Modern Education and Colonized Assam: an Experience of Progress under Britain’s Rule

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Abstract:

The so-called dual missions (Constructive and destructive) of the imperial British government always worked out in a parallel way in India. Apart from colonial subjugation and exploitation, native people experienced so many progressive and encouraging acts of colonial government. Among those the notable and exceptional act or activities of the Englishmen was to bring about an intellectual revolution in different parts of Indian territory through new modern western education system. As a considerable part of the British dominion, Assam since middle half of the 18th century experienced the policies, mechanisms and magnitudes of the modern education system. This paper offers an evaluation and understanding of Assam Modern Education system and the development of English language during colonial rule (1757-1947). And attempt has also been made to assess the impact and limitation of Assam education system and English language teaching process under British government in a most intelligible and analytical way.

Key Words: Patselas, Toll, ELT, Modern Education, Assam, Missionaries etc.

1. Introduction:

Assam is one of the northeastern states of India, which has its unique cultural values in Indian sub-continent. By the onset of modern era both the modern education and English language has played vital role in modernizing Assami people and enriching their culture. In terms of education, recently Assam has developed into a top educational destination at the state as well as at the national level. To enhance the status of Assam education, the colonial government has introduced many innovative education systems and English language polices. Its capital city Guwahati is a key destination for higher education for students of the whole of north-eastern region. The modern age of Education in Assam began with the annexation of Assam with the British Empire in accordance with the ‘treaty of Yandaboo’ in 1826. In that period the political and social scenario of Assam was unstable and very less importance was given to education sector. The British Government had taken initiatives with the help of some local people to improve education system and gradually spread a tentacles of modern education throughout the Assam Territories till country’s independence.

The development of modern education in Assam started with the emergence of British rule in 1826 in Assam territory. For long Assam was having her indigenous system of imparting elementary education through formal intuitions like Pathsals, Tols, and Madrassas etc. These indigenous systems were largely replaced by modern education pattern under British company’s patronage. With the expansion of British rule in India as a whole, knowledge of English became a historic necessity both for administration and increasing commercial intercourse. Before the charter act of 1833 there was no noticeable progress in the field of education in Assam, but after that both government and missionaries actively took part in educational field. It has been very aptly pointed out that the aim of the English to educate the Indians was either to produce caricatures of European characters who would be willing to accept the Gospel of Christ or to get a regular supply of cheap clerks to serve them in the business organization of the government of India and subsidiary undertakings of the British Subjects.
2. Educational Development:

During ‘Oriental –Anglicized Controversy’, David Scott, agent of governor general of Eastern frontier flavored the encouragement of oriental learning by improving the indigenous system of education. Soon after his arrival in 1826, he took interest in the promotion of indigenous system of education in Assam. To win over the confidence of Assamese people he started eleven schools, mostly in lower Assam.1 He also opened a school in Garo Hills for the expansion of primary education among the hill tribe. Students passing out of these schools were offered job under the Government. C. E. Elliot, the chief commissioner of Assam adopted the measures for improving indigenous education system.2 Gradually a need for English education appeared for administrative advantages. Adam White (Commissioner) in 1831 established a English Elementary School at Guahati.3 After 1832, T. C. Robertson (another agent) took the policy of ‘education through collaboration’ with Moravian.4 The scheme of imparting useful education to the youth of Assam received serious consideration of Mr. Francis Jenkin, (commissioner of Assam, 1834-61) who urged to government to set up English school.5 As a result Gauhati Jila School opened up in 1835,6 which was the harbinger of modern educational advancement in Assam and the forerunner of the Cotton College, the Earl Law College, the Jorhat Normal School and Department of Mohammedan Education. In 1838 Late W. Robinson was appointed as the first Inspector of that School. By 1839-40 there were 366 students Gauhati School, among them a considerable number joined the English section.7 Other hand with the strong recommendation of Mr. Ross then the President in Council, James Matthew’s plan of village school received the approval of the government as an experimental measure. Accordingly in August 1838 Matthew established 21 village schools at Kamrup district and its number increase gradually.8

