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Development of Secondary Education in Barak Valley since Independence

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Abstract:

Education and development are two words interrelated with each other. The process of development is dependent on education. It has become impossible to talk about development without education. The stage between class IX to XII is classified as secondary level. It consists of High and Higher secondary education. The gradual development of secondary education in Barak valley started with the establishment of present Government Boys' Higher Secondary and Multipurpose School, Silchar in 1863 with 80 students. A rapid development took place in the field of secondary education in Barak Valley since Independence. There has been a gradual rise in the number of secondary schools in Barak Valley. With the increase in the number of Schools, there was an increase in the number of enrollment of pupils. The high enrollment, the high is the literacy rate. Both the Central and State Government through their various programmes and policies try to increase the enrollment rate in the schools. The gradual growth of schools and increasing number of students demanded the appointment of more and more teachers in secondary schools of Barak Valley. To make secondary education available, accessible and affordable to all young in the age group of 14 to 18 years of Barak Valley, Rashtriya Madhayamik Siksha Abhiyan (RMSA) took measures in the areas like construction of new building, additional classroom facilities, proper sanitization facility, Library facility, teacher training programmes, curriculum development and so on. To provide quality education in secondary schools, efficient teachers have been appointed through Teachers Eligibility Test (TET) since 2011. Moreover untrained teachers were deputed to Teachers Training College for the completion of B.Ed course. Through the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), skill of critical and constructive thinking input among the minds of the students of Barak Valley which in turn provide the development of leadership and community service. Thus, there is a significant development of secondary education in Barak Valley since independence.

Keywords: Development, Education, Independence, Curriculum, Communication.

Introduction: Education is the key to unlock the main gate of civilization and modernization. It is an agent for transmitting, preserving and modifying the socio-cultural aspects of the society. Education plays an important role for the development of a particular area. The more an area is educationally developed, the more economic stability and quality of life that area enjoys. The education should therefore, stress in such a way that it will lead to the development of society which will ultimately develop the economy of that region and the quality of life. Education and development are two words interrelated with each other. The process of development is dependent on education. The socio-political and economic structure as well as policies and goals of the government influence education, while education influences economic and social development through the change in beliefs, attitudes and values of the people. It has become impossible to talk about development without education.

The Barak Valley region is situated between longitude 92°15' and 93°15' East and latitude 24°8' and 25°8' North covering an area of 6922 sq km. The valley is comprised of three districts, viz, Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi. The region shares its border with Dima Hasao District and the state of Meghalaya in the North, the state of Manipur in the East, the state of Mizoram in the south and the state of Tripura and the Sylhet district of Bangladesh in the West.

The stage between classes IX to XII is classified as secondary level. It consists of High and Higher Secondary education. This stage makes children efficient to be a member of diverse society. Secondary education gives foundation for adopting different professional courses. Therefore, it is an important stage in a student's life as rationalism and critical thinking begins to entire in this stage. Secondary education in Assam made remarkable progress after independence. The Government of Assam adopted several measures for the development of secondary education. Introduction of changes in administration, revision of curriculum, change in the evaluation system, establishment of different types of schools are some of the important measures adopted in the field of secondary education. The recommendations of Mudaliar Commission (1952-1953), Kothari Commission (1964-1966) and National Policy on Education, 1986 made tremendous contributions to the development of secondary education in Assam. The Assam Secondary Education (Provincialisation) Act 1977, the Assam Venture Educational Institutions (Provincialisation of Services) Act 2011 further accelerated the development of secondary education in Assam. With the provisions of these Acts, large numbers of secondary and higher secondary schools were provincialised and the services of the teaching and non teaching staffs were regularized. The present study focuses on the development of secondary education in Barak Valley from 1954 to 2015.

Development of Secondary Education in Barak valley since Independence: The journey of secondary education in Barak valley started with the establishment of Government Boys' Higher Secondary and Multipurpose School, Silchar in 1863 with 80 students. The institute became forerunners of the development of a wide network of modern educational institutions in the region. The following table (Table 1) reflects the development of secondary education in Barak valley since independence.

