UC 27722
NRLF
790867

GAZETTEER OF INDIA

ASSAM STATE

LAKHIMPUR DISTRICT

(PRESENT LAKHIMPUR & DIBRUGARH DISTRICTS)

ASSAM DISTRICT GAZETTEERS

LAKHIMPUR DISTRICT

(PRESENT LAKHIMPUR & DIBRUGARH DISTRICTS)

By

Late Prof. K. N. Dutt, M.A., B.L.

&

Shri N. C. Datta, M.A., A.C.S.

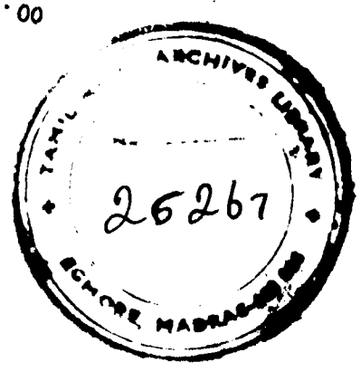
GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM
GAUHATI : : : ASSAM
1976

© Government of Assam

ASSAM DISTRICT GAZETTEERS UNIT
ZOO ROAD, GAUHATI-781003.

G
V27722
N76

PRICE RS.
RS. 40·00



Published by the Editor-in-Chief, District Gazetteers,
Government of Assam, Gauhati.

Printed at the Tribune Press, Gauhati-781003.

FOREWORD

I am happy that the second volume of the present District Gazetteer series of Assam has been published by our Gazetteers Unit. By depicting different aspects of life Gazetteers provide valuable information to scholars, educationists, administrators and others interested in the welfare of society. It is only through a better appreciation of our varied traditions, culture and social habits that an integrated view can be obtained of a vast country like ours. Gazetteers serve this purpose by providing a wider view of the whole country.

I hope that the remaining Gazetteers of the series will be published soon.

Gauhati
16.12.75.

Harendra Nath Talukdar
Minister, Education, Assam.

PREFACE

This is the second volume in the present District Gazetteer series of Assam. Although it was not till 1901-1905 that B. C. Allen, C. S. prepared the first series of District Gazetteers of Assam, Hunter's *A Statistical Account of Assam* published in two volumes in 1874 roughly served the purpose of a Gazetteer of Assam till then. After Independence, the State Unit of Revision of District Gazetteers for Assam came into being in January 1958 under the administrative control of the Education Department. Late Prof. K. N. Dutt, M. A., B. L., was the first Editor. During his tenure three District Gazetteers viz., those of Sibsagar, Lakhimpur and United Mikir and North Cachar Hills were prepared and submitted to the Govt. of India for approval. The District Gazetteer of Sibsagar was published in 1967 but due to certain unavoidable reasons the Lakhimpur District Gazetteer could not be sent to the press. In time its contents became outdated needing revision and incorporation of new developments which took place in the District. Shri N. C. Datta, M. A., A. C. S., who took over as Editor in September 1970 undertook the task of revising it. The State Advisory Board for District Gazetteers approved it in April, 1971 and it was sent to the press in September, 1971. However, sudden closure of the press caused dislocation of the printing works and the manuscript had to be withdrawn. The work was then entrusted to the Tribune Press, Gauhati.

Meanwhile, administrative changes took place and the district of Lakhimpur was bifurcated into the districts of Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh in October, 1971. Basic changes in the draft were not possible at this stage as these would have further delayed the publication. Some figures pertaining to the new districts have been incorporated wherever possible.

Inspite of our best endeavour, some printing errors have crept into the text for which an erratta has been appended.

Since the very inception of the scheme in Assam, the Gazetteer Unit of the Government of India has been evincing keen interest in the work. We are indebted to Dr. P. N. Chopra, M. A., Ph. D. and his editorial staff for their careful scrutiny and suggestions. We are also thankful for the interest and patronage of Shri H. N. Talukdar, Minister, Education, Assam, and the members of the State Advisory Board for District Gazetteers, Assam.

Shri S. N. Neog, M. A., who was the District Compiler, Lakhimpur prepared the ground work for the draft. He along with Shri Rameshwar Dass, M. A., LL. B., Compiler, assisted in the preparation of the Press copy. Other Compilers Sarvasree M. C. Bhuyan, M. A., R. C. Medhi, M. A., and P. K. Barua, M. A., LL.B., helped in bringing out the volume. My thanks are also due to the entire office staff.

D. P. Barooah.
Editor-in-Chief,
District Gazetteers,
Assam, Gauhati.

GAUHATI
2.1.76

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. General	1—49
II. History	51—100
III. People	101—151
IV. Agriculture and Irrigation	152—217
V. Industries	218—268
VI. Banking, Trade & Commerce	269—304
VII. Communications	305—331
VIII. Miscellaneous Occupations	332—344
IX. Economic Trends	345—384
X. General Administration	385—393
XI. Revenue Administration	394—421
XII. Law Order & Justice	422—447
XIII. Other Departments	448—457
XIV. Local-Self Government	458—477
XV. Education and Culture	478—501
XVI. Medical and Public Health Services.	502—521
XVII. Other Social Services	522—538
XVXII Public Life and Voluntary Social Service Organisations	539—574
XIX. Places of Interest	575—583

1. Principal Tables .. .. 585—631
2. Index
3. Glossary
4. Bibliography

CHAPTER I

GENERAL

PHYSICAL FEATURES AND NATURAL RESOURCES

(a) Introductory :

(i) **Origin of the name Lakhimpur** : Tradition associates the origin of the name of the district of Lakhimpur with one Laksmi. According to one account, the Bara-Bhuyans who set up their principalities in the areas north of the Brahmaputra and west of the Chutiya kingdom in the 13th century were the descendants of Samudra, the minister of the king named Arimatta, who seized the throne on the expulsion of Arimatta's son Ratna Sinha or Gajanka. Laksmi was the daughter of Samudra's son Monohar. She had two sons Santanu and Samanta, each having twelve sons. Santanu with his sons migrated to Rampur in the district of Nowgong, while the latter's sons settled in a place on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, which came to be known as Lakhimpur after the name of their grandmother Laksmi.[1] The name of the district is believed to have been derived from the said place name Lakhimpur.[2]

In the biographies of Vaishnava saints there are occasional references to Lakhimpur, where several **satras** were established. For instance, the Bar Mahara Satra is said to have been removed from Dikhoumukh to Lakhimpur where it still stands. Another **satra**, Gomotha Mahara is stated to have been originally established in Lakhimpur. Among the 24 **satras** of Bar-Barajonia order, one is stated to be in Lakhimpur, established by one Raghupati.

In the history of the Moamaria rebellion we find mention of a person from Lakhimpur who is said to have raised a standard of revolt styling himself as Gobha Raja. Reference is made to another person of Lakhimpur named Jabar who was the originator of Panimua Conspiracy of A. D. 1802.

There are other historical accounts which show that a king named Laksminarayan ruled over the area, now included in the eastern part

1. The elder line which was a Vaishnava came to be regarded as Bar Bara-Bhuyan and the younger one, a Sakta as the Saru Bara-Bhuyan. (*Bara*-twelve).
2. E. A. Gait ; *History of Assam*, (1967), P. 40,

of Lakhimpur district, who during the 14th-15th century A. D. made a land grant dated **Saka** 1323 (A. D. 1401). The land was donated in the village of Bakhana on the western bank of the Subansiri. His capital was at Sadhayapuri, to be identified with Sadiya, the capital of Chutiya kings. This king Laksminarayan is likely to have built a town in his kingdom and named it after him. Sri Sarbeswar Barua of North Lakhimpur strongly believes that the district took its name from the town of Lakhimpur (later known as North Lakhimpur), originally selected as its headquarters, when Lakhimpur district was first formed in 1838 by the East India Company. He points out that this is known from the original seal of the district, as found in a **sanad** (manuscript) dated 1839 granted to the late Maheswar Sarma Bapu Barua and the note written by the Principal Assistant Commissioner in English at the top of the **sanad** just below the seal where the name of Lakhimpur district is found written. The **sanad** was issued from North Lakhimpur. From this, Sri Barua concludes that the name of the district was derived from its first headquarters viz., Lakhimpur.[3]

It was after the annexation of the Matak country and Sadiya by the British in 1842 and addition of these territories to the Lakhimpur district that its headquarters were transferred from Lakhimpur to Dibrugarh in the Matak Country.[4]

Whatever may be the source materials, historical or legendary, bearing on the origin of the name, reference to Lakhimpur is found mentioned in various accounts prior to the British period of Assam history.

(ii) **Location, general boundaries, total area and population** : The undivided district of Lakhimpur extending along both banks of the river Brahmaputra in the north-east corner of the State of Assam, was situated between Latitude 26°50′ and 27°90 Longitude 93°46′ and 96°10′ and covered an area of 4926 sq. miles or 12,758 sq. K. m.[5] It had a population of 15, 63, 842 persons in 1961. In the Census of 1971, total population of this district was provisionally estimated at 21, 18, 386 persons.

The district was bifurcated on October 2, 1971. The Brahmaputra forms the boundary between the two newly constituted districts—Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh. Dibrugarh district which comprises the southern part of the undivided Lakhimpur district is bounded on the

3. S. Barua ; **The Name of the District Lakhimpur** ; published in the Journal of the Assam Research Society (Vol. XVII, 1963, pp. 19-23).
4. E. A. Gait ; History of Assam (1967), p.362.
5. *Census of India, 1961* ; *Assam : District Census Hand Book, Lakhimpur*, p. 1. In another place (p.24) the total area is given as 5012'0 sq. miles.

north by the rivers Brahmaputra, and the Lohit, on the east by a part Lohit district of Arunachal, on the south by Tirap district of Arunachal. The south-western boundary of Dibrugarh district runs along the eastern boundary of Sibsagar district. Lakhimpur district is bounded on the north by Subansiri and Siang districts of Arunachal, on the east by a part of Lohit district of Arunachal and a part Dibrugarh district, on the south by Dibrugarh and Sibsagar districts and on the west by Darrang district.

(iii) **The History of undivided Lakhimpur district as an administrative unit and changes in its component parts** : The undivided district of Lakhimpur as an administrative unit was a creation of the British in the 19th century. The Chutiyas are supposed to be the first ruling tribe in Lakhimpur. Their chief, named Ratnadhvaj Pal consolidated his power by defeating the neighbouring chiefs. He is known as the builder of Sadiya.

When the Ahoms entered Assam in 1228 A. D. the Chutiyas were established at Sadiya and were masters of the country as far west as the Disang river. The two powers continued to live in a state of intermittent conflict which assumed an acute form at the beginning of the 16th century, but ultimately the Chutiyas were defeated by the Ahom ruler Suhungmung, and the administration of Sadiya was then entrusted to an Ahom noble, styled as Sadiya Khowa Gohain. The Ahoms became the paramount power in the Brahmaputra Valley and built up their kingdom in Assam by defeating the Chutiyas in the north and the Kacharis in the south. By the middle of the 18th century the Ahom power, however began to decline.

