



# Development of primary education in Karbi Anglong district, Assam, India

**Karabi Das<sup>1</sup> and Swapan Kr. Dutta<sup>2</sup>**

1. Department of Education, Diphu Govt. College, Diphu, India.

2. Department of Education, Assam University, Silchar, India.

## Abstract

Karbi Anglong is a tribal dominated area of Assam. It is an autonomous district under the Sixth Schedule of Indian Constitution. Area wise it is the largest district in Assam inhabiting by various people like Karbi, Bodo, Dimasa, Kuki, Assamese, Nepali, Adivasi, Bengali and other Hindi speaking people. The people of the district earn their livelihood chiefly by agriculture. The district is abundant with natural resource but unfortunately it was quite backward in the field of education. Formal education was started in the district only after arrival of the Christian Missionaries. The investigator intended to study the development and expansion of primary education in the district. The explored information says that prior to Independence education was totally at zero level in Karbi Anglong. After Independence, some initiatives have been taken by both the state government and the District Council for providing education to the local tribal people. At present, a number of primaries, M.E., high and higher secondary schools were established in the district. Provision of higher education is also here. According to 2011 census, the literacy rate of Karbi Anglong is 73.52, which is low in comparison to other districts of Assam. Presently, Sarva Shiksha Abhijan (SSA) has been trying to cover all children of 6-14 years in the field of education which has been a great initiative for the development of elementary education.

**Keywords :** Primary education, Development, Sarva Shiksha Abhijan, Karbi Anglong.

## 1. Introduction

Primary education has been playing a significant role in the development of the children, society and nation. Realising the importance, the constitution of India has made primary education a fundamental right for the children. Article 45 of Directive Principles of State Policy says, "The state shall endeavour to provide within a period of 10 years from the commencement of the Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years" (Das, 2005). The National Policy on Education, 1968, recommended, "Strenuous efforts should be made for the early fulfilment of the Directive Principle under Article 45 of the Constitution seeking to provide free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of fourteen" (Kochhar, 1991). The second

National Policy on Education 1986 stated, "It shall be ensured that all children who attain the age of about 11 years by 1990 will have had five years of schooling or its equivalent through the non-formal stream. Likewise, by 1995 all children will be provided for free and compulsory education up to 14 years of age". On the basis of 86th Amendment of the Constitution, the Govt. of India notification made on 13th December 2002 made free and compulsory elementary education a fundamental right for all children in the age group of 6-14 years.

Karbi Anglong is one of the two hill districts of Assam. Its main population is Karbi, though Bodo, Dimasa, Kuki, Hmar, Rengma, Adivashi, Nepali, Assamese and other Hindi speaking people are living also here (Rahman, 2011). The district was formed very recently because there

was a need for a separate district for the Karbis. It was created only in 1951 named as United Mikir and North Cachar Hill District. In 1970, Mikir Hills and NC Hills became two separate districts and in 1976 Mikir Hills was renamed as Karbi Anglong district. In 1952, Mikir Hills District Council (Presently Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council) was formed by the govt. for providing the power of autonomy to the local tribal for their convenience and development (Bey, 2005).

As per 2011 census, the literacy rate of Assam is 73.18 where 78.81% is male and 67.27% is female. The number of drop outs is higher among female than the male. It may be because of existence of schools without adequate infrastructure, physical facilities like drinking water, urinal, etc., poverty, lack of educational awareness among the guardians, lack of competent teachers, uninteresting curriculum, problem of communication etc.

## 2. Beginning and development of education in Karbi Anglong

It is unbelievable that there was no formal education in Karbi Anglong before the advent of the Christian Missionaries. School education

started only after their arrival in the late 1850s. They started their Missionary works in the district but received no good response from the people. Only one school at Tikapahar run by them received some educational importance. Since it could not serve the necessity of the whole district, so, many Karbi students went to the neighboring districts for education. During 1871, the present Karbi Anglong was adjoined in Nagaon district. There were eleven (11) numbers of schools in Nagaon and the entire schools were within the boundary of Karbi Anglong. Most of the schools were run by the Government. By publishing books, writing dictionaries the Missionaries started developing the Karbi language.

Because of unhealthy climatic condition and the frequent outbreak of the epidemics, the missionary works could not progress in the district. Since education was not given any importance in this hill area, so the literacy rate was very low. In 1951, the literacy rate was only 5.65%, in 1961 it was 16.92%, in 1971 it became 19.17%, in 1991 it increased up to 45.57%, it was 58.83% according to 2001 census and has become 73.52% in 2011 census (Table-1) (Fig-1) whether in Assam it is 73.18% and in India it is 74.04%. Karbi Anglong is marching ahead in the path of progress (Sarma, 2009).