Table 1
Number of Secondary Schools in Barak Valley since Independence

Sl. No.	Types of Schools	Year				
		1957-58	1977-78	1984-85	2004-05	2014-15
01	High School	49	149	220	344	629
02	Higher Secondary & Multipurpose School	06	21	29	64	178
03	Total	55	170	249	408	807

(Source: Statistical Handbook of Assam, 1960, 1980, 1988, 2006, 2015 & 2016 and Inspector of Schools, Cachar)

Secondary education got momentum in Barak Valley since Independence. A very marked advancement has taken place in secondary education in Barak valley. A rapid development took place in the field of secondary education in Barak valley since Independence. There has been a gradual rise in the number of secondary schools in Barak valley. Altogether 55 numbers of secondary schools (including 49 High School and 6 Higher Secondary and Multipurpose School) existed in 1957- 58. These secondary educational institutions cater the needs of secondary education of pupil of Barak valley at that time. The number of secondary educational institutions gradually increased from that period and rose to 170 in 1977-78. The number gradually increased and rose to 249 in 1984-85. The number of secondary educational institutions further rose to 408 in the year 2004-05. The number of secondary schools increased sharply in 2014-15 and rose to 807. Thus, the number of secondary educational institutions rose gradually in Barak valley since Independence.

The success of a school largely depends upon the enrollment of pupils. It plays a crucial role in the development of education in a region. The high enrollment, the high is the literacy rate. Both the Central and State Government through their various programmes and policies try to increase the enrollment rate in the schools. The bellow table (Table 2) reflects the significant rise in the enrollment of pupils in the secondary schools of Barak valley since independence.

Table 2
Enrollment in Secondary Schools in Barak Valley since Independence

Sl. No.	Types of Schools	Year				
		1957-58	1977-78	1984-85	2004-05	2014-15
01	High School	17708	46575	58244	45018	100021
02	Higher Secondary & Multipurpose School	4216	11208	13884	20841	18451
03	Total	21924	57783	72128	65859	118472

(Source: Statistical Handbook of Assam, 1960, 1980, 1988, 2006, 2015 & 2016 and Inspector of Schools, Cachar)

With the increase in the number of schools, there was an increase in the number of enrollment of pupils. The study reveals that in 1957- 58, altogether 21924 number of pupils enrolled in secondary schools (High 17708, Higher Secondary and Multipurpose school 4216). The enrollment of pupils increased to 57783 in the year 1977-78. It was further increased to 72128 in 1984-85. However, the enrollment of pupils in secondary schools of Barak Valley declined in the year 2004-05, though the number of schools and number of teachers increased during that period. There were altogether 65859 number of pupils enrolled in secondary schools of Barak Valley in the year 2004-05. The enrolment of pupils in the secondary schools was further increased in the year 2014-15. The total number of enrollment of pupils in secondary schools of Barak valley was 118472 in that year. The enrollment of girl's student was also accelerated during that period. Thus, the enrollment of pupils both in High School and Higher Secondary and Multipurpose Schools increased gradually in Barak valley during the period.

Teachers are the backbone of any educational institution. Teachers have to possess a great deal of knowledge and skill with regard to both teaching and assessment practices in order to meet the demands and standards of quality education. Secondary school teachers play a vital role in shaping the educational path of students. The following table (Table 3) reflects the significant increase of the number of teachers in secondary schools in Barak valley since Independence.

Table 3
Number of Teachers in Secondary Schools in Barak Valley since Independence

Sl. No.	Types of Schools	Year				
		1957-58	1977-78	1984-85	2004-05	2014-15
01	High School	822	1836	2381	4907	6314
02	Higher Secondary & Multipurpose School	382	608	794	2154	1032
03	Total	1204	2444	3175	7061	7346

(Source: Statistical Handbook of Assam, 1960, 1980, 1988, 2006, 2015 & 2016 and Inspector of Schools, Cachar)

The gradual growth of schools and increasing number of students demanded the appointment of more and more teachers in secondary schools of Barak Valley. Therefore, the Government gradually appointed a large number of teachers in secondary schools. It is found that whereas in the year 1957- 58, total number secondary school teachers were 1204(High 822 and Higher Secondary and Multipurpose 382), the number of teachers rose to 7346 in the year 2014- 15, including 6314 high schools and 1032 higher secondary and multipurpose school teachers.