Lakshmi Sinha's reign (1769-1780) was signalised by the outbreak of the Moamaria insurrections ; after initial success the Moamarias were defeated. But the power of the Ahoms also suffered a set back never to regain its original vigour. When the Burmese attacked Assam during the first quarter of the 19th Century A. D. the Ahoms were unable to defend the country. Causes of quarrel arose, however, between the Burmese and the British in adjoining Bengal and in 1824, war was declared by the British Government in India against king of Ava and force was sent up the valley of the Brahmaputra to drive out the Burmese from Assam. In the year 1826, by the treaty of Yandaboo which ended the first Anglo-Burmese war, Assam came into the hands of the East India Company.

After the expulsion of the Burmese the administration of Lakhimpur was entrusted to those semi-independent chiefs whom the British

found in possession of the country.[6] In 1833 the portion of the valley lying between the Dhansiri and Dihing, south of the Brahmaputra and between Bisvanath and Sadiya on the north bank, comprising the districts of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur was placed under the administration of Purandar Sinha with full civil powers, but on payment of an annual tribute of Rs. 50,000 to the British Government. The Raja was accorded the position of a protected prince. This experiment however, did not prove useful. Complaints and charges were raised against this administration from different quarters. Purandar Sinha's territory was therefore, resumed in 1839 for direct administration by the British. In July, 1839, a proclamation was issued by the Governor General-in-Council annexing his territory to Bengal and dividing it into two districts of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur and directing that these two districts should be administered in the same manner as the other districts of Lower Assam.

In August, 1842, another proclamation was issued annexing the territory of Bar Senapati, who had died in 1839, and whose son refused to accept the management of the country on the terms offered to him. Sadiya, the district of the Khampti chief, was by the same proclamation, incorporated with the rest of the province. This place had been the scene of a rising of the Khamptis in 1839. They attacked the station of of Sadiya, and killed the Political Agent, Colonel White. A punitive force was at once dispatched to Sadiya. The insurgents who sought refuse amongst Mishims were followed and repeated defeats were inflicted on them. Because of complicity in this rebellion, the son of the Sadiya Khowa Gohain, was exiled with his followers to Narayanpur, on the Dikrong, in the west of the Lakhimpur district where the colony still exists.

Thus, from 1842, the whole of Assam proper was under the same system of administration, save that in Lakhimpur, including Matak and Sadiya, an establishment of Panchayat courts was maintained for special reasons. Persons of rank and influence in the district were appointed to these courts without much regard for their judicial qualifications. This special Panchayat system was abolished in 1860.

It is evident that before 1842 the district headquarters were at North Lakhimpur and were transferred to Dibrugarh for administrative convenience when the district was enlarged by addition of Matak and

6. The Moamarias whose country, known as Matak lay within the present Dibrugarh Sub-division south of the Brahmaputra, were left under their own ruler, the Bar Senapati, who in May, 1826, executed an agreement of allegiance to the Brit sh Govt. The Khampti chief of Sadiya, called the Sadiya-Khowa Gohain, was also confirmed as the Company's feudatory in possession of their country.

Sadiya[7]. From that year Dibrugarh continued as the district headquarters of Lakhimpur district till its bifurcation in October, 1971.

Records of some administrative changes are available in the district. During the decade of 1911-21, Lakhimpur Frontier Tract situated on the east and then under the control of the Deputy Commissioner, was expanded by adding an area of 83 square miles containing 13 Naga villages. There was another inclusion of 206 square miles with some Abor villages in the north. The well-known Abor Expedition of 1911-12 was followed by the creation of Balipara Frontier Tract and Sadiya Frontier Tract. The Balipara Frontier Tract was constituted in 1914 out of the territory transferred, 22 square miles from Lakhimpur and 500 square miles from Darrang district. Formerly, a portion of this district was known as Dibrugarh Frontier Tract with headquarters at Sadiya and was administered by an Assistant Political Officer who was subordinate to the Deputy Commissioner, Lakhimpur. After the expedition of 1911-12, this system of administration was changed and the Dibrugarh Frontier Tract ceased to exist. The Sadiya Frontier Tract now considerably enlarged became a separate entity administered by a Political Officer working directly under the Chief Commissioner.

Another important change of area is noticed in the north bank of the old district. The area of the district which lay on the north bank was very much curtailed in extent by the inclusion of the Dhemaji thana area in the Dibrugarh subdivision and transfer of the westernmost part comprising the Behali and the Gohpur thanas to Darrang district. This transfer was called for in the interest of administrative convenience as the shifting of the headquarters to Dibrugarh in 1842 made these areas too remote.

Certain changes in the boundaries of the district also occured during the decade of 1941-51. It lost an area of 103 sq. miles which was detached from it while forming the new Tirap Frontier Tract in 1941. Further, the plain portions, of the North East Frontier Tract were added to it after the 1st March, 1951. Mishmi Hills which constituted the Sadiya subdivision of the old Sadiya Frontier Tract of the 1941 Census and was made a separate district under its new name in July, 1948 in charge of a Political Officer was transferred to Lakhimpur district with its plain portions of 391.7 sq. miles. The Abor Hills, which constituted the Pashighat subdivision of the old Sadiya Frontier Tract and was made a separate district under its new name in July 1948 was also transferred to Lakhimpur district with its plain area of 273.9 square miles. The Tirap Frontier Tract was constituted in 1941 by excluding 103

7. E. A. Gait : *History of Assam* (1967), p.362.

square miles from Lakhimpur and joining this area with a portion of old Sadiya Frontier Tract and a portion of Naga Tribal area. The plain area of Tirap Frontier Tract was transferred to Lakhimpur District on the 1st March, 1951. Total area of Tirap Transferred Area is approximately 150 sq. miles. Three Transferred Areas have been constituted into three separate administrative units (transferred area), and assimilated with the district of Lakhimpur in the year 1951 (vide Govt. notification No.TAD/R/35/50/109, dt. 23.2.51).

These three transferred areas are—Sadiya Transferred Area, Tirap Transferred Area (State) and Murkongsellek Transferred Area, the headquarters of which are located at Chapakhowa, Margherita and Jonai, respectively. Each of these areas is placed under one Assistant Political Officer who is to work under the administrative control of the concerning Deputy Commissioner of the district as the latter functions the Political Officer of the respective transferred areas.

The most important change in respect of the territorial extent of the old Lakhimpur district, in the recent times, is its bifurcation on October 2, 1971, as stated above.

(iv) **Sub-divisions, Revenue Circles and Thanas** : Undivided Lakhimpur district comprised three sub-divisions—Dibrugarh, North Lakhimpur and Dhemaji. The district head-quarters were located at Dibrugarh since 1842. Dibrugarh district was formed in 1971, bifurcating old Lakhimpur district ; it comprises only one subdivision and the present Lakhimpur district is divided into two subdivisions—North Lakhimpur and Dhemaji. Dibrugarh continues to be the headquarters of the district of its own name. The headquarters of Lakhimpur district are located at North Lakhimpur. Dhemaji, the third subdivision of the undivided district came into being on August 15, 1970.[8] It was carved out partly from Dibrugarh subdivision and partly from North Lakhimpur subdivision, covering an area of 1426.38 Miles.

The following table shows the total area and population of the two districts, in 1971.

Name of the district	Name of the subdivision	Area (in sq. Km.	Population		
			Total	Male	Female
1	2	3	4	5	6
Dibrugarh	Dibrugarh	9067.20	1,409,414	757,897	651,517
Lakhimpur	North Lakhimpur	1409.60	397,269	210,162	187,107
	Dhemaji	2282.20	311,703	165,021	146,682

8. Govt. Notification No. AAP. 102/68/197 dt. the 3rd August, 1970. The Morkonsellek Transferred Area the headquarters of which are located at Jonai, had an Assistant Political Officer since 1951. Dhemaji was also formed an administrative unit in 1965 and a Special Officer was posted there. Both these areas now fall within Dhemaji subdivision, which is the north eastern subdivision of Lakhimpur district and has Arunachal, as its border in the north.

Revenue Circle : Previously, there were nine revenue circles in the district, Sadiya circle was constituted in 1969.[9] The area of the revenue circles, as on 24.9.70 is indicated in the following table.[10]

1.	Tinsukia—A	..	616.92 Sq. miles
2.	Tinsukia—B and South Bank of Sadiya	..	387.83 ,,
3.	Sadiya	..	736.00 ,,
4.	Jonai	..	523.77 ,,
5.	Naharkatiya	..	580.78 ,,
6.	Dibrugarh East	..	543.21 ,,
7.	Dibrugarh West	..	348.00 ,,
8.	Dhemaji	..	518.00 ,,
9.	North Lakhimpur	..	571.00 ,,
10.	Subansiri	.	470.00 ,,
11.	Bihpuria	.	287.11 ,,

It may be mentioned here that the total area of the circles is 5462.31 sq. miles. The discrepency between the circle area total and total area of the district as mentioned earlier, will be reconciled on completion of the current resettlement operation.

Of the eleven revenue circles Jonai, Dhemaji, Subansiri, Bihpuria and North Lakhimpur fall in Lakhimpur district and the rest six constitute the present Dibrugarh district.

Thanas : There were sixteen Police Stations and a number of Police outposts and Patrol Posts in the undivided Lakhimpur disrictin 1971. In the present Lakhimpur district there are five Police Stations and six Police Outposts. Dibrugarh district comprises eleven Police stations, ten Outposts and fourteen Patrol Posts. The list of Police stations and Outposts of these two districts is given below.

List of Police Stations and Police Outposts.

Lakhimpur District

Police Stations

1. Bihpuria
2. North Lakhimpur
3. Dhemaji
4. Dhakuakhana
5. Jonai

Dibrugarh District

Police Stations

1. Dibrugarh
2. Moran
3. Joypur
4. Bardubi
5. Chabua
6. Tinsukia
7. Dum Duma
8. Margherita
9. Digboi
10. Sadiya (Chapakhowa)
11. Lekhapani

9. Sadiya circle has been constituted under Govt. Notification No. R.L.R. 84/68/31 dt. 11-8-69.
10. Information furnished by the Director of Land Records Assam, Gauhati.

Lakhimpur District

Police Outposts

1. Dhalpur
2. Laluk
3. Gogamukh
4. Ghilamara
5. Sisi Bargaon
6. Sila Pathar

Dibrugarh District

Police Outposts

1. Ledo
2. Pengari
3. Na-Sadiya
4. Saikhowa (Dhala)
5. Talap
6. Tipling
7. Namrup (Investigation Centre)
8. Tingkhong (Investigation Centre)
9. Barbam
10. Barbari

Police Patrol Posts :

1. Barbaruah
2. Lahowal
3. Dikom
4. Rohmoria
5. Ghoramara
6. Khowang
7. Naharkatiya
8. Bohadoi Pachali
9. Panitola
10. Makum
11. Kakapathar
12. Kundil
13. Sesa
14. Mohanbari

Mauzas : Each revenue circle comprises two or more mauzas which are constituted by a few villages. The list of mauzas of Dibrugarh and Lakhimpur districts is given below.

