same State Government also managed 33 primary schools, though as many as 245 rural and 4 urban schools were looked after by the local body. After Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council exercised its rights to manage primary schools, according to the provisions of the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, the Local Body started managing 397 schools (351 rural and 46 urban). Thus by 2000-01, there were no schools managed by the Assam Government under its departments of Education and Tribal Welfare. Though the data as given by DPEP Cell at Diphu does not reflect the existence of private aided or unaided schools yet in the field visit to the block, we did find schools run by the Don Bosco Mission. Such schools reflected as 'others' in 1997-98 (7) are however not reflected in 2000-01 data.

4.5 The Sample Schools

All the 25 sample schools belonged to tribal areas. Their list is given in Annexure III. There were 7 schools located in the urban areas. The sample was based upon the method of 'random sampling'. The students were overcrowded in some schools like Adarsha Hindi (420) run by members of the Hindi-speaking community, especially Marwari tradesmen. However in remote areas schools like Wophong Timung there existed only thirty five students. Barring schools like Longmili L.P. School (63), Tralongso (70), Memari Terang (52), Tari Teron Memorial English School (98) and Sarlok English School (75). The average size of the school children was between 325

and 213. However, schools like Sorada and Arthunglongso had only 86 and 80 students each. It was observed that large student population was generally around schools near the district headquarters, Diphu and in remote areas with poor schooling facilities, the number of students were few.

The walking distance of the children to their schools varied from 17 kms in Police Reserve School, 8 km. in Chutianala to as little as 1 km. In schools like Adarsha Hindi (located near a bazaar at Diphu), and Amalapatty L.P. School also near Diphu. The Rongnihang English medium school also admitted children living at a walking distance of 17 km. Though the norm of opening schools at the distance of 1 km prevailed the most of the 25 schools visited, yet one did find the above-mentioned exception, some times schools were situated even 5 km. distance from the place of residence of the children, such as in schools like Sarada. Children of Artungso in upper Dilaji were forced to walk 16 km. The sheer fact that several schools were located at the distance of between 5-17 kms. from the children's residence indicates a lack of the exercise of 'school mapping'. Especially in view of the fact that these schools have few students. It would have been better to construct residential-cluster-schools serving such remote areas. Wophong Timung a single teacher school with all 35 ST students found itself located at a remote upper Hapjon Wophong Timung village at the distance of 30 km from Diphu. It was very obvious during the field visit, that this school remained neglected, was never inspected on an annual basis and also had limited educational equipments, which will be discussed in detail in the latter section of this report.

In general, there was 'no' literacy campaign in the area and hence parents did not realize the importance of primary education. The parents being farmers and labourers did

not see the necessity of sending their children to schools and hence there was little demand from the community to open schools near a village. The small schools were situated at the distance of 17 kms. on account of the paucity of school children wanting to attend schools, and hence, such schools also reflected a low enrolment of school children.

4.5.1 *Category of Students*

Lumbajong being a tribal area, most of students participating in primary schools are of ST origin, though not necessary belonging to the Karbi group. In Langmili L.P. School belonging to Dhansingterang village the school was located 9 kms away from Diphu; all its 63 students belonged to the ST category. The same is the case of Wophong Timung school, where there is a single tribal Karbi teacher with 100 per cent ST students. The SC students comprise 50 per cent in Junior Basic Colony situated in Municipal Ward No.5 near Diphu. The Sarlok School situated in Upper Mapjan also has the same percentage of SC students. There are however a few schools like Sitalabari which has as few as 10 per cent SC students and no ST students. Sitalabari being a Bengali school situated in the Bengali area comprises of persons living in the area from before 1947 and mainly engaged in the services or in petty business. This population is reflected as category 'others' in Table XXXXVII.

In the same table the percentage of all category of students and the total of students enrolled in the 25 schools is given. The category 'others' needs further analysis as it gives a picture of the different ethnic composition of school children. Binapani, situated in Diphu municipal ward no.1, is the only school visited which had electricity. Out of its category 'others' mostly the students belonged to the Bengali community,

however, there were 25 per cent 'OBC' students. The category 'others' apart from Bengali Hindu students represented Manipuri and Bengali and non-Bengali Muslims.