To make secondary education available, accessible and affordable to all young in the age group of 14 to 18 years of Barak Valley, Rashtriya Madhayamik Siksha Abhiyan (RMSA) took measures in the areas like construction of new buildings, additional classroom facilities, proper sanitization facility, library facility, teacher training programmes,

curriculum developments and so on. The Right to Education Act (2009) Provides for the Establishment of High School within a reasonable distance of 5 KM and Higher Secondary with 7 to 10Km but it is yet to be achieved successfully in Barak valley.

In order to develop quality education in secondary students, the government of Assam adopted various steps and as a result the quality is improved in secondary schools of Barak Valley too. To provide quality education in secondary schools, efficient teachers have been appointed through Teachers Eligibility Test since 2011. So far as training of teachers is concerned, the untrained teachers were deputed to the B.Ed. colleges for the completion of B.Ed. course. Gradually the number of trained teachers increased in secondary schools. As a result of acquiring professional degree, these teachers adopt various methods and techniques of teaching in the classroom. So, the students feel more interest in attending the classes. The numbers of trained teachers are increasing in the schools of Barak Valley which accelerated the development of quality education in secondary schools. Besides these, various trainings were providing to the teachers and non-teaching staffs along with facilitating students in curricular and co- curricular issues. Apart from subject wise training, training on areas like leadership and management, disability, adolescent and gender, environment, life skill, slow learner, career counseling and disaster management etc. are also being conducted for teachers. Special training on subjects like English, Mathematics and Science are conducted for teachers.

Training on life skills are organised to promote mental well being, healthy social interaction and behaviour of the students to help the students in solving problems. All the high schools and higher secondary schools of Barak Valley have identified one life skill teacher to act as a friend-philosopher and guide for the students. The three districts of Barak Valley conducted life skills training in December 2015. As a result of this training, students started co-operate very much with teacher and interacting with teacher which improves the teaching learning process and thus quality of education improved in the high and higher schools of Barak valley.

Assam government has taken up the programme *Dristi*. The programme is basically covering the evaluation of assessment of school governance, educational and support process, performance measurement and improvement at school level. District wise resource group was constituted with the teaching fraternity of DIET/BED colleges /BTC/CTE and also two renowned Principals or retire educationists. Each assistant resource group person is retired/local academician or member from district academic council who is visiting and monitoring each and every school under their jurisdiction for five times in a year. Accordingly the resource groups of three districts of Barak valley were also visited the secondary schools and as a result positive impact found in the development of schools. Teachers regularity has been improved, cleanliness of the school premises have been improved; awareness programmes have been done among the students at a regular interval. Teachers are putting efforts on inculcate good moral conduct and ethical values among the students. Management of library and uses of library are improving, arrangements of providing counseling service to the students for their career development is also improved.

To provide quality education in secondary schools, efficient teachers have been appointed through Teachers Eligibility Test (TET) Since 2011. Moreover untrained teachers were deputed to Teachers Training College for the completion of B.ed Course. As a result acquiring professional degree these teachers adopt various new methods and techniques of teaching in classroom. Curricular and co-curricular activities are also designed according to the needs of the students. Through the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), skill of critical and constructive thinking input among the students of Barak valley which in turn provide the development of leadership and community service.

Conclusion: To conclude, it must be mentioned that though some problems are found in the secondary educational scenery of Barak Valley, yet overall development of secondary education has significantly improved since independence. Many new secondary schools have been established viz a viz the enrollment of pupils also significantly increased in the valley. The establishment of new schools and increasing number of enrollment created a lot of teaching posts in the secondary schools of Barak valley. Tremendous improvement has been taken place in the field of construction of buildings, additional classroom facilities library facilities, curriculum development etc. by the government through RMSA.

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