List of mauzas :

Dibrugarh district

Dibrugarh subdivision

1. Dibrugarh town
2. Mankota
3. Rahmaria
4. Bogdung
5. Ghorbandi
6. Chabua
7. Pulunga
8. Lahoal
9. Madarkhat
10. Jamira
11. Larua
12. Khowang
13. Moran
14. Chepan
15. Lengri
16. Rangagora
17. Tinsukia
18. Doom Dooma
19. Tingrai
20. Hapjan
21. Saikhowa
22. Buri-Dihing
93. Makum
24. Tipling
25. Fakial
26. Jaypur
27. Tingkhong
28. Sassoni
29. Kheremia
30. Tengakhat
31. Tirap
32. Sadiya

Lakhimpur district

North Lakhimpur Subdivision

1. Lakhimpur
2. Kamalabaria
3. Telahi
4. Naoboisha
5. Nakari
6. Kadam
7. Uttar Lakhimpur
8. Bihpuria
9. Narayanpur
10. Dhalpur
11. Narayanpur Kheraj Khat
12. Laluk
13. Bihpuria town

Dhemaji Subdivision

1. Dhemaji
2. Sisi
3. Paik Mahal
4. Bardalani
5. Gohain
6. Dhakuakhana
7. Maskhowa
8. Markongselick

(b) TOPOGRAPHY :

Natural division : The physical features of the old Lakhimpur district which has been divided into two districts, are both varied and picturesque. Situated at the tip of the Assam Valley, the entire tract is girt on the north and east by the Himalayas, thickly wooded from the base to the snow line, and bisected by the mighty river Brahmaputra which now forms the boundary between the two districts. A continuous narrow strip of plains, on either bank of the river rises almost to the foot of the hills presenting a very diversified panorama. Gigantic reeds and grasses are found to cover the low lands of the nearly banks of the river and the hinterland consists of extensive plains of fertile rice lands dotted with villages surrounded by bamboos and fruit trees, the background being formed by dark forest which stretches from the interior table land high up in the snow capped mountains.

These two districts consist of a broad plain lying on either side of the Brahmaputra, bounded on three sides by hills. To the south of Dibrugarh district these hills are only a few thousand feet above the

level of the sea, and their sides are for the most part clothed in dense tropical forest. They lie in tumbled ridges, sharply serrated at the summit, and sloping steeply to the valleys with which they are intersected and each of the main ridges is buttressed with spurs thrown out on either side. The hills that shut in the eastern end of the Brahmaputra valley are considerably higher, and on a clear day the continuous chain of snowy peaks can be seen. Along the northern boundary of Lakhimpur district the nearer ranges are generally high enough to conceal the eternal snows of the great Himalayan ranges. "North of North Lakhimpur there are points in this chain which are nearly 10,000 feet above the level of the sea, but a little to the east of the Subansiri the level falls, and the outer hills are not more than two or three thousand feet in height." [11]

In Dibrugarh district the plain is fairly high and a vast tract of the country along the foot of the hills is covered with dense evergreen forest. Creepers spread in every direction over the larger trees, knitting them into one great mass of foliage, and drop down here and there in graceful coils and loops. The forest is dense with bamboos, plantains, palms and huge tree ferns. The broad plain of the district is covered with fields of waving rice or with stiff tea bushes ranged in rows with mathematical precision. The drainage of the country is carried off in small streams and *Jans* which feed the larger rivers and there are comparatively few swamps and *bils* even in the neighbourhood of the Brahmaputra.

Lakhimpur is somewhat different from Dibrugarh. A large portion of the country is still covered with tree forest. The level of the land being lower, there are more *bils* and marshes and in the rainy season much of the country is exposed to inundation. The country is covered with dense masses of grass and reeds ranging from ten to twenty feet in height and the general effect may be described as extremely picturesque. In the foreground are seen the fields of rice, of a vivid green during the summer season, but changing to a rich gold as the harvest time draws near. Groves of slender palms surround the edges of these paddy fields, while further back is seen the dark green line of primeval forest. To the north the view is bounded by the blue hills whose sides are mostly covered with trees, though here and there are patches of white rock where the cliff is too precipitous to afford a lodging for a plant or sapling, even in that rainy climate. In the far distance to the east are seen the ranges of snow-capped high hills. With the evergreen forests and the roads carpeted with grass and bordered with ferns, winding across the green pastures, the country looks fresh, green and cool

11. B. C. Allen ; *Assam District Gazetters. Lakhimpur*, 1905, P. 2.

throughout the year. The hilly rivers which swiftly change the course have been perpetually changing the face of Dhemaji area. Compared to this, the topography of Dibrugarh is more settled and solid.

Hills : Lakhimpur district is surrounded on the northern and the eastern sides by hills ; but the whole of the area included in this district is a flat level plain. An outlying spur of the Naga Hills stretches from the Disang river through the south of the Jaypur and Tipling mauzas in Dibrugarh district. But apart from these mountains and a few isolated hills in the Makum and Buridihing mauzas, there is nothing to break the even level of the plain bisected by the Brahmaputra.

(c) River System :

The Brahmaputra : The whole of the drainage of Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh districts ultimately finds its way into the Brahmaputra which is an enormous river here even at a great distance from its sources of origin. In this part of the country it possesses a peculiar interest from the fact that it is here that it passes out of the Arunachal hills and slithers into the alluvial plain.

The Brahmaputra river has two names—'*Lauhitya*', which is evidently a Sanskritized form of Tibeto-Burman name *Luhit*. The word '*Lauhitya*' means in Sanskrit "pertaining to red", but it is in all likelihood just a Sanskritization of the Pre-Aryan Sino-Tibetan name. It is so called because of the fact that the river takes this colour during the rainy season when it cuts through the red soils of the adjoining embankments. A mythological account is associated with the origin of this name. It is connected with Parasurama and his sins ; it was in upper reaches of this river, at Parasuramakunda or Brahmakunda, that the great saint, it is said, washed off his blood stains of the matricide and regained his sainthood. The waters of the river assumed the colour of blood, it is believed, from that day.

The other and better known name of the river is Brahmaputra, and it means 'son of Brahma' and that is quite within the orbit of Sanskrit nomenclature.[12] The Ahoms called the river *Nam-Dao-Phi*. It means the "river of the Star God." The Brahmaputra is formed by the Dibang and the Lohit rivers on the north-east merging into the Dihang, and thus joining into one fat stream. The prefix '*Nam*' in the Ahom language, like '*di*' in the Bodo language means water or "river".

The Hindu scriptures hold that the river Brahmaputra rises in the sacred pool known as the Brahmakunda in the easternmost point of the state. It is a religious sanctuary and is situated about 50 miles east of Sadiya. In fact, an element of romance hangs over the river,

12. Sri Vishnu Rabha has suggested that the word is just a Sanskritization of the Bodo expression Bhullumbuttur.

as a certain portion of its course has never been actually explored, though there is little doubt that the Tsan-Po, or great river of Tibet pours its waters through the Dihang into the river which is known as the Brahmaputra in Assam. The source of the Tsan-Po is in 31°30′ N. and 82° E., near the upper waters of the Indus and Sutlej ; and a little to the east of the Mansarobar Lake. Rising in these glaciers this mighty river Brahmaputra which has a total length of 1800 miles and a drainage area of about 361,200 sq. miles, flows for about half of its length in a trough, north of the Himalayas running parallel to the main Himalayan range. Then it swings north-east, runs through gorges in a series of cascades and rapids, makes a hairpin bend at a few miles east of Namcha-Burwa. The bending is well marked near the longitude 94° near Pemkoi Sung, ten miles below Gyala Singdon. It then turns south and south-west taking the name Dihang. After receiving the waters of the Dibang and the Lohit, the united stream from this point flows 450 miles down the Assam Valley in a vast sheet of water dotted with numerous islands, the chief among them being Majuli and Umananda in Sibsagar and Kamrup districts respectively.

General features of the river basin : The mass of silt brought down from the Himalayas is sufficient to form sandbanks, and even islands in the lower valley, wherever it is blocked by any impediment in the current of the river, which thus alters its channel amidst an intricate network of water ways. Broad streams diverge from the main river and rejoin it after a long separate existence of uncontrollable meandering.

The principal rivers which fall into the Brahmaputra in Lakhimpur are the Ranganadi, the Dikrong and the Subansiri. In Dibrugarh district it receives the Noa-Dihing, the Buri-Dihing, the Lohit, the Kundil and the Dibang. It receives the drainage of the Himalayas in the north and the Assam range on the south, and continuing its course round the western spurs of the Garo Hills for 180 miles, joins the Ganges at Goalunda from where the river flows under the name of Padma, and reaches the bay of Bengal by the broad estuary of the Meghna.

Through the greater part of its course in Assam, the Brahmaputra is bounded on either side by stretches of marshy land covered with thick grassy jungle relieved by patches of cultivated land. Further behind, however, where the elevation is higher, the plain is covered with rice fields and dotted over with clumps of bamboo, palm and fruit trees.

"The banks of the Brahmaputra are, as a rule, higher in Lakhimpur than in the districts lower down the valley, and in places they are covered with tree forest. Between the main banks there is wide strath in which the river oscillates from side to side, throwing out here and there divergent channels which after a time rejoin the parent stream.

The waters of the river are heavily ladden with suspended matter and the smallest obstruction in the current is liable to give rise to an almond shaped sand-bank. The next flood may wash this bank away or may only increase its size by fresh deposits of sand, and *churs* or islands of this nature, which have held their ground for a few seasons, soon became covered with a dense growth of reeds.[18]

The tributaries of the Brahmaputra for most of their lengths drain the steep slopes of the Himalayas to the south where rainfall is heavy. Consequently. they not only carry heavy run-off, particularly where slopes are denuded of forests, but also very large volume of detritus, the result of excessive soil erosion. A great amount of this material contributes, without doubt, to raising the land surface in the plains by bank spill, but the major portion of the heavily silt-laden floods carried to the Brahmaputra not only aggravates its flood congestion, but also adds to the silt-charge of the flood. The plain area of the valley has since been built up and is being raised gradually by comparatively coarse material (without much cohesion between the particles) carried down from the hill slopes. The soil is very friable resulting not only in considerable tortuosity of the streams, but also frequent shifting of their courses, which in fact, is necessary to a certain extent in the economy of the nature as it is only by such shifting that the alluvial plain can be raised uniformly.

Cross section : No regular records have been kept of the cross sections of the Brahmaputra at various important places throughout its course. It is mainly for this that any significant change which had occured cannot be scientifically discussed nor analysed. A few cross sections and gauge readings were recorded at certain important stations during the earlier part of this century, but this will be of little interest or value unless they are compared with regular and accurate gauge readings recorded over a series of years and co-related to the earlier ones. It may, however, generally be noted here that the dry season channels vary from 500 to a few thousand feet in width, with large stretches of sand *chars* extending for several miles in many places, until a bank sufficiently high is formed to limit the width of the channels during the flood season, but not sufficiently high to prevent inundation during peak periods of floods. In the vicinity of Gauhati and Goalpara the width of the river is about 3,5000 feet flowing between more or less permanent banks with greatest depths of varying from about 30/60 feet during the dry season to 130/150 feet during the rainy season. At these points discharge calculations have been made when the river was surveyed for the purpose of construction of a bridge. From some old

13. B.C. Allen ; *Assam District Gazetteers, Lakhimpurs*, 1905, P. 7.

records which are available we find that the gauge reading and the width at some of the more important stations have been quoted as follows :

Gauge Station	Dry Seasons Width Average	Dry Seasons Depth Average	Flood Season Width Average	Flood Season Depth Average
Tezpur	3,300 ft.	34 ft.	7,700 ft.	51 ft.
Gauhati	3,000 ft.	23 ft.	3,400 ft.	48 ft.
Goalpara	1,650 ft.	62 ft.	..	..
Dhubri	4,000 ft.	28 ft.	..	..