Effective British policy in the field of education begun with the Macaulay’s (president of the committee of public instruction) ‘downward filtration theory’.9 Latter on the ‘Educational Dispatch’ (1854) of Charles Wood opened a new era in the history of Indian education and provided a comprehension plan of education covering all stages from primary school to the university. As per the recommendation of Wood’s Dispatch in 1854, Department of Education was created in each province.10 In Assam such a Department of Education was created in 1874 when Assam was separated from Bengal and a ‘Director of Public Instruction’ was appointed. Accordingly government extended ‘grant-in-aid’ to Assam and a considerable increase in primary and secondary schools took place. By 1880s there were around 1760 primary schools, 98 High schools and several Reading schools. Primary schools were consisted of government schools, aided schools and indigenous schools. Secondary education was imparted in three types of intuitions, namely the High schools, Middle schools and Vernacular schools. Special schools consisted of Guru training classes, and schools devoted professional studies. Scholarship were given to the students for college studies.11

The beginning of modern education and the promotion of language and literature in Assam can be attributed to the efforts of the Christian Missionaries. The Christian Missionaries rendered unique service towards the promotion of vernacular and for the upliftment of the tribal areas of Assam. But side

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1 Letter from Jenkins to Deputy Secretary Government of Bengal, 21 June, 1834; also Bengal Political Proceedings, 1843, 10TH July, No. 11
2 Memorandum by the Chief Commissioner of Assam on the recommendations of the Education Commission 20TH June, 1884.
3 Bengal Political Proceedings, 1843, 10TH July, No. 11
4 Missions of the United Brethren called Moravians were the inhabitants of Moravia
6 By July, 1835 Committee of Public Instruction recommended the establishment of a English School at Guahati under Mr. Singer.
7 Report on the Public Instruction Bengal, 1840-41, P.221
8 Bengal Revenue Proceedings, 1838, 14TH July, No. 66; and letter from Mathew to Jenkins, 11 June, 1839, No. 15
10 See for detail: Dispatch from the Court of Director, Wood’s Educational Dispatch, 19TH July, 1854, No.49
by side they also started to impart education through English medium. The American Baptist Missionaries under Rev Nathan Brown and Oliver Cutter came to Assam and setup nearly 14 schools in Sibsagar. The Missionaries established the first printing press in Sibsagar in 1836 and started using the local Asamiya dialect for writing purposes. The first Monthly periodical “Arunodoi” was published by Nathan Brown in 1846. They went into the interior places of the hills and plains and established schools in Garo hills, Khasi Jaintia hills, Nagaland, Darang, Nowgaon, Guwahati etc. They wrote several books in Assamese language. In 1848, Nathan Brown published the first book on Assamese grammar. In 1848 missionary Nathan Brown published a treatise on the Assamese language. This treatise gave a strong impetus towards reintroducing Assamese the official language in Assam. Another American Baptist missionary, Miles Bronson edited the first Assamese Dictionary “Dictionary in Assamese and English” in 1867. In place of intellectual activity, missionaries undertook to provide basic medical and educational facilities to the Assamese, especially in remote tracts where state infrastructure was practically non-existent. For example, Edward Clark began work in Naga hill in 1871. Roman Catholic Mission & Welsh Mission also set up several schools and they prepared text books and translated many articles in English language. As a result by the year 1875, the number of educational institution for general education increased to 1,293. The wives of the missionaries established ‘Zonana’ schools for female education. They took the additional responsibility of maintaining several government schools and Normal schools were opened by missionaries for teachers trainings. The Zamindars of different localities also donated money for the promotion of education. In 1902-03, there were 199 private elementary institutions and by 1937 there were 870 unrecognized schools for 33,197 male & 3,610 female pupils.

Assam naturally welcomed the all governmental helping hand in the direction of educational expansion. In this context the resolution of 1882 (Hunter Commission) made first attempt which laid emphasize on the importance of local bodies in the matter of expansion of primary education. This resolution of 1882 empowered the local board to establish, aid, manage and control the primary schools. It also authorized the Boards to exercise general supervision and give grant-in-aid to the lower middle schools also. At the end of the year 1881-82, the number of Government Schools in Assam was eleven with 2264 pupils. Educational policy under resolution of 1913 provided greater emphasize to the primary education. The Assam local self government Act of 1915 gives wider power to local bodies to manage all affairs of primary and middle education.