In Adarsha Hindi L.P. School situated in Diphu had as many as 40 per cent students in the category of 'others' consisting of Marwari, Nepali, Bihari, Punjabi, Bengali, Manipuri and Karbi students all studying in the Hindi Medium. In Manza village, Manza Hindi L.P. School situated in Nepali Basti in Ward No.19, also had a 25 per cent students in the category of 'others' through mostly children belonging to the Nepali labour community. The Rongnihang Assamese medium school situated in Ward No.3, had mostly Muslim children belonging to north India and children of tea garden labourers in its 10 per cent category of 'others'. The Amalapatty school located in rural area of Ward No.6, had 15 per cent students belonging to the category of others comprising of Bengalis, Nepalis and Adhivasis. The 10 per cent 'others' in Sarada school belonged to the Nepali, Bihari, Desowali, Karbi and Kachari population. Once again the 10 per cent students belonging to the category of 'others', in Dillai Mithi Pang School in Ward No.8, had students from Boro, Dimasha, Karbi, Nepali, Bihari, Garo, Manipuri, Muslim community and tea-gardens. School Semsongsingh Engte situated in village Ramteron also had a variety of ethnic groups such as Nagas, Karbis, Bihari, Nepali, Boro and Manipuri in its 10 per cent category of 'others'. Bithipang school located in Hemari Terang village 20 kms. From Diphu also indicated a variety of similar ethnic groups in its 10 per cent category of 'others', namely, Karbi, Manipuri, Kachari, Garo and Muslims. School Tralangso situated in the village by the same name, three kilometres away from Diphu also consisted of Karbi, Nepali, Bihari and Garo students. The 10 per cent 'others' in Rongbohum village situated only two kms. from Diphu with a

small school of 121 students had Karbi, Adhivasi, Boro, Assames, Dimashas, Bilaspuri, Nepali and Bengali students in this category. Generally speaking, the schools situated either in remote rural areas or near markets of small towns had this varied ethnic groups of students though the medium of instruction could be as diverse as Assamese, Hindi, Bengali or English.

Table XXXXVII
Students Strength in Sample Schools by Caste

S.No.	School	Total	% SC	% ST	% Others
1.	Police Reserve	185	15	50	35
2.	Lower Dillagi	325	40	40	20
3.	Chutiyanalla	125	45	45	10
4.	Adarsha Hindi	420	30	30	40
5.	Sitalabari	230	10	-	90
6.	Ronghihang (English)	245	30	45	25
7.	Ronghihang (Assamese)	160	20	70	10
8.	Amalapatty	175	15	70	15
9.	Junior Basic Colony	203	50	40	10
10.	Binapani)	300	15	25	60
11.	Sarada	86	60	30	10
12.	Artunglangso	80	15	78	7
13.	Dillai Mithi Pang	240	30	60	10
14.	Wophong Timung	35	100	100	100
15.	Sarlok English School	75	50	50	-
16.	Tari Teron Memorial Eng. School	98	20	70	10
17.	Semsonsingh Engte	130	10	80	10
18.		212	25	50	25
19.	BithiPhang (Assamese)	84	100	80	10
20.	Diphu Town Primary School	213	35	45	20
21.	Langmili L. P. School	63	-	100	-
22.	Tralangso	70	21.09	42	7
23.	Hemari Terang	52	-	41.60	10.40
24.	Lumlangso L. P. School	150	4	96	-
25.	Rengbohum	121	30	6	1
		2		0	0
		1			

4.5.2 *Quality of School Buildings*

Most of the school buildings were made of brick though often not plastered. Their roofs were made of tin mostly constructed years back and are leaking resulting in the destruction of furniture and teaching-learning material. There were hardly any boundary walls and except for the cluster school area and the BRC school area. Thus schools had practically no playgrounds. Though school Binapani established by the Bengali community had sufficient playgrounds and is even thinking of constructing more, some sort of ground space is available outside the schools, though not sufficient for physical exercises. It was pointed out by the project team that those rural school which are located near empty field could use the space for children's games activities. Our photographs will give an insight into the condition of primary schools in the block.

Out of 25 sample schools only 13 were 'pucca'. They were Police Reserve, lower Dillaji, Adarsha, Binapani, Artunglangso,, Manza Hindi LP School among others. Ten were partially pucca whereas schools such as Langmili LP located 9 kilometres away from Diphu in Dhansing Terang village and Sarlok Hansa English Medium School. In Sarlok Hansa Upper Hapjan village located 15 kms away from Diphu were kuccha building often with thatched roofs.