Shoals : Shoals are continually being formed, causing serious impediments to navigation. In old records some 84 shoals were said to be in existence between Dibrugarh and Gauhati and 43 shoals between Gauhati and Goalpara. The navigable channels through these shoals are clearly marked by bamboo marks placed by the major I.W.T. operators. Apart from a record of the depth on these shoals each season, no comprehensive data could be collected to enable a study of the reasons for the formation of these shoals or the conditions existing in the vicinity of regular recurring shoals.

Floods : The different effect which the various stages of flood has on alluvial rivers such as the Brahmaputra, frequently causes radical changes in the rivers themselves and in the configuration of the land through which they flow. This is quite noticeable, year by year, in the large rivers of North East India.

On the Brahmaputra the fluctuations in river levels begin towards the end of March or early part of April, when the Himalayan snow begins to melt and the annual phenomenon of North Westerly storms speed across the plains of the valleys of North East India. From this period onwards the Brahmaputra river levels record a series of "pumps" or rises of short duration till the end of April, when a more defined rise is felt and in early May the first of flood rises are experienced. As a general rule the first big rise is of short duration and does little harm to the land or early cultivation but improves navigation facilities in the river throughout and enables river '*Ghats*' to be moved into their high level sites adjacent to bazars, road and rail terminals. By early June the S. W. Monsoon registers its arrival in the Assam Valley and with the continuous heavy rain experienced, the river levels rise rapidly and the Brahmaputra remains in flood condition, registering a series of peak flood levels until October. These peak floods overtop the main banks and inundate large expanse of land, causing severe damage to railways and roads.

From October onwards till December the Brahmaputra levels steadily drop till about December or early January when the lowest

levels are recorded. Thereafter the levels remain reasonably steady till the end of March or early April when early pumps are again experienced.

Navigation : The mighty Brahmaputra has been a great high way which connected Assam with the rest of the country even in ancient times. Till the appearance of the steam navigation, the voyage, though hazardous, had to be performed in country boats, braving the swirling currents and tortuous whirlpools not to speak of hidden shoals and hundreds of other dangers. The journey up the river was always a lengthy business. From an account of Mr. Mc. Cosh, it is evident that in 1837, a large boat took six to seven weeks to come from Calcutta to Gauhati and it took about a month from Gauhati to Dibrugarh by boat.

In 1848, Government steamers plied between Calcutta and Gauhati and from 1853 steamers plied up to Dibrugarh from Gauhati. The steamer service was found very useful for transhipment of heavy merchandise at cheaper rates as well as for providing smooth transport for passengers. In 1860, the Indian General Steam Company started its operation in the Assam Valley.

The earthquakes that ravaged Assam from time to time severely affected the navigation in this State. Till the suspension of the inland river traffic in 1965 by the steamer companies, Dibrugarh was navigated by large powered inland vessels of 300 ft. in length and 1000 tons carrying capacity. Vessels formerly navigated in the Brahmaputra as far as Sadiya Ghat on the North bank and Saikhowa Ghat on the south bank. Gradual deterioration in the channel conditions, however, rendered the river unnavigable in this area and just prior to the World War II, the Steamer Companies were forced to terminate their services of Dibrugarh on the south bank some sixty miles downstream. Similarly the Subansiri which was navigated by feeder steamers was found hazardous for this purpose after the great earthquake of 1950. During the Indo-Pak war in 1965, the steamer service through Pakistan was totally suspended. In 1972 the steamer service in the Brahmaputra through Bangladesh has been revived.

The details of the navigation course of the Brahmaputra are summarised here. From Sadiya Ghat the river flows in a south westerly direction through the alluvial plains of Assam and the town of Dibrugarh, the headquarters of the Dibrugarh district of Assam is the first large town on the bank of the river. Extensive protection works of stone groyness and permeable spurs have been constructed and the erosion of the town has been checked. This, however, has induced major silting of Dibrugarh town which, coupled with serious deterioration in the ap-

proach channels following the earthquake, now prohibits the passage of steamers to Dibrugarh.

At Dibrugarh the main banks of the river are about 5 miles apart and the main channel begins to meander from one bank to the other. About 30 miles below this town the Dihing river joins the Brahmaputra on its south bank and, downstream of the outfall of this tributary, extensive shoals exist. During the low water season the main channel through these shoals carries 5 feet of water or less in many places and navigation in this area, even prior to the earthquake, was only possible due to extensive river training.

About 20 miles below the outfall of the Dihing, the Disang river also flows into the Brahmaputra through the south bank and Disangmukh, a small centre at the outfall was the terminal point for large vessel proceeding up the Brahmaputra. The channel in this area during the low water season is only 100 yards wide and the range of river levels during the year being about 17 feet, extremely strong currents are encountered in this vicinity after rainfall in the Himalayan catchment area during the month from June to August.

A few miles below the outfall of the Disang river, a tributary called the Dikhou flows into the Brahmaputra, again on the south bank, and the sand brought into the Brahmaputra from this river form a very extensive shoal area at Banaria, some miles downstream of Disangmukh. The Banaria shoals cause delay to the passage of steamers at times during the low water season when bars having depth of 5 feet or less exist in the channels.

For many years small feeder steamer services proceeded up these three tributaries during the rainy season to bring down cargoes of tea for transhipment to larger vessels on the Brahmaputra. In recent years, however, road communications have been greatly improved and only one of these small feeder services used to ply on the Disang river.

Below the Banaria shoals a large transhipment station has been developed, at Nimati, again on the south bank of the river. The station has been in existence for many years but it was only subsequent to the earthquake of 1950 that it was expanded to its present size. With extensive rail sidings and road connections, it replaced Dibrugarh as the major river port serving the rich tea districts and oilfields on the south bank of the Brahmaputra in Upper Assam.

The Brahmaputra at Nimati has for its nothern bank, the island of Majuli which is approximately 10 miles broad and 55 miles in length and the largest inland island in the world.

Below Nimati a further shoal area exists at Bengna-ati which extends over a distance of approximately 10 miles and carries minimum navigable drafts of 5 ft. 3 inches during the dry season. Immediately downstream of this shoal area, on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, is the outfall of the Subansiri river which is separated from the Brahmaputra proper by Majuli island. For many years small feeder steamers operated in the Subansiri river as far up as Pathalipam and up the Ranganadi river, a tributary of the Subansiri, to Bordeobam. The upper reaches of these rivers have, however, since deteriorated and vessels cannot now proceed above Badati, situated about 18 miles from the out-fall. Large steamers of up to 220 feet in length with carge flats of similar length drafted to 6 ft. can reach the town during the rainy season but only small feeder steamers of 3 fact draft serve this point at other times in the year. The steamer stations of Badati and Subansirimukh, which is at the outfall of the river, are the limits of the steamer service on the north bank of the Brahmaputra and serve a small but remote tea-growing district from which till recently the only other regular communication was by air. Only recently it has been linked by rail, and with the bridging of important turbulent rivers on the north bank road communication has become easier and better.

The Dhansiri river flows into the Brahmaputra through the south bank, a short distance below Subansirimukh. Feeder stremers at one time navigated this river as far as the large town of Golaghat during the rainy season but due to diversion of traffic by road and rail via Nimati this service is no longer necessary. Below the outfall of the Dhansiri (where there is a steamer station serving the local tea district) deeper channels exist and the main flow of the Brahmaputra meanders between the banks of the river to the towns of Silghat on the south bank and Tezpur on the north bank. These two towns are situated almost opposite to each other and connected by a ferry service. Tezpur and Silghat are both important tea centres and have relatively large steamer stations; transhipment facilities between the river and rail exist at the latter.

The river from Tezpur flows in a westerly direction, passing several small steamer stations on both banks, until the major town of Gauhati is reached on the south bank. Here the river becomes narrow as it passes through a hilly gorge. Channel depths between Tezpur and Gauhati rarely fall below 6 feet in any season of the year, but, during the rainy season, extremely strong currents run through the gorge area, attaining speed of 7 to 8 knots for short periods in high spates.

Some distance below Pandu, the hilly area is left behind and the river again commences to meander as it flows on towards the town of Dhubri on the north bank. Channel depths over this stretch are gene-

rally favourable although there is one shoal on which drafts in the low water season may fall to as low as 5 feet 6 inches. There are also two points where narrow channels dictate extremely strong current flows during the rainy season.

Below the town of Dhubri, which is the major jute exporting station in Assam, the Brahmaputra swings into a southerly course and enters Bangladesh. Extensive shoaling occurs in this area due to the existence of a number of turbulent tributary rivers which enter the river from the north, the major ones being the Raidak, Dharala and Teesta. This shoal area, commonly known as Noonkhowa shoal, divides the river into three main channels intersected by a multitude of spill channels. The area is 25 miles in length, between 7 and 8 miles wide, and is probably the greatest inland shoal in the world. Natural depths in the dry season fall to exceptionally low levels as the river's flow divides and spreads into the three main channels and with the simultaneous fall in current speeds, silt deposit is heavy causing extensive bars to form in the main channels. The area is maintained under constant survey, and river training on a considerable scale is carried out annually to maintain navigable depths of 5 to 6 feet in the low water season.

Below this extensive shoal the river flows through Bangladesh into the Bay of Bengal.

Tributaries of the Brahmaputra : The principal rivers which fall into the Brahmaputra from the northern hills are the Kundil which falls into it east of Sadiya ; the Dibang, the Sessari, the Subansiri, the Jiadhal, the Ranganadi, the Dikrong, the Pichala and the Sisi. On the south bank the Brahmaputra receives the Noa-Dihing, the Dibru and the Buri-Dihing. A part of the Dibru river has now merged with the Brahmaputra. The Kundil is of little importance in the economy of the district. The Kundil flows past Sadiya, but the greater part of its course lies inside Arunachal. The Dibang and its tributaries debouch upon the plain through gorges of great natural beauty ; the current is swift, the beds of the rivers are full of snags and boulders, and the scenery through which they pass is exteremely picturesque. One important feature of the rivers is that they frequently change their courses. For instance, the Kumaria, the Jiadhol and the Subansiri deviated partly from their old courses in 1971. The frequent changes of the courses have made the task of identification of the rivers mentioned in the Puranas, quite difficult. Of these rivers, the Kundil, the Dibang, the Noa-Dihing, the Buri-Dihing, the Lohit and the Sessari flow through Dibrugarh district and others through Lakhimpur district.