In Assam the relevant Act was passed in 1926, but it was failed to achieve its primary objectives. In Assam the first compulsory primary education Act was passed in 1926. It extends to the whole of Assam. It introduced compulsory primary education for children between 6-11 years of age. The local authority shall submit the government a statement showing all particulars concerning the total existing expenditure incurred by the local authority and by the government and the additional cost required for introduction of compulsory primary education. No fees shall be charged from any students. Poor children will be provided books and other writing materials if education committee recommended. Afterwards, this policy was changed and by 1930, compulsory primary

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12 For later development see: Bengal Educational Proceedings, 1844, 29TH April, Secretary government of Bengal to the commissioner of Assam.
13 Brown, Nathan. (1848) ‘Grammatical Notices of the Assamese Language’, American Baptist Missionary Press, Sibsagar, Assam, , see introductory chapters
15 Annual report of American Baptist Mission Schools, 1902, pp.1-3
17 Government Resolution, 17th November 1882
18 Report on the Public Instruction Assam, 1881-82, p.4
education Acts were passed in all the provinces. By this time government released imperial grants to Assam for the promotion of elementary education. As a result by 1937 around 6795 primary schools were functioning along with 313,347 pupils. Side by side education also imparted through Tols and Madrasas. There were around 162 Tols and 120 public Madrasas in 1935. The Assam primary education Act was passed in 1947, which removed most of the defects of the 1926 Act. Compulsory education was not just to be implemented but enforced through various measures.

In Assam secondary education was started in the year 1835. As per the recommendations of the General Committee of Public Instruction, the Commissioner of Assam, Captain Jenkins started an English school at Gauhati in 1835. This school was also known as “Guwahati Seminari” which is the present Cotton Collegiate School in Panbazar. In 1841 another high school was established in Sibsagar which is presently known as “Sibsagar Govt. Higher Secondary school”. In 1858, the Gauhati School was affiliated to the entrance standard under Calcutta University and three years later i.e. in 1861 two candidates from this school successfully passed the entrance examination. In 1864, the Inspector of Schools Mr. Murray submitted a proposal to the Government of Bengal to raise up the standard of the Gauhati School to teach up to F.A. course of the Calcutta University. The Government of Bengal recommended the proposal and within a few months sanction was received from the Govt. of India. In July 1865, it was ordered that the Gauhati School may be raised to a Collegiate School to train up natives of the province for offices of responsibility and trust. Accordingly in May 1866 the collegiate section was opened at the Gauhati School with affiliation to the first examination in Arts. In 1874, Assam was separated from Bengal with the constitution of a Chief Commissioner’s province. A separate Directorate of Public Instruction was created for Assam. The first Chief Commissioner of Assam was Colonel Keatings. But unfortunately the collegiate section of the Gauhati School was abolished by Col. Keatings in 1876 due to several reasons. The reasons were: The University results were so disappointing that the number of successful candidate was absolutely nil during 1872 – 1874. The cost of educating a pupil at the collegiate school, Gauhati was much higher. The enrolment at the collegiate section was proportionately very poor.

Realizing the difficulties experienced by Assamese students going for higher education in Calcutta, the public continued to impress on the Government the necessity of reopening the collegiate section at the Gauhati School. The question of higher education in Assam was sympathetically considered by Sir Charles Elliot, the Chief Commissioner of Assam. In 1882 Sir Charles Elliot decided to award scholarship to high qualified Assamese students. He also expressed the idea that if the University results continued to be satisfactory the question of reopening the Collegiate classes at Gauhati School would be considered. The attention of the Government of Assam was not seriously drawn until March 1899, when Late Honourable Manick Chandra Barua, after refuting the arguments of his opponents made a strong demand for the establishment of a college at Gauhati. Realizing the urgency of the problem, Sir Henry John Stedman Cotton decided to establish a second grade Government College at Gauhati. The sanction of Her Majesty’s Secretary of State was received on 20th June 1900. The Chief Commissioner formally opened the college on the 27th May’ 1901 and the college was named after his name as Cotton College. Frederic William Sudmeren was the first Principal of Cotton College. This marked the beginning of higher education in Assam. It is true that Cotton College has contributed to the quantitative growth of higher education in this state. The following table gives the enrolment figures at the end of every five years beginning from 1911 till 1941. The first girl student was admitted into the college during 1929-30 session and the number of girl

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20 Ibid., see: Assam Districts Gazettes- Statistical Tables
21 At that time administrative Headquarter of East India Company was Calcutta and Assam was a part of Bengal.
22 Bengal Educational Proceedings, 1865, 30th January, No. 42
students increased to 75 during 1940 – 41 session. The total number of enrolled students in the college were as accordingly:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1911</th>
<th>1921</th>
<th>1931</th>
<th>1941</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrolment</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>609</td>
<td>1045</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Besides Cotton College, during the period from 1914 to 1935, the following colleges were established in Assam: Earle Law College at Gauhati (1914), Jagannath Barua College at Jorhat (1931), Lady Keane College at Shillong (1935).