All the 25 schools being co-educational, there were no separate classroom for girls. On the average there were 4 classrooms, though two schools had 5 and 6 each representing different sections in Class I. Only 1 school namely, Binapani had as many as 7 classrooms, the classes I-III being divided into two sections each with a well spaced and decorated teachers room. Two schools namely Junior Basic Colony and Ronghihang

English medium school had as many as 6 classrooms comprising of more than one sections in classes I and II. As many as 9 schools had one hall to impart teaching in all its four classes and school Ronghihang English medium had the same though it had built partitions for the separate classes.

Regardless of the fact as to whether the school was located near Diphu or not as many as 7 out of the 25 sample schools had 2 teachers room. This was often made due to the initiatives taken by the Head-teacher together with Assistant Teachers. The photograph reveals how this extra room had been used for storing teaching-learning material and 'dry ration' (Gur, Chira and uncooked rice). The science kits which were given under the Scheme of 'Operation Blackboard' were stored in this extra room. These items as the picture reveals are used for husking and cleaning the rice in children's homes.

4.5.3 *Furniture, Windows, Doors and Veranda*

Out of the 25 sample schools as many as 20 schools had desks for their students and 18 had separate chairs. Five schools had long tables in which several as much as six children used it at one time. Five schools had benches for their children and two schools such as Diphu Lower Primary and Lumlangse Lower Primary School children used mats with small desks. Twenty two schools had proper chairs and desks for the teaching learning staff. Out of the three remaining sample schools Hemari Terang Schools showed the project team about their inability to use "broken furniture". The Sarlok and Manza L P Schools also complained about the inadequacy of staff furniture. All schools visited by the project team had either brick or mud verandas which were open on all sides

for ventilation, though during monsoons they were water logged often the monsoon water entering the classrooms though the verandas were covered on top by tins. Though all schools had doors and windows, they were not always in a usable condition. In particular, the windows of school Himari Terang which had broken glasses. The same case was with its doors. In fact, the windows and doors of most schools are in urgent need for repair.

4.5.4 *Teaching-Learning Material*

Teaching aids play a crucial role in imparting quality education in any school. Most of the sample 25 schools had four to five blackboards. Though schools with more than one section had as many as 8 as Binapani. The Ronghihang English School even had as many as 10. However, schools located at a distanced from Diphu, the District Headquarter had few blackboards which can be used. Schools like Artunglanso L.P. English medium school had only two and since it was located 16 kms. away from Diphu its complaints were never attended to. The Wophong Timung, a single teacher school, located 30 kms. away had only one blackboard and hence lessons were conducted in their absence. Schools like Dillagi Mithi Phang also had only one unusable blackboard. Hemari Terang located 8 kms. away had also two unusable blackboards. The same complaint was from Semsongsing Engte School. Even Sarlok, otherwise a well-equipped school complained that it had only three blackboards in its four classes. The four blackboards of Tralanso L.P. School were also of no use. Hence, about 40% of the schools had either insufficient or unusable blackboards.

All the twenty-five schools possessed a syllabus provided by the District Council Authority. However, there is a variation as far as Teachers Guide or Handbooks are concerned. Though these were supplied by the DPEP Cell and should have reached all the twenty-five sample schools, it appeared from the field visit that as many as 10 schools were without them. Though the schools which had them (15 schools) generally had two such guides, school Tari Teren had as many as 4 due to the initiative taken by its Principal to obtain them. Binapani and Diphu Town Primary School had as much as three each. Out of all the 25 sample schools, twenty-three had state maps. School Hemari Terang 8 kms. away from Diphu had no maps of any category. When pointed out by the Investigator that this facility could be easily made available by the social studies teacher; it came as a “surprise” to the school head School Dillai Mithi Pang which had no district map had however a state map. Country maps not common to the sample schools were available in only 8 schools, and schools like Adarsh Hindi and Tralango Lower Primary also possessed maps of the world.

As far as other teaching aids such as Globes and Charts of ‘birds, flower, vegetables, trees’ etc. went, School Adarsh Hindi had neither. Nor did the Sarlok school and Hemari Terang. In fact, the latter expressed ignorance of having to possess these essential items. Binapani had even charts of important national leaders and literary figures. If the 22 schools had Globes, the norm has to have one, however, 6 schools did possess two Globes each. Seventeen schools had some sort of games equipment such as balls, cricket and hockey bats, strings for jumping and often a badminton bats. Once again the Sarlok School had no such games equipment. The Arthungso Lower Primary School and Sarada L P school had nothing for its children.