Following tables No. 1, 2 and 3 show the length, catchment areas and the volume of water discharge by the rivers of the undidided district of Lakhimpur.

Table—1

Rivers	Length in miles	Catchment area of the rivers.
1	2	3
1. Subansiri	326 (upto international Border)	10,148 sq. miles in Arunachal 440 sq. miles in Assam
2. Ranganadi	90 miles	839 sq. miles in Arunachal 296 sq. miles in Assam
3. Dikrong	76 miles	512 sq. miles in Arunachal 101 sq. miles in Assam
4. Sampara (Jiadhal)	70 miles	138 sq. miles in Arunachal 328 sq. miles in Assam
5. Buri Dihing	225 miles	32.97 sq. miles
6. Namphuk	72 miles	368.8 sq. miles
7. Namsik	40 miles	198 sq. miles
8. Tirap	25 miles	432.8 sq. miles

Table—2.

Water Discharge : in cusecs

	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959
Subansiri	1,80,594	2,30,025	2,46,837	2,69,636	4,01,902
Ranganadi	28,527	20,009	25,799	19,862	23,340
Dikrong	15,678	20,424	31,097	26,070	41,700
Sampara (Jiadhal)	—	2,991	4,470	1,695	18,419
Buri-Dihing	51,500	63,741	72,839	94,318	66,366
Dibang	—	34,1910	16,1156	11,0622	91,605
Sesseri	—	—	9,301	19,594	32,552

Table—3.

Flood slopes of the following rivers at various reaches :-

(i) Subansiri :

From	To	Flood slope (average)
Foot hill	N. T. Road	3.0′ per mile.
N. T. Road	Outfall	1.6′ per mile.

(ii) Ranganadi :

From	To	Flood slope (average)
Foot hill	N. T. Road	3.7′ per mile.
N. T. Road	Outfall	1.5′ per mile.

(iii) Dikrong :

From	To	Flood slope (average)
Foot hill	N. T. Road	3.5′ per mile.
N. T. Road	Outfall	1.85′ per mile.

6. (e) Bankful capacity—Average of three years.
   (i) Subansiri—2,09,546 Cusecs at Bhimparaghat.
   (ii) Ranganadi— 17,500 Cusecs at 2 miles u/s of N. T. Road.
   (iii) Dikrong— 20,000 Cusecs at 1 mile d/s of N. T. Road.

The Subansiri : "The Subansiri is believed to rise far up amongst the mountains of Tibet, and enters the plains of Lakhimpur through a gorge of singular beauty. On either side, the hills rise from the river ; their sides being for the most part clad in dense tropical forest, the trees thrusting their roots into every crevice in the rocks, though here and there sheer cliffs rise straight from the still dark water. Creepers bind the trees together with a soft green veil, and slender palms, giant tree ferns and broad-leafed plantains are to be seen on every side. The rocks near the water's edge are covered with moss and ferns, and nature seems to have been determined to produce a masterpiece of river, hill, and forest scenery. In places the river comes roaring down in rapids, which can only be shot by the expert of boat-men ; in places it stretches out in reaches of still green water whose smooth unruffled surface is fifty or sixty feet above the bottom"[14].

The main course of the Subansiri after entering the Miri Hills runs along the boundary between the former Balipara Frontier Tract in the Dafla Hills and the Sadiya Frontier Tract in the Abor Hills. Even in this gorge reach, very little is known of the river and its valley as it is covered with dense vegetation and impenetrable forest. Finally, the river emerges in the plains crossing the Rajgarh Ali, a remarkably well preserved remains of an ancient road of romantic memory ; for tradition has it that it is along this road that the chariot of Lord Krishna raced a successful elopment carrying away His valiantly won bride Rukmini. It enters the plains near Dulungmukh and flows a southerly and westerly

14. B. C. Allen ; *Assam District Gazetteers, Lakhimpur*, 1905, P.8.

course till it falls into the Brahmaputra opposite to Dhansirimukh. The bed of the river is composed of black sand mixed up with 50% of pebbles and 10% of boulders and is unstable in nature.

The Subansiri in spate is a swirling mass of brown waters heavily charged with silt. But in winter, it quietens and flows smoothly with an unruffled surface of luminous green. After flowing about 60 miles from the hills, the river meets Kherkatia Suti, a spill channel of the Brahmaputra and once again changes its name to the Lohit. The total length of the river in the plains from Dulungmukh to its outfall in the Brahmaputra is about 95 miles, along its present course through Bhimparaghat. Before the great earthquake of 1950, the Subansiri was flowing through Bilmukh and this old course was shorter, measuring only about 85 miles. It is learnt that it had a still shorter course two centuries ago when the Brahmaputra was flowing along the present course of Kherkatia Suti and the Lohit Subansiri met the Brahmaputra near Garmur. Its conflyence with the main river further underwent a change later during 1908 when it short-circuited and fell into the main river near Jamuguri. The old course was along the present Pichala *Nadi* joining the Brahmaputra near Ranumukh about 10 miles downstream to its present outfall. After its entrance into the plains and before merging with the Brahmaputra it collects nearly all the drainage of North Lakhimpur Subdivision, the principal tributaries from the left bank being the Sampara and the Koran. The Koran has two considerable tributaries, the Dhol and the Charikaria or Sisi of which the latter flows past Dhakuakhana, and though it joins the Koran is also connected by another channel with the Kher-Katia Suti. On the right bank there is the Ghagar with its various tributaries and several minor streams.

The river Subansiri is navigable upto Pathalipam tea estate, near Chauldhoa *Ghat*. It has provided an important line of communication between North Lakhimpur and other areas in the North bank and a riverine trade thrives on it.

Floods in the Subansiri basin : The Subansiri plain, as other areas of Assam is subject to periodic floods. The main river as well as its tributaries have shallow beds and donot have well defined courses. The catchment is what can be classified as good. The forested mountains have steep slopes. Rainfall is heavy in this region. In the higher mountains the overburden of snow is also deep.

The floods in the Subansiri basin may be caused by all three contributary factors, namely excessive rainfall, melting snow, and bursting of dams which are formed by the land slides. The most important of all these factors is the heavy and prolonged rainfall. The contribution made by the melting of snow is generally not very signficant but due to the

prolonged nature of the monsoons in these parts the periods of heavy rainfall and melting of snow combine to cause heavier floods.

The floods released by the bursting of dams, are more devastating on account of their suddenness and extensiveness. In this case also, the menace of releasing heavy floods in the Subansiri basin forming part of the wider Brahmaputra basin may be considered to be present in a greater degree than in the basins of other rivers whose mountain catchments are more stable and not so widely encompassed by zones of seismic activity. The gorges are narrow and as such susceptible to easy blockade. So, what may be considered as a gift of nature, also becomes an easy site for the land slides to crash down and build up a dam.

The floods in deep gorges of the mountains do not generally cause human distress. The area is sparsely populated and the small settlements are mostly above the level of floods. The floods which came in the wake of the great earthquake of 1950 were caused by the blocking up of the river in the higher gorge section at Sipolmukh and the sudden release of the stored waters. During such floods, the river gets charged with enormous quantities of silt and in their movement down the river, alters the conditions of flow and sometimes changes the river course, causing thereby untold miseries to the people inhabiting in its low-lying basin.

The Ranganadi : The river originates in the Dafla Hills and is said to be a very ancient river. Its existence can be traced to the Vedic times. The 'Rasnadi' of the Rigveda and later on, the 'Somasana' of Kalika Purana are identified with the present Ranganadi. The river enters the plains about 4 miles upstream of Joyhing tea estate and flows in a serpentine course with sharp curves for a length of 40 miles before joining the Subansiri, about 3 miles north-west of Dhekialgaon. It crosses the N. T. Road at mile 126. About 5 miles downstream of the road-crossing, it has abandoned its old course which was going through Bamungaon and rejoins the old course and very close to its confluence with the present Khabali, branch of the Subansiri near Pakonia. Until the Khabali course was usurped by the Subansiri the Ranganadi was flowing beyond its present confluence by its own distinct name, for a further twelve miles to join the Lohit Subansiri about five miles upstream of Badati. The bed of the river is composed of coarse grade of sand and to some extent stable in nature.

The Dikrong : The Dikrong originates in the Dafla Hills. It is also an ancient river and is mentioned in the *Kalika-Purana* as Kama river. In the hills, it is called the Par Nadi and flows in the north-easterly direction for about thirty miles and suddenly turns towards south-west direction. In the gorge reach, it receives a number of mountain streamlets. It enters the plains near Harmuti Tea Estate and runs

for twenty five miles to join the Brahmaputra about two miles upstream of Badati. The river has changed its course in the last leg of its journey. The old course which is now rightly called Mora Dikrong (Dead Dikrong) was joining the Brahmaputra near Silikhaguri about ten miles downstream of its present out fall. The bed of the river is composed of brown sand mixed with a slight percentage of coarse sand and is unstable in nature.

The Buri-Dihing : The most important river south of the Brahmaputra is the Buri-Dihing which rises in the Patkai range and flows a tortuous course with a westerly direction till it falls into the Brahmaputra after meandering for 150 miles. Its principal tributaries are, on the right bank the Digboi, the Tipling, the Tingrai and the Sessa ; and on the left bank, the Tirap and the Namsang. After leaving the hills it flows along the southern border of the district and passes Margherita, an important town of this region. It then winds its way through an outlying spur of the Assam range, passes Jaipur, Naharkatiya where it is crossed by the N. F. Railway, and Khowang ; and during the last part of its course forms the boundary between the Dibrugarh and Sibsagar Districts. Below Jaipur, the floods of the river do some damage, and an embankment was constructed during the reign of the Ahom Kings. The spill water is, however said to have fertilizing effect, where the flood is not deep enough to injure the crop. Even as far from its mouth as Margherita, the Dihing is about 200 yards in width. The bed is sandy and in places obstructed with snags, and it is not very commonly used for purposes of navigation. The present bed of the river is composed of fine brown sand and is unstable in nature.

The Noa-Dihing : The Noa-Dihing in its upper reaches is known as Diyun. It rises in the Singpho Hills and pursues a westerly and then a northerly course till it falls into the Brahmaputra east of Sadiya. It is of little importance to the economy of the district as the greater part of its course flows through jungle land and the current in the higher reaches is also very strong. It is connected with the Buri-Dihing, and its principal tributaries are on the left bank the Dirak, and on the right the Tengapani. Its bed is composed of fine black sand and is to some extent stable in nature.

The Jiadhol : This river rises in the Abor Hills and at the foot of the hills loses itself in a lake called *Morani Bil*. It changes its name to the Koran Nadi and later receives the Sampara. The Sampara originates from Abor foot hills and a bunch of fine rills join it, all welling up from the low lying areas of the Subansiri Reaseved forest. The bed of the river is composed of fine clay and stable in nature. The river changes its course repeatedly. Till 1971, it is said to have changed its course four times since the great earthquake of 1950.