In 1882 Hunter Commission made important recommendations on secondary education. In Assam these recommendations could not be implemented, as the Government was not ready to sanction financial assistance to the private bodies. Consequently, the growth of secondary education was very slow. During 1899 – 1900, the total number of high schools in Assam was only twenty. Lord Curzon’s Policy in 1905 attached the administration of Assam with East Bengal. Secondary education in Assam received a great setback due to the policy of control adopted by Lord Curzon. The Govt. of India Act of 1919 introduced the system of Diarchy in the administrative field. Under this system, State Governments were given freedom in matters of Education. This administrative reform helped in the expansion of secondary education in Assam. Secondary education in Assam made considerable progress during 1912 – 1947 when the number of Middle English schools and Middle Vernacular schools increased to 742 and the number of High schools increased to 191 till 1947.

In general, the system of primary and secondary education is rather similar to the system of neighboring states in the country. In the context of secondary education the Hunter Commission of 1882 and the resolutions of 1904 and1913 provided greater impetus to the secondary education. The Sadler Commission of 1919 recommended for introduction of diversified courses at this level and asserted that university education, cannot improve without the improvement if secondary education. As its aftermath in 1935 there were 213 high schools including 28 government high schools and several aided ,non-aided high schools were running along with various courses. Yet there were weakest link in secondary education. To remove this difficulties the post-basic education based on the principle of education through craft and multi-propose schools were introduced. The basic aim of these courses is an all round development of the students both as an individual and as a useful member of the society and to provide varied types of courses for students with diversified abilities and interests.
Assam boasts of the most wide-ranging networks of higher educational institutions in the whole of North-Eastern region of India. Progress of collegiate education in Assam accurred much later. By 1901 Cotton college and than Sylhet established. Gradually Earl Law college(1915), Jorhat college, the Brindabun college, Edmund’s college and the St Anthony college founded in Assam territory which played important role in promoting higher education before Indian independence .The Berry White Medical School was established at Dibrugarh in 1900. The Technical and Industrial education also developed in pre independence period through Dibrugarh Railway workshop, Tezpur-Balipara railway workshop and many training institutions. Besides this the state has excellent English medium schools, arts and Science colleges.30 There has been a phenomenal expansion in higher education.

In the context of women modern education the Christian missionaries like Mrs. Brown, Cutter, Robinson and Braker had initiated for setting up girls schools in Assam. Several Anglo-Vernacular were set up in several district of Assam31. The first girls school opened at Sibsager in 1840 and than at Nawong and Guwahati consequently. By 1870 there were eight girls schools in Assam which in 1889 increased into 187 along with 3144 pupils. Primary girls schools also increased in number from 116 in 1904 to 793 in 1937.32 In 1936-37 there were 13 girls high schools with an enrolment of 3664 students.33 The Hartog Committee recommended that special attention must be paid to the removal of various difficulties for the promotion of girls education. During 20th century there was considerable progress in girls education. Dibrugarh Girls Model School found in the year of 1929-1930 to be appearing in the B.A. Examination. A separate college for women the Lady Keane’s college was set up in 1936. A native Rajabala Das also founded Panbazar Girls High School and Handique Girls college in 1939 at Guwahati. The Indian education commission made elaborate recommendation for the expansion of female education and the government came forward with some what larger grants for girls schools manage by private and public bodies. After 1950 in Assam a notable development are appearing in female education. A number of higher and vocational institutions were opened in Assam for girls.34 There Women Polytechnic Colleges were also established both governmental as well as private to provide a greater vocational net work to female. By 1901 the percentage of women literary stood at only 0.59 which in 1939 it was below 2 percentage. It was only after independence that women’s education made notable progress35.