School libraries or reference books generally kept in the teachers' room was a rare phenomenon of rural primary schools, however, Karbi Anglong and Lumbajong block proved an exception to this rule. Barring 9 schools, all the other 16 schools had some sort of 'school library' at the primary level, generally provided by the District Council authorities. A school like Tralangso demonstrated proudly its 200 books provided by the Council, Dillai Mithi Pang had 125 and Police Reserve 152. It was also not uncommon to find schools with generally 6-14 reference books. This urge to acquire additional reading material provided by the Council is certainly an unique feature in India's remote North-East Tribal belt.

As per 'OB' norms, primary schools are required to possess a 'mini tool kit', 'primary science kit' and 'maths kits', which were generally absent in 95 per cent of the schools in the sample. Binapani being an exception of having all three such teaching aids. Junior Basic Colony, an Assamese medium school had both a mini tool kit as well as a primary science kit though it often did not use them in a classroom situation. Sitalabari school, however, did try and use these aids. In total only 3 schools had mini tool kit, 4 primary science kit and 3 maths kits.

4.5.5 *Teaching Staff*

The staff strength of the sample school vary from 9 to single teacher schools. The schools having a single teacher such as Langmili, Temari Terang, Sarlok and Wophong Timung were at a tremendous disadvantage, though their students' strength may have been as little as 35 (Wophong Timung). Since these single teacher schools had more than Class I, the paucity of teaching staff prevented them imparting quality education. In fact,

“management of classroom” was their pre-occupation. Schools such as Hemari Terang and Semsongsing Engte had only two teachers; whereas Police Reserve and Amalopathy had as many as 9 teachers each. This surplus teaching staff in these schools as well as in others such as Rongnihang English LP School, Junior Basic Colony and Diphu Town Primary School (8 teachers each) could easily be shifted to single or two teacher schools as a means of rationalisation of teaching staff. Schools Lumlangso and Binapani had also as many as 7 staff members each. The schools having 6 teachers each were Lower Dillagi, Adarsh Hindi, Sitalabari and Rongnihang (Assamese). School of Dillai Mithi Phang, Chutiyanalla and Rengbohum had five teachers each which was reasonable considering that there were often more than one section in Class I. Quite apart from single teacher schools, schools like Tranlangso and Manza Hindi LP School were also short of staff since they had 4 classes each with only 3 teachers employed in each school. It was observed by the Project Team that generally schools located near Diphu had more than 4 staff members and hence an imperfect teacher-pupil ratio which was far below 1 : 35 or 1 : 40 as per the state norms. This was because of low enrolment and frequent dropout of school children. The tendency among school teachers was to want to be posted in schools near their residence so that they could also look after their families. Being close to Diphu also meant the availability of better schooling opportunities for the teachers’ children.

Though at the primary level one generally finds more female than male teachers, Lumbajong block is somewhat different. Only 6 schools had all female teachers and five with majority females. The remaining schools had both male and female teachers, though often the Headteacher was a female. The teacher-pupil ratio varies from 70 : 1 in

school Adarsh Hindi to as little as 19 : 1 in Amalapatty. This range in teacher-pupil ratio reflects the urge of school teachers to serve in small urban areas. On the average there were 25 : 1 and 26 : 1 teacher-pupil ratio; a ratio considered good for imparting quality education. However, though the ratio is favourable, yet the paucity of teaching aids and their infrequent use does not improve the teaching-learning process.

It has been observed that like most tribal areas under Autonomous District Councils, the primary school teacher in Karbi Anglong employed as far back as 22/23 years lacks the essential qualifications and training. Often a teacher is below matric pass since at the time of his/her's employment matric or higher secondary pass was not an essential qualification. Hence 4 to 5 schools had teacher below matric or high school leaving certificate and often not trained even under DPEP short term training courses and workshops. Only one school which was Police Reserve situated in the heart of Diphu had a graduate BT trained teacher. However, Binapani a Bengali school had all seven graduate teachers with 6 being trained by DPEP and one under BTC course. The Head Teacher of Ronghihong English Lower Primary School was also a graduate with a BTC training whereas its other 8 teachers were higher secondary pass. Under DPEP 7 of its teachers were trained, though one newly recruited remained untrained. School Teri Teron a single teacher school had only one Higher Secondary pass teacher trained under DPEP. An exception to the single teacher school was the Semsonsing Engte which had two teachers; one as graduate and the other Higher Secondary pass but both had been trained by DPEP.