Lakes and Marshes : South of the river Brahmaputra, the level of

the country being fairly high and settled, there are not many *bils* or marshes of importance, "North of the Brahmaputra there is a heavy local rainfall to be carried off, and the rivers are liable to be swollen by the drainage of the hills through which they make their way into the district. Much of the country also lies comparatively low, and the water tends to collect in the lower levels and basins. Some of these *bils* are extremely picturesque. In the centre lies the actual sheet of water, surrounded as a rule by a stretch of the richest pasture in which the cattle can graze knee-deep in cold weather, while the whole is enclosed by a wall of elephant grass and reeds. The surface of the lake is dotted over with islets and clumps of flowering grasses, and in the cold weather is visited by flocks of duck and other aquatic birds. To the north, the view is bounded by the hills, while in the near distance there is dark green line of forest or bamboo groves." [15] The most important *bils* of Dibrugarh district are the Garukhuti *bil* in Jamira mauza, the Chaparu and Kawamari *bils* in Larua, and the Romai *bil* in Madarkhat. Bhimpura, Kani *Bil* and Mer *bil* are three big *bils* of Lakhimpur district where there are twenty six fisheries.

Underground water resources : Hydrological studies indicate that groundwater mainly occurs under unconfined conditions in the alluvial tract, the water table broadly conforming to the topographic profile. In the pre-monsoonal period the depths to water, in the alluvial fan zone range between 4.5 m. and 9.0 m., in the older flood plains it varies from 1.5 m to 4.5 m. and in the recent flood plains and abandoned river channels it varies from 1.0 m. to 2.5 m. Seasonal fluctuation of water level is reported to vary from 0.5 m. to 2.5 m. In this terrain, open wells sunk to depths of 6 m. or more are likely to be perennial. There are lenticular clay bodies at shallow depths, but the aquifers are interconnected and have hydraulic continuity.

An artisan (free flowing) belt exists near the western boundary of Darrang district, north of the Brahmaputra river. It extends into the adjoining Kamrup district. Tubewells in this belt tap aquifers occuring 50 m. below land surface, separated from the near surface aquifers by a thick clay bed occuring from 20 m. to 34 m. below ground level.

Recharge : Groundwater Recharge takes place principally through the alluvial fan zone, both by infiltration of precipitation as well as by influent seepages from rivulets. The abandoned river channel areas also provide recharge. Water infiltrates highly permeable alluvial fan zone and migrates downwards and feeds the acquifer bodies in the alluvial tract. A number of small streamlets originate from this zone and are fed by groundwater seepages only except during rains average annual precipitation is of the order of 360 cm. Thus recharge is expected to be considerable.

15. B. C. Allen ; *Assam District Gazetteers*, *Lakhimpur*, 1905, pp. 11—12.

Quality of water : Groundwater from shallow as well as deeper aquifers are found to be suitable for both domestic and irrigational purposes. Usually the total iron content is about 1.00 ppm or less.

Scope of Development : Considering the pattern of alluvial sedimentation and recharge in the area, the large scale development of heavy duty tubewells with an yield of 100,000 lt. p.h. at a draw down of 4 m. to 6 m. should be economically feasible throughout the tract. It is expected that adequate thickness of about 30 m. or more, of water bearing material will be available within a depth range of 150 m below ground level. Borehole data from tubewells in tea gardens, Defence establishments at Tezpur, Chabua and the Oil India at Duliajan confirm this contention.

(d) **Geology** : Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh districts consist of a vast alluvial tract and geomorphologically represent the eastern end of a big trough or "fore deep" of tectonic origin. The floor of this trough, now covered by several thousand metres of gravel and alluvium, is apparently the easterly continuation of the Shillong plateau wedged between the Himalayas and the Patkai ranges.

Except along the foot hills of the two mountain ranges, the younger sedimentary formations, laid down over the gneissic platform of the trough are below a considerable thick cover of alluvium.

Geological Formations : A considerably thick group of sedimentary rocks occur in the district. These rocks range in the geological time scale from Eocene (early Tertiary) to Pleistocene (post Tertiary) and are exposed mainly along the foot hills bordering the southern boundary of the district. Along the Himalayan foot hills over the northern boundary, only the upper parts of the group of rocks are seen along a narrow fringe following the base of the hills upto Nizamghat. In the eastern part of the district, and along the valley of the Brahmaputra, the rock formations are covered by thick alluvial deposits belonging to sub-Recent and Recent periods.

Tertiary Rocks : The tertiary group of rocks of this area are classified into the following Series and Stages according to their chronological order of superposition, the eldest, being at the bottom.

Age	Series	Stage	Thickness
Pliopleistocene	Dihing series	—	300 m.
		Unconformity	
Mio-Pliocene		Namsang Stage	800 m.
		Unconformity	
Miocene	Tipam Series	Girujan Clay Stage	900 m.
		Tipam Sandstone Stage	1400 m.
		Unconformity	
Oligocene	Barail Series	Tikak parbat Stage	550 m.
		Baragolai Stage	2500 m.
		Naogaon Stage	1000 m.
Eocene	Disang Series		Obscured by faults.

Disang Series : The oldest formation of the Tertiary group is a thick series of hard, iron-stained, grey to dark greyish, splintery shales with thin partings of hard, fine-grained, greyish, flaggy sandstones and sandy shales, together called the Disang Series. The Disang shales cover the high hills behind the southern limit of the Makum Coalfield along which they are overriding the younger Barails and Tipams against the Haflong-Disang thrust fault. The shales are highly folded into numerous minor folds and are well exposed in the area along the head-waters of the Lekhapani and Tipangpani rivers as well as along the Tirap river section south of Honju (27°18′ : 95°55′).

Barail Series : The lowermost part of the Barail series is represented by the Naogaon stage comprising finegrained, hard, compact, thin bedded, flaggy, greyish sandstones with partings of hard, splintery shales, sandy shales and occasionally of carbonaceous shales. The stage shows a gradual change from the underlying Disang shales to a more arenaceous facies. The Naogaon sandstones cover the area towards south and south-west of Namdang (27°15′ : 95°43′) where they are abutting against the rocks of the younger Baragolai and the Tikak Parbat stage of the series, along the margin of the Haflong-Disang thrust. The sandstones are well developed over the Dirak hill (27°13′ : 95°33′). Towards south of the thrust, rock beds of this stage are well exposed along the upper course of the Namdang, Ledo and Tipangpani rivers as well as along the Margherita-Chang-lang road behind the Namdang

Colliery of the Makum Coalfield.

The middle part of the Series is represented by the Baragolai Stage comprising several alternating facies of hard, greyish, micaceous and occasionally, ferruginous and clayey, well-bedded sandstones, bluish grey to greyish clays, sandy clays containing fine, sandy, calcareous lenticles, and carbonaceous shales with many thin, unworkable seams of coal. The stage is mainly exposed in the Makum Coalfield area on the north of the hills between Dirak and Ledo (27°17′ : 95°45′) and also along a narrow belt following the southern boundary of the coalfield between Lekhapani (27°17′ : 95°49′) and Hanju. Some of the sandstone horizons of this stage are oil-bearing and several oil seepages, locally called "*Pungs*" occur along the northern belt.

The Tikak Parbat Stage, comprising light greyish to buff coloured, hard medium, to coarse grained, bedded, quartzose sandstones alternating with sandy shales, shales, clays and carbonaceous shales with several thick seams of coal at the base, represents the upper part of the Series. The Stage entirely covers the Tikak hill of the Makum Coalfield and extends eastwards along two narrow belts between Namdang and the old Tirap Colliery (27°8′ : 95°47′) along the north flank, and between Namdang and the hair-pin bend of the Tirap river along the southern flank of the Namdang-Ledo-Tipang-Honju range of hills. Another narrow belt of this stage of rocks with several workable seams of coal run along the north side of the Jaipur-Tipam range of the hills. Here, the Stage is upto 300 m. in thickness in the Disang river section near the Jeypore Coliery. The thickness gradually diminishes towards the northeast and the Stage completely pinches out near Saraipung (27°18′ : 95°28′).

Tipam Series : The lower part of the Series, known as the Tipam Sandstone Stage, comprises coarse-grained to gritty, greyish, bluish to bluish green, greenish and brownish, massive, false bedded, felspathic and micaceous sandstones with subordinate beds of bluish to greenish mottled clays, sandy clays and occasional olive green shales. The basal beds of the stage are often conglomeratic with small rounded pebbles of quartz and jasper. Fragments of semi silicified and semi carbonised fossils wood are abundantly found throughout the rock beds of this stage. The sandstones at places contain thin bands and lenses of lignite.

In the Makum Coalfield area, the Tipam Sandstones cover the central part of the Namdang Syncline and widening towards the east, cover the ridge of the Tikak-Ledo-Tipang and Honju range of hills. Another belt of the Tipam Sandstones covers the major part of the Jaipur-Tipam-Digboi range of hills. In this part, the Tipams include several oil-bearing horizons and a good number of oil and gas seepages occur along the base of the hills between the Dihing river and Digboi.

Along the base of the Himalayan foothills over the northern boundary of Lakhimpur district, this stage is represented by a group of coarse, micaceous greyish to greenish sandstones, clays and sandy clays containing thin bands of lignite, and fragments of lignitised fossilwood.

The overlying Girujan Clay Stage of the Series is represented by a thick group of mottled clays showing bluish, greenish, pinkish, brownish and chocolate colour mottling, and subordinate beds of coarse to gritty, greyish to greenish occasionally mottled, sandstones. Fragmentary fossil wood is also common in this stage. The low-lying hills flanking the southern side of the Jaipur-Tipam-Digboi range of hills and these towards the east and north east of the Makum Coalfield are covered by the Girujan Clays.

Namsang Stage : The Namsang Stage consists of alternating beds of soft, coarse-grained, gritty to conglomeratic sand-stones and bluish to greenish grey, soft clays, some times showing reddish, purplish, brownish and greenish mottling. Fragments of lignitised fossil wood are fairly common throughout this stage. The conglomerates of this Stage are mainly composed of rounded pebbles of coal and hard Barail sandstones, occasionally rounded pebbles of quartz and jasper also occur. Pebbles are of variable sizes set in a ferruginous matrix.

The Namsangs unconformably overlie the Girujan clay along a belt covering the southern part of the Jaipur-Tipam hill range. The rocks are well exposed along the valley of the Namsang river upto its confluence with the Buri-Dihing at Namsangmukh (27°14′ 30″ : 95°29′00″) where they are gradually covered by the overlying Dihing Series.

Dihing Series : This Series consists of thick alternating pebble beds with soft greyish to dark greyish and brownish clays and light greys to pale greenish, coarse, loose sandstones. The clays invariably include fragments of partially decomposed wood, and on weathering resemble the alluvial clays. The pebble beds are upto 35 m. thick and are mainly composed of hard Barail sandstones in the west around Namsangmukh. Towards the east in the vicinity of Margherita, the sandstone pebbles are gradually replaced by pebbles of various types of metamorphic and igneous rocks. The Series is well exposed along the Burhi-Dihing river section near Namsangmukh and from there it extends east-northestward along the valley of the river upto its confluence with Namchik river and eastward beyond it. In the eastern part, the Dihing outcrops are, however, limited to several high, flat mounds that occur along the valley of Buri-Dihing. These mounds are surrounded by older alluvium.