Unlike other parts of India, educational expansion in the context of teacher education could not be started earlier in Assam. It was the Christian missionaries who were pioneers in establishment of a few Primary Teacher Training Schools in the state as early as 1888-89. To provide training to MV and ME level teachers of the state the then government had established a few Normal Schools in the early part of 20th century. The duration of these in-service Normal schools course was for the period of 3 years and policy was that teachers were appointed after completion of the training in Normal schools. In

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>High school</th>
<th>M.E.School</th>
<th>Mid-vernacular</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>331</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

30 Government of India’s resolution on Indian Education policy of 1913
31 Bengal Educational Proceedings, 1863, 14 March, No. 70, Atkinion to Bayley.
33 See education of Women Education: Report on the Education in Eastern Bengal and Assam, 1901-1902 to 1906-1907
34 Directorate of higher education, government of Assam, Report on women education, 2000
1936 the Irish Christian Brothers came forward to established some training classes at the St Edmond’s college for B.T. degree. The provision for providing training to then in service teachers teaching in Secondary level of school education was imparted at St Edmund’s college in Shillong which was later on shifted to St. Mary’s college.

The medium of instruction in Assam at the school level is usually Assamese, Mother tongue or regional languages is the medium of instruction from the Senior Secondary stage of education in Assam. Facilities for in a medium other than regional languages are also available in the state. The report on education in Assam in the year 1935-36 says that the medium of government schools would be Assamese. After Independence In early 1970, Gauhati University took a decision to introduce Assamese as the medium of instruction in all colleges affiliated to it, with effect from 1972-1973, in place of English. At the higher educational level English is the medium of instruction. There are as few schools in the state that also use English as their medium of study at lower level. Basically The modern Assamese period began with the publication of the Bible in Assamese prose by the American Baptist missionaries in 1819. The currently prevalent standard Asamiya has its roots in the Sibsagar dialect of Eastern Assam. As mentioned in Bani Kanta Kakati's "Assamese, its Formation and Development". The Missionaries made Sibsagar in Eastern Assam the centre of their activities and used the dialect of Sibsagar for their literary purposes". The American Baptist Missionaries were the first to use this dialect in translating the Bible in 1813.

India as a developing country acquiring a marking position in post modern period. In the field of education, India played very important role in Third World Era of intellectual development. Assam as an integral part of our country are producing highly fertile brains and personnel. Though Assam has constructs a proper channel of education system from primary level to university level in its own territory, yet a number of difficulties and problems are hampering present education system in the state. The administrative inefficiency and the lack of resources are the immediate problems in all stages of education. After Indian independence the all India primary education mission could not achieved expected goals. In Assam the children education are faced two formidable difficulties in enrolling all the children. The major difficulties comes from the resistance of the parents to send their girls to the school and the enormous number of halation in the rural areas with less than 500 peoples. Among the causes for failure to implement the only Directive Principles of state policy in education may be included, the large birth-rate and consequent population explosion, the inability of the government to raise the required financial resources, the apathy of the illiterate masses, the tradition resistance to the education of girls, the poverty of the parents which compel them to use the labour of children, small and scattered habitations etc.  

The secondary education system is not functioning properly and could not fulfill the national desire. The two main defects are that it is academic, without taking into account either the variations in the interest of the students or need of the society, and that even the academic education that is given by the secondary schools is not satisfactory, as it does not enable the students to pursue higher education at university level. Other hand the secondary education is not geared to meet the needs of industrialization.

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36 Assam Education Department Report, dated 19th December, 1936, para.1
37 Published by Sree Khagendra Narayan Dutta Baruah, LBS Publications, G.N. Bordoloi Road, Gauhati-1, Assam, 1941
3. Language policy:

English came to India with the British. Since the English had come here for the purpose of trade, in the beginning, they focused their attention only on trade and did not bother to encourage the teaching of English, but with them had come some missionaries who started schools where English was taught as one of the subjects. The reason why the English initially did not think of encouraging the teaching of English was that they feared that they might lose their colonies in India as they did in America. In order to have full command over the people whom they had begun to govern they decide to open educational institutions. Two such institutions were Calcutta Madrassa started in 1781 and Benares Sanskrit College founded in 1791. They were the institutions of classical learning, but they also made a provision for the teaching of English. In this way, the teaching of English in India was begun by the British rulers. The importance of English went on increasing with the passage of time. A great demand for the spread of English education begun to be raised from the different parts of the country. To meet this demand Raja Ram Mohan Roy established the Hindu College in 1817. Soon, thereafter the missionaries opened a number of schools and colleges in which the teaching of English was given utmost importance. In 1835, Macaulay, in his famous minute, strongly recommend that the spread of western learning could only be possible through the medium of English language. Macaulay argued that, “English is better worth knowing than Sanskrit and Arabic” That “the natives are desirous to be taught English” and that “it is possible to make natives of this country thorough good English scholars”.