**Table - 1 :** Male, female and total literacy rate of Karbi Anglong district.

Sl. No.	Year	% of Male Literacy	% of Female Literacy	Total Literacy Rate
1.	1951	09.26	02.17	05.9
2.	1961	25.56	06.87	16.92
3.	1971	26.93	10.29	19.17
4.	1991	55.55	34.35	45.57
5.	2001	68.11	48.65	58.83
6.	2011	82.12	64.62	73.52

(Source : Office of the Joint Director of Economics and Statistics (Hills), Diphu, Karbi Anglong.)

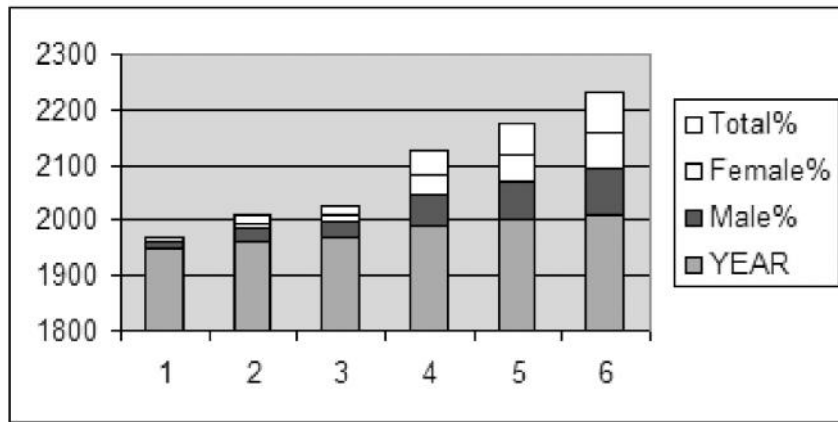


Fig - 1 : Literacy rate of Karbi Anglong (Male, female and total) from 1951 to 2011 (as per census).

Till 1951 there were only a few schools in Karbi Anglong, not exceeding 21. Some initiatives were taken in the field of education by Karbi Anglong District Council (presently Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council) since its inception in 1952. They had started some schools in different areas from their own fund and also with the help of state Govt. The Executive Committee of the council adopted some policies for expanding primary education in the district and accordingly the council set up some primary schools, where teachers had been appointed from their own resources and some were appointed against the sanctioned post of the government. They also encouraged the establishment of venture schools wherever necessary.

Prior to the creation of separate district, the schools of Karbi Anglong were managed and

controlled by the respective School Boards of Nagaon and Golaghat. After the creation of separate hill district (United Mikir & North Cachar Hills now Dima Hasao), schools were taken up from the School Boards for their control and management. The District Council had started some primary Schools within the district from its own budget. The council established 97 primary Schools with 127 teachers within the period from 1953-60 with its own resource which were managed by their own Inspectorate. During 1961, there were 182 government lower primary schools and 98 primary schools of District Council in Karbi Anglong. Since 1975 number of school was increasing slowly. It has increased up to 1,402 during 2010 (Table - 2) (Fig. - 2).

**Table - 2 :** Progress of primary education in each decade in Karbi Anglong.

Sl. No.	Year	No. of Schools
1.	1950	82
2.	1960	280
3.	1970	492
4.	1980	731
5.	1990	1162
6.	2000	1395
7.	2010	1402

(Source : DISE INFORMATION, MIS, SSA, Diphu, Karbi Anglong)

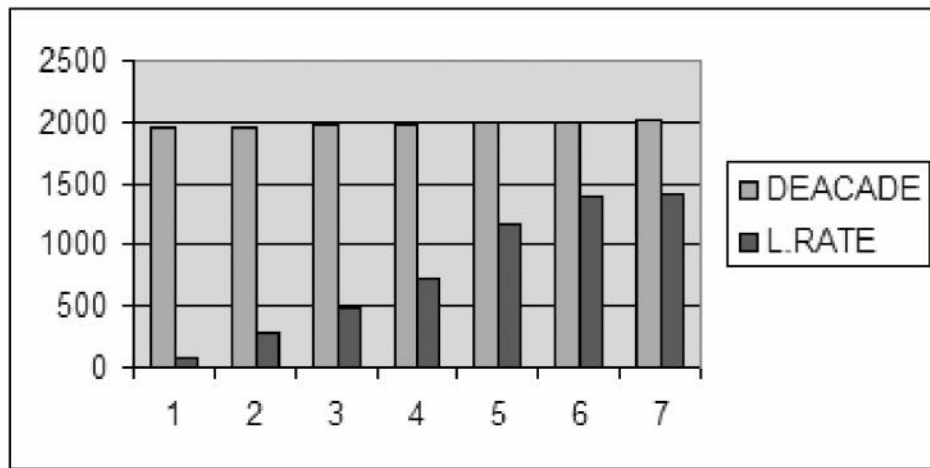


Fig - 2 : Number of primary schools from 1950-2010.