Sporadic outcrops of the Dihings are also recorded along the base of the Himalayan foothills over the northern boundary of the district. In the northeastern part, the Dihings are covered by alluvium.

Alluvial Deposits : The Alluvium covers the major part of the district and is of two different types.

The older group, also known as the "High Level Alluvium", is deposited along abandoned courses and channels of the Disang, the Buri-Dihing, the Noa-Dihing, the Lohit, the Dihing, the Dihang, the Subansiri and a few other rivers during or at the end of the pleistocene period. In many places they are of the nature of terrace deposits covering the base of the hills.

The newer group, known as the "Low Level Alluvium" is of recent origin, laid down by the present day rivers along their valleys.

Older Alluvium : This group consists of alternating beds of pebbles, gravel or boulders with loose sands and clays, covering, mainly the low mounds along the base of the hills but sometimes occuring on the hill flanks upto 100 m. above the present flood level.

This alluvium contains rather stiff, reddish to brownish, sandy to fairly pure clay with coarse particles of impure and irregularly distributed pockets of unsorted pebbles. The pebble beds vary in thickness from place to place. Size of the pebbles are frequently variable and they are seldom well rounded. The pebbles are mostly derived from quartzites, schists and shale also occur either along with the pebbles of matamorphic rocks or separately. Rolled pebbles of fossilwood are also seen at places in this group of alluvium.

Many of the low mounds along the valley of the Buri-Dihing river between Jaipur and Namchik and those along the northern base of the Jaipur-Tipam Digboi range of hills, are capped by or entirely made up of this deposit. The gravel terrace deposits around Margherita, with large pebbles of hard sandstones and shale, belong to this group.

In the northern and northeastern part of the district this deposit is represented by several terraces covering the base of the Himalayan foot hills.

This alluvium shows undulatory dips due to the irregularity in deposition, differential shrinkage and current bedding, and therefore the deposit is sometimes not easily distinguishable from the underlying Dihing Series.

Newer Alluvium : This group consists of sands, silts, shingles and clays covering the vast plain along the Brahmaputra Valley. The group shows variation from place to place and is comparatively more sandy than the older group.

The deposits of this group stretches out westward as a gently rolling large alluvial cone from the Doom Dooma neighbourhood where the headwaters of Buri-Dihing, Noa-Dihing and Lohit emerge into the plains

and drain their pent-up waters through a large number of channels. These channels, having no permanence, migrate from place to place across the width of the cone and thus the eastern part of this district is riddled with the old channels of these rivers forming swampy lakes.

The thickness of these two alluvial deposits are not fully known. The newer group is apparently considerably thick along the Brahmaputra Valley. In certain parts of the district, these two groups of alluvium are difficult to distinguish and at places found intermixed.

Geological Structure : The Brahmaputra Valley, in this district, is of the nature of a "ramp" valley developed during the simultaneous upheavals of the Himalayan on the north and northeast and the Patkai ranges on the south and southeast.

Consequent to the upheaveals there were tectonic forces directed towards south from the Himalayas and to the north-west from the Shan-Burma plateau region resulting in the buckling and overthrusting of the thick sedimentary formations of the Tertiary period. Eventually the Tertiary rocks along the Patkai range were structurally disposed along several closely folded anticlines, often cut off by several parallel imbricating thrust faults. The last visible thrust bordering the plains of the Brahmaputra on the south is the "Naga Thrust" passing along the northern edge of the Jaipur-Tipam-Digboi range of hills. The next important one is the "Haflong Disang Thrust" which runs ENE along the northern base of the Namsang-Barduria hills, south of Jaipur and continue further eastward along the southern boundary of the Makum Coalfield. In between the above two, there is another loop thrust, known as the "Margherita Thrust", running along the northern boundary of the Makum Coalfield. This thrust merges with the Naga thrust near Namchik towards the east and with the Haflong Disang thrust near Dirak towards the west.

The Makum Coalfield, structurally represents an asymmetrical syncline plunging east-northeast successively exposing the Barails and Tipams. Highly folded Disang Shales and a part of the overlying Naogaon Sandstones are abutting against the younger Barails and the Tipams along its steep south limb, along the margin of the Haflong-Disang thrust Comparatively, gently dipping beds of the Barails and the Tipams exposed along its north limb are in just opposition with the Dihing against the Margherita thrust.

The Jaipur hill is structurally represented by the south limb of a long NE-SW directed anticline called the Jaipur anticline. The north limb of this anticline is faulted down along the boundary of the Naga thrust. Along its south limb, younger Namsangs and Dihings are overridden by the Disang Shales against the Haflong-Disang thrust.

The Digboi hill is a local culmination of the Jaipur anticline in the same line of upheaval. The hill is over a small ENE directed, asymmetrical anticline, the north limb of which is faulted down along the margin of the Naga thrust.

Mineral Wealth : Coal and Petroleum are the chief minerals playing an important role in the economy and industrial development of Dibrugarh district since the last 75 years. Next is the "Natural Gas", associated with the petroleum from the Naharkatiya area, which is now gaining importance in various industrial uses. Besides, clays, for brick-making and pottery and gravels, for road metalling and other useful purposes are abundantly found in Dibrugarh district. Lakhimpur district also had the reputation of collecting small quantities of alluvial gold from river gravels during the Ahom period.

Coal : Large deposits of bituminous coal exist in two different fields lying along the southern boundary of Dibrugarh district.

The well-developed and important one is the Makum coalfield near Margherita. This field is 30 km long and about 5 km wide between Dirak on the west and the hair-pin bend of the Tirap river on the east. At least five workable seams of coal, successively 21.0 m., 2.3m., 6.0 m., 1.6m., and 2.1m. thick, are well developed within the basal 200 m. strata of the Tikak Parbat Stage. The coal seams extend eastwards from Namdang, along the two opposite limbs of the east-plunging Namdang syncline. The south limb of the syncline is obscured, at places, by the Haflong-Disang thrust and consequently the coal seams extending along this limb are either highly distorted or totally cut off at intervals.

The Assam Railway and Trading Company of Margherita have been working the coal seams, more particularly the 21.0 m. seams, through their different collieries since 1884. Inferred workable reserves of coal in this field is about 300,000,000 tonnes and the present annual production is about 3,00,000 tonnes.

The Jaipur Coalfield covers a tract, 15 km long and roughly 1 km wide, along the base of the Jaipur hills, between the Buri-Dihing and the Disang rivers. The belt is also extending further westward across the Disang river into the Sibsagar district. Several seams of coal exist in this field within a 300 m. thick horizon of the Tikak Parbat stage extending along the south limb ; of these at least five are found workable. The main one is upto 6.5 m. thick while the other varies in thickness between 0.9, and 2.0 m. Richest development of the seams are in the vicinity of the Disang river where M/S Jeypore Colliery Limited is working coal since 1954. Inferred workable reserves of coal in the Jaipur field, upto a depth of 100 m, will be about 10,000, 000 tonnes. The present annual production of the Jaypore Colliery is nearly 20,000 tonnes.

Petroleum : Seepages of crude petroleum with bubble discharges of natural gas are seen along the base of the Jaipur-Tipam-Digboi range of hills as well as along the valley of the Buri-Dihing river near Margherita. The important ones amongst them are in the Barpatherjan and Naharjan streams in the Jaipur Coalfield ; Dhekiajuli, Gelipung and Saraipung between Digboi and Jaipur, Makum pathar ; Hilikapani and Namdangpani around Margherita and Namchik towards east of the Makum Coalfield.

The seepages in the Jaipur Coalfield area and those near Margherita show presence of oil in the Barails, and the others in the Tipams, indicating probable migration of oil from the former to the latter.

Earlier attempts to find reserves of oil near some of the seepages in the vicinity of Jaipur and Margherita proved futile. However, the discovery of a big oil seepage in Digboi jungle during the construction of the Dibrugarh Ledo railway line in 1882, eventually led to the discovery of the Digboi oilfield. The Assam Railway and Trading Company started exploration of oil in Digboi area from 1888, and in 1899 the Assam Oil Company was formed to take over the management. Later, in 1921, the Burmah Oil Company took over the management to step up the production of oil through new technical aids and financial help.

Crude oil at Digboi occurs in more than 20 beds of oilsand, distributed at intervals through a stratigraphical thickness of 1,200 metres of the Tipam Sandstones in the Digboi anticline. The Digboi crude is of mixed paraffin and asphalt base with a fair proportion of cyclic hydrocarbons. Till 1953, Digboi was the only oil producing area in India with a total production of 6.5 million tonnes of crude upto the end of 1952. Current annual production of oil in the field is roughly 0.2 million tonnes.

The Naharkatiya oilfield, a hidden structure below 1500 metres thick cover of alluvium and the Dihings on the north side of the Naga thrust near Jaipur, was discovered by geophysical methods of prospecting, conducted by the Assam Oil Company during 1925 and 1938. The Company started drilling in the field in 1952 and the first test well drilled to a depth of 3570 metres came out as a good producer of oil in 1953.

Oil occurs in this field in five main oil sand horizons in the Barails. The structure of the field is a E-W trending a gentle anticlinal fold broken by several faults which form suitable structural traps.

Further, detailed geophysical investigations of the Assam Oil Company culminated in the discovery of the Moran Oil Field, over the western boundary of this district, in 1956 when the first test well drilled near Moranhat struck oil in the Barails within a depth of 4187 metres.

The Oil India Limited, a new venture with equal partnership between the Government of India and the Assam Oil Company, took over the management of the Naharkatiya and Moran Oil fields in 1961. Crude oil from these two fields are being supplied to the Digboi, Noonmati and Barauni Refineries. Present estimated target of annual production from these two new fields is of about 3,000,000 tonnes.

Southwest of the Naharkatiya and Moran fields exploration by the Oil and Natural Gas Commission has revealed the existence of encouraging reserves of petroleum near Rudrasagar and Teok, in the Sibsagar district.

Natural Gas : Large reserves of Natural Gas are found in association with oil in the Naharkatiya and Moran fields. For utilization of this gas, a thermal power project has been completed by the Assam State Electricity Board, and a Fertilizer Factory has been constructed by the Fertilizer Corporation of India. Other Gas-based industries are likely to come up in future.

Clays : Several thin bands of fine clay containing a little amount of impurities are found in association with the coal seams in the Makum and Jaipur Coalfields. The clay might be suitable for manufacture of fire bricks after washing and blending with other high alumina clays.

Suitable clays for brick manufacture are extensively found in the areas covered by the Dihing group of rocks as well as by the Older Alluvium. The main belt is along the valley of the Buri-Dihing river. The Assam Railway and Trading Company has been manufacturing bricks at Ledo for years.

Clays suitable for pottery are available throughout this district. A blackish variety of clay found both in the Dihings and the Older Alluvium is suitable for use in oil drilling, and is so utilised by Oil India Limited and Oil and Natural Gas Commission.