Macaulay’s recommendation gave an impetus to the study of English throughout India, as a result of which the study of the regional languages got marginalized. By 1837, the missionaries had begun to provide a significant part of the facilities for teaching English both in Bengal and Assam. Not very long thereafter, English became the language of administration and judiciary in India even as the vernaculars continued to be used in several instances. Almost simultaneously subordinate level positions in the judicial and administrative institutions were thrown open to Indians by a government resolution.

In 1853, the year when the Company’s charter was renewed once more, under the pressure of government personnel to manage the widening domain of its, “India activities” the company decided to open up its highest Civil Service appointments to Indians by allowing them to appear for a competitive examination set up for this purpose. As a follow up of the Wood’s Dispatch of 1854, the first formalized and formulated education policy statement of the East India Company three universities were established in 1857 at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras respectively. However, the Indian Education Commission (1882) expressed its dissatisfaction at the exclusive use of English as the medium of education. The Indian Universities Commission (1902) also raised its voice against the neglect of regional languages. The Calcutta University Commission (1917-1919) tried to strike a balance by observing that, “The educated classes in the various provinces of India will wish to be bilingual, to use their mother tongue for those dear and intimate things which form part of life and to use English as a means of inter-communication necessary for the maintenance of the unity of India, and of touch with other countries.”

Favoring the idea of encouraging the teaching of regional languages in scholars and colleges the commission recommended, “We are emphatically of the opinion that there is something unsound in a system of education which leaves a young man, at the conclusion of his course, unable to speak or write his own mother tongue fluently and correctly. It is thus beyond controversy that a systematic

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39 Bose, M. L., op. cit, p.99
40 see: (1971) ‘Distribution of languages in Indian states and union territories’, published at the central institute of Indian languages Manasagangotri, Mysore
41 BPC.,1835; June, Nos. 2-5 & BRC.,1838; 14th August, No. 65, Mattheie to Jankins, 13 February
effort must henceforth be made to promote the serious study of vernaculars in secondary schools, intermediates colleges and in the university.” As a result of this recommendation, the medium of English was restricted only to the colleges and universities from 1920 onwards throughout the country. India got independence in 1947. Commissions and Committees and the leaders of public opinion took a close at the value of English and tried to strike a balance between gains and losses^{43}.

Due to its association with the British colonizer, English started life in India as not just a foreign language, but as a much-hated language. From the despised instrument of oppression to the reluctantly adopted lingua franca to the status symbol of the upper classes to its position today as a second language, English has come a long way. In fact, it would not be an aberration to label it a first language for some echelons of Assamese society. The change was first observed at the social, political and economic levels of Assamese life. Suddenly, English ceased to be the badge of status for the upper crust. Earlier, only the upper classes and a few limited size groups were seen using English in everyday life. The middle class reserved it for official purposes or those social occasions where they wished to leave an impression. The lower classes thought the use of English was beyond them and since the government schools of India made no effort to teach any kind of spoken English^{44}, this category of people had no exposure to it.

From the late 18th century British linguistic attitudes changed as the East India Company Broadened its territorial and ideological reach. During the period of Assamese-Bengali language controversy in the middle of 19th century the Western missionaries who working in Assam were in the forefront of those who opposed the language policy of the raj. The fought for the introduction of the Assamese by replacing Bangla, and they support the teaching of English among the masses for spreading Christianity. The process of English teaching was started through translation method. The translation of English books in Assami language in American Baptist Mission, viz, Nathan Brown translated the new Testament and works like Pilgrim’s Progress into Assamese. Brown ‘s grammatical notes and a vocabulary and phrase book by Miss Cutter were issued in 1848. A small vocabulary in English and Assamese was compiled by Mr. Wood in 1864. Later on Brown, Brownson and Farwell laid down the Christien-Assamese literature and spread English language in Assam^{45}.

In 1853, when called upon to assess East India Company rule before Justice Mills, Anandram Dhekial Phuhan (an eminent learned person of Assam) delivered a powerful indictment of British failures in language and educational policy. The education shortfalls of the Assami people were entirely due to a defective language policy. The British erred when they were introduced primary education in the Bengali language^{46}. A local initiative for the urge of English medium education started under the leadership of Anandaram.