### 3. Role played by Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Mission in Karbi Anglong district

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was introduced during the Ninth Plan (1997-2002) to universalize elementary education (Taj, 2008). It is a central govt. scheme for the expansion and development of primary education on national basis. It is an effort to universalize elementary education by community-ownership of the school system. The administrative responsibility of the scheme has been decentralised among central, state and community level as a whole. This mission is in operation with Panchayati Raj institutions, Schools Managing authorities, Education Committees of villages and slum areas of towns and cities, Tribal Autonomous Councils and other related agencies at local level.

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is to provide useful and relevant elementary education for all children in the 6-14 years age group by 2010. There is also another objective to bridge social, regional and gender gaps with the active participation of the community in the management of schools. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is being implemented in Karbi Anglong district in 2003 as a supporting programme to primary education through the council. A number of developmental works has been initiating by SSA

Mission in the district. A separate SSA establishment has been enacted with the council for this purpose. It has maintained a very close coordination with the Primary Education Department of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (erstwhile Karbi Anglong District Council).

The component of Integrated Education for the Disabled (IED) of SSA provides education for the children with special needs. SSA of Karbi Anglong has identified 2,426 children with special needs (CWSN) in the district. 11 Resource Teachers and 145 Volunteers have been engaged for physical and academic support to the identified CWSNs during 2007-08. As per DISE survey 2009-10 the total 3,631 numbers of CWSN identified in the district, out of which 2,416 numbers of CWSN enrolled in formal education system.

Civil Works (CW) component is one of major components in the district. It implements all types of civil work to improve the quality of infrastructure and to create conducive environment for studies in the school campuses. It works for providing building, toilet, drinking water facilities etc. This component strives to achieve success despite being located in hilly areas. Till 2008-09, this component has done the works given in Table - 3.

**Table - 3 :** Achievement of Civil Works (CW) Department during 2008-09.

Sl. No.	Category	Target	Completed	In Progress
1	ACR (Additional Class Room)	1,150	647	503
2	NSB (New School Building)	13	13	-
3	Toilet	45	35	10
4	URC (Urban Resource Centre)	01	-	07

(Source : Souvenir-2008, Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council.)

There are four numbers of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) established in Karbi Anglong district. They are opened at Amri, Socheng, Samelangso and Langsomepi block covering. For implementing National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary level (NPEGEL) scheme, four blocks have been identified- Lumbajong, Langsomepi, Socheng and Samelangso.

Community Mobilisation (CM) is another component of SSA which works for community linkage with educational institutions and ownership development. During 2007-08, this component has re-constituted 1,725 numbers of school managing committee (SMC), 641 numbers of Village Education Committee (VEC), 10 numbers of Tea Garden Education Committee (TGEC), 40 numbers of Ward Education Committee (WEC), and 1,788 numbers of Mother Groups. The committee constituted has legal affiliation and its own powers and functions.

Teacher Training (TT) component of SSA conducts training for teachers and the natures of training are residential and non-residential. The TT of Karbi Anglong SSA has conducted 11 days block level and 4 days district level residential and non-residential training in the year 2007-08. It has provided 186 numbers of Para teachers to support single teacher schools in the district and free Text books to all schools (Sarma, 2011).

#### **4. Obstructive factors in the development of primary education :**

Of late, it can be stated that the literacy rate in Karbi Anglong is up to the mark. But

unfortunately the difference of development is very clear between the urban and rural areas. Many of its tribal villages are still lagging behind in different sphere. Since population is very less in hilly areas so it is very difficult to start a new school there. Moreover, it is also difficult to go to the neighboring villages to attend school due to lack of communication because some tribal villages are surrounded by river, dense forest, hills etc.

Most of the tribal people are illiterate, so they can not understand the value of knowledge and education. They are poor and helpless and hence, exploited by the rich and dominant class. Due to their ignorance they can not come out from the grip of poverty. Hence they need guidance from the society. The local government should take some initiative to create awareness among these people.

Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council has adopted various policies for the expansion and development of education in the district. But the policies of the council can not reach the rural and remote areas which obstruct the progress. Therefore, the Govt. should be careful while implementing its policies.

Terrorism and insurgency in Karbi Anglong have been creating another problem in developmental works. The govt. should find out the root of insurgency and accordingly try to solve the problem.

#### **5. Comments**

Primary education is the foundation of all education. Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council

with the help and support of state govt. and central govt. has taken various initiatives for the expansion and development of education in Karbi Anglong. The council should take more initiative so that the rural and remote areas can properly be developed along with the urban areas.

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