Almost 13 schools out of the sample 25 schools had untrained teachers, often as many as 6 out of 9 of its teaching staff such as Amalapatty. The school Sharada had only

four Higher Secondary pass teachers who received “unsatisfactory” DPEP training. Though it would not be incorrect to conclude that on the average the primary school teacher was either matric or High School pass, yet almost 5 to 6 schools had teachers with qualification up to Classes 6, 7 and 8. Wophong Timung School which only had one Higher Secondary pass teacher complained of not being trained at all in either DPEP or in any other course.

4.5.6 *Method of Teaching*

A combination of factors such as effective use of teaching-aids; preparation of lesson plans; supervision of class work, correction of home work improves the method of imparting quality teaching in any school. Though most of the 25 sample school teachers including the Head Teacher had admitted the use of “Lesson Plans”, yet during the visit to these schools by the Project team, such plans were invariably limited to school located near urban areas. Moreover, in the absence of proper primary school training, the DPEP short term trainings and workshops had not been successful in imparting the skills required to develop such a plan. What, therefore, was available to the Project Team were Teachers’ Diaries in which they had written down their lesson numbers as per subjects and dates in which they were to impart the lesson class-wise. The general reaction to the teaching-learning process was “children are directed to read the lesson on their own”.⁴⁹

All the sample 25 schools admitted that the “teacher had read out the paragraphs or lessons in class and then explained the subject to the students”.⁵⁰ Out of the sample as many as 23 schools were using blackboards though as mentioned earlier every class or

⁴⁹ School Questionnaires, March-April, 2002

section did not possess them. Schools like Dillai Mithi Pang and Hemari Terang did not use blackboards at all. Dillai Mithi Pang despite having 5 teaching staff was not in a position to have even one usable blackboard. The Tranlangso LP School with a simple teacher had no blackboard at all. School Semsongsing Engte also complained that they had two unusable blackboards. School Hemari Terang situated 8 kms. away from Diphu was only able to use the “question-answer method” in its classroom interaction. It did not possess maps blobs, charts, junior science kit, Maths kit, dictionary. It was also not possible for its school teachers to use ‘demonstration’ method in science or social studies classes. Though like all the other 24 schools, this school gave its students home work and evaluated it regularly along with class work, yet as far as teaching-learning methodology was concerned it merely encouraged the children to read from paragraphs which were then explained by the class teachers.

All the other 24 schools used maps belonging either to the district or state except for Hemari Terang Schools like Adarsh Hindi and Tralangso L.P. also used country and world maps. Adarsh Hindi and Hemari Terang had no globes, hence they use to explain social studies was not possible. Only 12 schools possessed and used primary science kits and four maths kits. Twenty out of twenty five schools possessed dictionaries and did refer to them frequently for spelling mistakes and often to translate the words from Assamese to English.

In general, the sample schools did not produce any teaching aids like models out of clay as was found in primary schools in Lai Autonomous District Council of Mizoram (Jalali, 1996). Demonstration method which 15 sample schools had indicated in their

⁵⁰ Ibid.

questionnaires generally referred to the use of flower, vegetables and fruits which they translated from Karbi to Assamese language. The medium of instruction though often Assamese with a few Hindi and Bengali words English was bilingual with Karbi words being used to explain the meaning of words or sentences. Almost all the twenty five schools visited had teachers who were well-versed in the Karbi language and used it often in the classroom interaction.

An important feature of the school curriculum was the teachers' efforts to introduce 'Work Education' even at the primary stage. Hence in the Head Teachers rooms one generally found personal items used in a kitchen made of bamboo such as containers for foodgrains, cleaning of paddy, ropes made of coir. When asked by the Project Team that "who" had helped the students learn this skill, the school teachers often replied that "it was the students' parents who during their spare time came to the school to help make these items".

4.6 Financial Implications

According to the Xth Five Year Plan which is different from the Eighth Plan, emphasis is given on decentralization. However, during our the visit to Diphu, the study sample only the Ninth Plan was applicable. Accordingly, girls and SC/ST were given priority especially in rural areas with enhancement of community participation at the elementary level. Both the Ninth and Tenth Plans as far as primary education is concerned looked at it as that of financing with the help of the Local Bodies and parents. But the Tenth Plan emphasizes on private contribution as more than in the Ninth Plan. Further, the role of the NGO in elementary education is considered an essential input.