There were another way of English Language Teaching process in Assam was through schools teaching. Jenkin, the first British man who recommended to the government of India to set up under the supervision of European functionaries English schools in each Sadar stations in Assam. In early March 1835 the Governor-General in Council finally resolved upon the promotion of European literature and science amongst the natives of India through the medium of English language. Gradually at Gauhati and Sibsagar English Schools opened along with European Headmaster. When the portals of public service were to those educated, the higher classes were not show to take advantage of the English education. General Committee of Public Instruction since it strictly followed the so called “filtration theory”-that education should spread gradually from the higher to lower classes. They desired that the Guahati

^{43} see detail for English education: Chand, Tara, op. cit., pp.156-163
^{45}Shekhawat, V.S. op.cit, pp.76-78
school should produce a class of local instructors expert in English literature and science, by whole agency the benefit of smaller instructions might be disseminated. Fortunately on the strong recommendation of Mr. Ross, the president of Council, the establishment of an Anglo-vernacular school was dropped. In the government schools at Sibsager and Guahati, there existed English as an independent department. Every emphasize was given at the beginning to the study of English, and the chances of getting jobs attracted most of the pupils to the English Department. From this time the teaching of English language kept continued within a growth process.

There are various methods which were usually manipulated to teach ELT in India. The “direct method”, is an interesting development, fostered by the Academician from 1915 to 1955 to teach English through the medium of English. According to the 1901 English speaker in Assam were 2234, out of them 1635 were male and 599 were female and 20549 returned themselves as being literate in English. ELT in Assam has come a long way from year 1880 when only 60% primary schools used English as the medium for teaching. Up to 1940, the grammar-translation method flourished and the spread of English remained confined to education and office circles, yet again in a haphazard manner.

The West impinged upon the East with shattering force in the sphere of practical life brought several changes. At the same time the impact in the intellectual and moral spheres was no less galvanic. The long cherished value system, religious, cultural, ethical, aesthetic were changed and India reacted on all these fronts. The impact produced, on the one hand the awareness of a gulf between the Indian and the non-Indian, on the other, the consciousness of belonging to a community different in nature in from the medieval order. The impact created the feeling of political unity which transcended cast, creed and region and attached to the nation of a common people possessing a common home. The idea of a people distinct from other peoples and of a territorial community comprehending all groups and communities thus emerged.

In this context among the cultural factors which made most profound impression upon the Assamese mind and fostered the development of new attitude towards the problem of life- intellectual, social and political, a high place has to be given to the spread of modern western knowledge through English education. Initially teaching of English was imparted under British patronage for their own benefit to smooth administration over oriental people. They simple wanted to create a educate class who were Indians in color and blood, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellectual. Gradually these class became the patronagers of English education in all states of our country. After the Independence the global requirements support to foster ELT in Indian land. The language of Assam went through important developments in modern period. This had a significant impact on modern Assam language history. During this period there was impotent growth in vernacular as well as classical languages. With the emergence of British in Assam the uniform printed script and a standardized took place. The standardization of and language was closely connected with the growth of a printed prose literature from around 1800. An increasing number of Indian authors are writing in English and finding a market for their writings both in India and abroad. On other hand there also appears to be glimmerings of a revival of traditional literature through English translations. Some recent example of this in Assam are Ancient Gonges, a translation of Assamese poet Nabakanta Barun’s poems, Ranjita Bezbaruah’s “Burhi Aair Sadhu” and a translation of Lakshmi Nath Bezbaruah’s poems.

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Many new arrivals were clerks, the archetypal Bengali amlahs who accompanied the colonial regime. With free white officials in Assam in the 19th century Bengali government officials formed the visible face of the new colonial regime. They dominated many new Jobs in the schools and offices, since the Assamese landed gentry were as yet unschooled in western education.\textsuperscript{52} The British state’s Chief claim was that colonial government had introduced a regime of liberty and improvement to replace the existing despotic rule of Ahom rulers and Dangariya lords. The gentry class of Assam now get a channel towards British services. The gentry’s monopoly of literacy and education allowed them to appropriate the resources that colonial modernity made available whether through clerical jobs in the revenue officers or missionary access to print technology.\textsuperscript{53}

4. Conclusion:

The above discussion on the matter of educational development and the English teaching language process in Assam province under British rule shows quite constructive and progressive development in the field of intellectual modernity. Though slow and inadequate, but gradual extension of educational and teaching process prop up the Assami people to get the ray of overall literal development in pre-independent era. The experience of western teaching and languages under colonial government has been provided a easy way to make fast development after independence. As a result we can see the considerable growth of modern education in Assam state after country’s liberation.

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