The North-Eastern Council (NEC) in its Ninth Plan outlay of Rs.2,450 crore; Rs.398 crore was utilized during 1997-98 and Rs.425 crore during 1998-99. The approved outlay for 1999-2000 was Rs.450 crore, out of which approximately Rs.215 crore was allotted to the power sector and Rs.162 crore to transport and communication sectors, constituting 84% of the total outlay for 1999-2000. Health and manpower development schemes got Rs.49 crore constituting 11% of the total outlay for 1999-2000.

NEC schemes were implemented mainly by the State Government agencies and the Central Public Sector Undertakings/Organisations. The main Central Organisations are Border Roads Organisation for construction of roads and bridges, Airport Authority of India for improvement of airports, North-Eastern Electric Power Corporation Ltd. For hydro-electric power projects and Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd. For power transmission lines. Only a fraction of NEC schemes are implemented through NGOs.

The major schemes under implementation were 33 on-going roads and bridges schemes. The Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) meeting was chaired by Special Secretary (NE) on December 2, 1999 to consider 11 Roads/Bridges Projects under the 9th Plan. The Committees considered the proposal one by one and cleared 8 projects and deferred 3 proposals. Assam got only Rs.584 crore up to 1997-98 and the investment in the social sector was as little as only 46% as compared with sectors like transport and power. The non-lapsable central resources pool for Assam was Rs.153.85 crores. During 1998-99, the Committee had identified projects/schemes costing Rs.118 crore for funding with these resources. During 1999-2000, the Committee has identified projects/schemes costing Rs.372.43 crores. Formal sanction for release of the money is being issued by the Ministry of Finance. If compared with other North-Eastern state in the non-lapsable

pool, Assam did get enormous amount of money but when it came to allotment at the district council level, the method adopted was arbitrary.

It was found that even out of DPEP funds allotted to Karbi Anglong, the money reached far too late for the district level to implement any scheme even for the ex-OB scheme. In fact, what the district authorities complained that allotment was not only the arbitrary but also delayed allotment of funds to the district authorities by the State Government. Hence, along with Lai Autonomous District Council, they too felt that the Central Government should directly allot them funds for improvement of all facilities including primary and elementary education. Their bridges and roads had been neglected despite allocation of funds for this sector. It is, therefore, not surprising to find primary school buildings lacking in funds for their improvement. However, unlike the Lai people, the Karbi tribe does not seem to feel any responsibility towards improving infrastructural facilities such as improved school buildings.

Under major heads for the budget estimate of 2003-04, the NEC has no budget for elementary education, let alone primary, however at the Centre the Tribal Affairs had allotted Rs.25.25 crores. In the total under planned expenditure, it is somewhat surprising that absolutely no scheme was sanctioned for Karbi Anglong district.

Chapter V

CONCLUSION

Decentralisation involving delegation of power to lower level in a territorial hierarchy, whether the hierarchy is one of the government within the state or officers, within a large scale organisation actually means delegation of power to the subordinate authority. In India, decentralisation of education has been a major concern since the 1950s. As mentioned in this Report, several attempts have been made to empower the local bodies to improve school effectiveness so that autonomy is exercised at the local level in the spheres of academic, administrative and financial planning and management of primary education. The involvement of community has been considered essential both for quality and quantitative improvement of primary schools.

The DPEP was a project designed specially for the low female literacy areas throughout the country and for the North East. The district of Karbi Anglong fell into its first phase. The project was conceived as one which dealt with decentralisation of academic and administrative aspects so that planning could be done at the lower level and administration or management of schools would be the concern not only to the state or district but also at the lower levels of hierarchy through the system of BRCs, CRCs and Village Education Committees. However, the Indian experience or the success of DPEP in remote areas consisting of tribal population such as this study of Karbi Anglong district has shown somewhat indifferent results. The coverage of 25 primary schools both rural and urban all of which belonging to government management and

Autonomous Council has shown that not only is there no financial decentralisation as mentioned earlier, but also that the primary education system is largely reflecting that of the broader Assamese pattern thereby ignoring the local 'Karbi' element.

Lumbajong block which consists of Diphu, the district Head Quarters has both Karbi and non-Karbi population. Quite contrary to the expectation of mobilisation of the community for enhancing their participation in improving the quality of primary schools, the awareness campaigns of DPEP were practically nil. Furthermore, most of the teachers felt that the required DPEP training was insufficient and complained of only 'Lip Service', short-term (7-10 days) teachers training programme covering primary school teachers including the Head Teacher in the school clusters. Whereas the Cluster Resource Centre was vibrant with teaching aids and infrastructural machinery like rooms and small administrative set-up, the primary schools in rural areas were left to their own device.

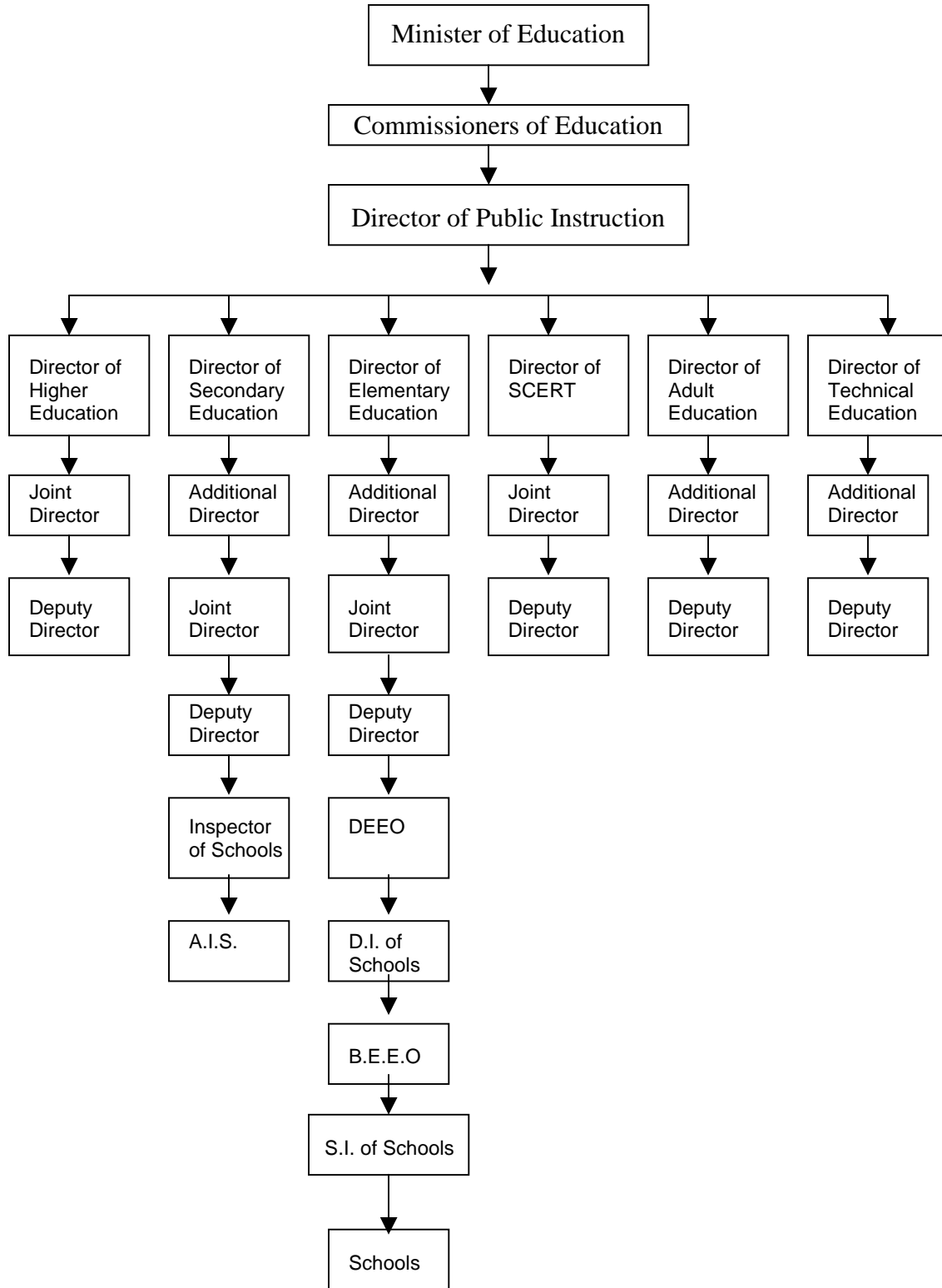
The need to introduce even a modicum of OB facilities such as 2 rooms, science and maths kits, charts, globe, map, sufficient textbooks, chair, tables, blackboards and teaching material were lacking in most rural schools though the urban schools through their own initiative had provided the pupils with these facilities. What is even alarming is the medium of instruction which instead of being in Karbi (the majority linguistic group) is still Assamese. For the first generation learner, it is, therefore, difficult to translate his classroom experience to his home environment. Even the Gaon Bora (village headman) complained about his inability to comprehend what was being imparted in his children's schools. This lack of communication between state government and the Autonomous Council is reflected in many other aspects of the Council's demands. Decentralisation of

the curriculum thereby making it more relevant to local heads may totally absent. The Council authorities despite all efforts feel a sense of failure in their ability to communicate this to the state and the central level authorities. Since the Karbi people are proud with the long sense of tradition and culture, their inner resources need to be tapped by delegating more authority to the Council for planning and management of primary schools and introducing proper teachers' training institutes. Their financial aspect of planning only at the state level for funds granted by the Centre which was allotted to the Council as per pattern of decentralisation envisaged in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution needs further probe. As for example, the district plans and the Council plans on primary education and their need under different heads of expenditure needs to be discussed at length at the state level and sufficient and timely funds should reach the Council for implementation of schemes. If decentralisation does not take place now, then future programmes like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan will only be another small effort in the larger ocean of one's effort to decentralise authority in educational planning and administration.

Few Facts on Assam

Capital	-	Dispur
Area	-	78,438 sq. km.
No. of Districts	-	23
Total Population	-	26,638,407
Male	-	13,787,799
Female	-	12,850,608
Urban Population	-	11% (28,87,795) [1991 Census]
Scheduled Tribe	-	12.8% (28,74,441) [1991 Census]
Male	-	8,64,617
Female	-	7,94,795
Density	-	324 (2001)
Sex Ratio	-	933 (2001)
Literacy Rate	-	65.38% (2001)
Male	-	75.85% (2001)
Female	-	54.16% (2001)
Growth Rate	-	53.26 (1991 Census)
Per Capita Income	-	Rs.3179.00 (1991 Census) [87.90]
Rank in India in terms of	-	(a) Total population - 13 th (b) Population Density - 14 th (c) Literacy - 22 nd
Climate	-	Monsoon Type
Economy	-	Agrarian
Industry	-	100 medium, 12000 SSI, 11 Large
Minerals	-	Petroleum, Coal, Natural Gas, Limestone

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE



List of Schools visited Lumbajong Block

1. Police Reserve Lower Primary School (Urban)
2. Lower Dillaji (Urban)
3. Chutiyamalla (Urban)
4. Adarsha Hindi Diphu (Urban)
5. Sitalabari (Urban Bengali medium)
6. Rongnihang (Assamese)
7. Amalapatty
8. Rongnihang (English) Lower Primary
9. Junior Basic Colony
10. Binapani (Bengali Urban)
11. Sarada (English)
12. Artunglangso (English)
13. Dillaimithiphang
14. Wophong Timung Lower Primary School
15. Sarlok English School
16. Tari Terron Memorial English School
17. Semsonsing English Memorial Lower Primary School
18. Mansa Hindi Lower Primary School
19. Bithi Phangi (Assamese)
20. Diphu Town Primary School (Urban)
21. Longmili Lower Primary School
22. Tralangso Lower Primary School
23. Hemari Terang
24. Lumlangso Lower Primary School
25. Rengbohum

List of Head Teachers Interviewed

1. Mrs. Rina Dutta
2. Mrs. Ritapurkayastha
3. Mrs. Jinlin Singnarpi
4. Mrs. Kusum Devi
5. Mr. Monmuhan Satrudhar
6. Mrs. Hoya Terangpi
7. Mrs. Nirupa Hansepi
8. Mrs. Rojoni Hansepi
9. Mr. Saimon Bordolia
10. Mr. Dijapada Dhar
11. Mrs. Langruipi Fongdipi
12. Mr. Joying Kvo
13. Mrs. Rani Timungpi
14. Mr. Ratnsing Killing
15. Mr. Solomon Rongpi
16. Mrs. Phudang Tokbipi
17. Mr. Bidyasing Engti
18. Mr. Premdaar Kachari
19. Mr. Longsingh Ronghang
20. Mr. Sepenga Rengma
21. Mr. Sonasing Engleng
22. Mrs. Kasang Milikp
23. Mr. Bharat Engti
24. Mrs. Ruplan Engtipi
25. Mrs. Kasang Terangpi
26. Mr. Biren Mahanta

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