Pebbles : Boulders, pebbles and gravels are abundantly found in the beds of almost all the big rivers where they cut across the Dihing or the Older Alluvium. In the southern part, pebbles of hard Naogaon sandstone and of hard Disang shales are abundantly found over a river bed, particularly where the river emerges into the plain. In other places the pebbles belong to various types of metamorphic and igneous rocks and are quite hard. These pebbles are being extensively collected for use as road metal, railway ballast, and as material for construction of roads, buildings and river embankments.

Gold : Small quantities of alluvial gold were recovered from some of the rivers of this district during the period of the Ahom Kings. Grains of gold were found to occur at places in the area mainly covered by the Older Alluvium. The mode of collection was by washing river sands and gravels and alluvial terraces. Promising areas were at the head of the Brahmaputra valley where the Dihing, Dibang, Luhit, Noa-Dihing and Burhi-Dihing emerge into the plains. Besides, the Subansiri, the Sissi, the Junglupani and the Tingapani rivers are also believed to contain rich auriferous sands. However, the practice of collection of gold by panning had long since been abandoned as it was uneconomic.

Special features : Volcanoes, earthquakes, earth tremors etc :

The frequency of earthquake in Assam is closely related to the geology of the region. Earthquakes occur in places where the crust is markedly unstable, such as mountain belts of geologically recent origin. One such region is the arc formed by the Himalayas and the Naga and Lushai Hills around the northern, northeastern and eastern border of the stable peninsular wedge of the Assam plateau with its north-eastern extension below the alluvium of the upper Assam valley. The organic forces which culminated in the rise of the mountain are still in progress, though equilibrium has largely been attained. Adjustment taking place from time to time find expression as earthquakes.

Like the rest of Assam, the districts of Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh is also liable to earthquakes and shocks are felt from time to time. The great earthquake of 1897 which caused widespread havoc elsewhere, was distinctly felt but left the district practically unscathed.

But the earthquake of the 15th August, 1950, with its epicentre at about 200 miles north of Sadiya, was one of the biggest earthquakes, the world had ever experienced. An area of 15000 sq. miles including the undivided Lakhimpur and Sibsagar districts suffered extensive damages. The earthquake left a trail of devastation including gapping fissures, subsidence and elevation of the ground, landslides and floods. The system of drainage of the country was changed considerably. The magnitude of the shock in the district was 8.6 on the Ritcher Scale. Severe damages were reported from all the corners of the district. It was noticed that generally the river beds silted up considerably and many had changed their courses. In some cases these changes were temporary but in others permanent. The Brahmaputra at Rangolikobo, a little below the junction of the Dihing and the Lohit had silted up by 8 to 10 feet. At Dibrugarh the minimum low water level recorded was 325 feet in January, 1950 and 331.1 feet in January, 1951. Silt was permanently deposited on the river beds making in many cases navigation almost impossible. Many houses and edifices in Tinsukia Town collapsed.

The Assam Trunk Road near Moran and Khowang subsided with cracks. The eastern frontier of this district suffered heavily from this great earthquake. The Saikhowa Ghat and Sadiya Town were either submerged or eroded by the Brahmaputra.

Landslides in different places near the foothills of the district were responsible for the formation of the natural dams in the rivers. The dam across the Subansiri burst after eight days of the earthquake and waves of flood water rolled down its basin engulfing villages, causing death of 532 persons and innumerable cattle. In Bardoloni and Kadam mauzas of Lakhimpur district the flood havocs were the heaviest, followed by other mauzas, Gohain, Nakari, Lakhimpur including the North Lakhimpur Town, Telahi and Kamalabaria mauzas. Other mauzas were also affected partially. The Ranganadi bridge, which provided a vital link with some parts of the sub-division was also washed away.

As stated above, after-effect of the earthquake brought a vast change to the topography of the district and the river Brahmaputra became the agent of destruction. Though the river was gradually eating south bank since 1913 but after the great earthquake of 1950, it took a serious turn. Severe erosion took place near the Dibrugarh Town. Many big buildings of the town were washed away. A stone revetment of 1500ft., long constructed in 1953-54 was totally out flanked and carried away by the mightly current. The bank of the Brahmaputra gradually shifted to about two miles inside the Dibrugarh Town. After the great earthquake, the river Buri-Dihing also destroyed vast areas of paddy fields, tea-gardens etc., of the Dibrugarh district. Many erosions occured in the eastern bank of the river, and near the Buri-Dihing bridge in between the Sibsagar and the Lakhimpur district. Assam Trunk Road was so badly damaged, that a diverson-route had to be opened up. The Government has constructed some spurs and dykes in some places to control the heavy current of this river. Besides the Brahmaputra and the Subansiri other rivers like the Dikrong, the Jiadhol, the Ranganadi, the Kaki, etc., also ravaged the northern bank of the Brahmaputra. The economy of the state was considerably affected by these natural calamities.

The district is seldom visited by hurricanes ; but during the rains a spell of hot-dry weather is often followed by a thunder shower which immediately cools the air and relieves the oppressiveness of the atmosphere. Hail storms occasionally do damage especially to the tea gardens but fortunately they are of very local in nature.

(e) **Flora** : Botanically the forests of Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh districts may be divided into three categories, viz., mixed deciduous, mixed deciduous forests with patches of evergreen species therein and evergreen forests. The first category which occurs in Dibru and Mechaki

reserves represents the primary serail type of moist deciduous riverain forests. Here the deciduous species predominate in the top canopy and evergreen species are fairly common in the lower canopies. This type of forests can be easily categorised into **Hollock** areas and miscellaneous areas. The **Hollock** forests occupy only a very small portion of these forests and is generally confined to flabby land where the soil is usually rich and drainage condition is good. Among other kinds of trees mention may be made of **Uriam, Outenga, Morhal, Jamuk, Thekera,** etc. In the miscellaneous forests, which consist of a mixture of several species, **Hollock** occurs only as a sporadic tree. These forests are characterised by the frequent occurance of **Lamtern** and **Uriam,** the former occuring to a larger extent than the latter.

The largest part of these mixed deciduous forests is poorly stocked and comes under the category of open areas, although in some part tangled mass of bamboo and cane have rendered these forests almost impenetrable. Among smaller trees **Hengunia, Jegeu,** and **Kusial** are commonly seen in this forests. The typical ground cover in these areas consists of certain species like **Digaloti, Gochbhedeli, Leea, Sorat, Reeds, Nal,** etc. **Leea** is a common undergrowth in the grassy banks along the bank of the Brahmaputra river.

The second type of forests which may also be described as tropical secondary semi-evergreen forests, are found to occur in the Jakai, Telpani, Namdang and Dehingmukh reserves. The general quality of the forest is poor. **Nahor** and **Outenga** are generally seen in these forests and among the associates of **Nahor** in these forests, in order of merit, mention may be made of **Uriam, Jutuli, Outenga, Ajhar, Hillikha** etc. Similarly the associates of **Outenga** are **Uriam, Morhal, Ajhar** etc. The open areas of these reserves are generally covered with grasses and weeds and some trees standing in isolation. **Patidoi** is the most common undergrowth in the **Outenga** type while **Sorat** and **Digaloti** are the characteristic of open areas.

The third category of evergreen forests as the name implies are evergreen in character and cover the rest of the reserves starting from the Dangari and Doom Dooma reserves. It stretches further south to the end of the district and beyond. This type which occurs in western regions of Dibrugarh district represents the climax vegetation of the locality with evergreen species like **Hollong** and **Makai.** On account of constant association of **Hollong** with **Nahor,** these forests are more popularly known as **Hollong ·Nahor** forests of upper Assam. The more important of the timber species of this type of forests are **Amari, Gonsoroi, Hollong, Pama, Som, Sopa** etc. A very common tree of the lower canopy is **Morhal,** which is now extensively used for fencing posts.

Forest Belt : The forest of the district may be divided into two classes i.e., the Reserve Forest and the Unclassed State Forest. In 1902-03 the Reserve Forest covered an area of 340 sq. miles of undivided Lakhimpur district ; but went upto 627 sq. miles in 1970. Most of the forests are concentrated in the southern and eastern portion of the district. The forests in the undivided Lakhimpur district are mainly along the foot hills, the innerline forming the northern boundary of the Reserves.

Management of the Unclassed State Forests is regulated by the Assam Forest Regulation VII, 1891. Under the provisions of this Regulation, use of any forest produce except in accordance with rules to be made by the Government is prohibited. To be brief, such forest is simple Government waste land, having a few or none of the characteristics which are usually associated with the expression 'forest'. It may be a sandy **char,** or a huge expanse of low lying land covered with grass and reeds and almost totally destitute of trees. It may be a small piece of arable land which has been resigned by its former holder and has not yet been settled with any other person, or it may be what its name would naturally suggest i.e., actual tree forest. In 1902-03 such forests occupied an enormous area of 3099 sq. miles but dwindled to 2000 sq. miles, in 1970. The Divisional Forest Officers of each district are entrusted with the task of management of the forests.

Forest Policy of the Government : Reserve forests have been constituted under provisions of the Assam porest Regulation VII, 1891, which prohibits the following acts—(1) tresspassing or permitting cattle to trespass or allowing cattle to pasture ; (2) causing any damage to Forest Reserves by unauthorised extraction of timber ; (3) any unauthoritative clearance of Forest land ; (4) setting, kindling or leaving any fire in the forest ; (5) felling, cutting, girdling, marking, lopping, taping or removal of forest produce ; (6) clearing or breaking up of land for any purpose ; and (7) poisoning water or in contravention to Government rules, hunting, shooting, fishing, setting of trap or snare.

Effects of Government Forest Policy : The first object of the management of forest is to conserve forest for the maintenance of climatic balance and to provide protection from erosion. Unfortunately, for various reasons these aims have not been achieved to the desired extent. During the past twenty years or so almost all the unclassed State Forests of the district have been completely deforested and settled for cultivation. The results of this process have manifested slowly in the shape of erosion and devasting flood.

The second object of management is to attain a more regular type of forest which is superior to the existing one. Sufficient progress has been made in this regard during the last 50 years. Implementation of

working plans has yielded rich dividends, both in generation and sustenance of superior type of tree forest. Due care is taken in maintaining the forests so as to encourage the growth of the forest based industries. The forest products of these two districts are exported to other parts of the state.

(f) **Fauna** : Wild animals are numerous and include elephants, rhinoceros, tigers, bears, buffaloes, wild hogs, bisons, leopards, wild pigs, and different kinds of deer of which principal varieties such as the *somber*, the *barasingha* or swamp deer, the hog deer, and the barking deer are common throughout the district. The *mithun* or wild cattle is also found. Elephants are fairly common, especially near the hills and when the crops are ripening, do much damage unless the number of herds is regularly kept down by elephant catching.

Rhinoceros are becoming now scarce, but are occasionally met with in the swampy grounds in the wilder portions of the district. They breed slowly, and their horns are worth more than their weights in silver. The two horned variety of rhinoceros is said to be found in the desolate hills which lie between Assam and the Khampti Valley.

Herds of wild buffaloes are found north of the Brahmaputra and wild bulls often meet the tame cows that are generally found near the hills and in the neighbourhood of the tree forests ; tigers, leopards and bears are seen within the wilder parts of the district. A curious animal called the *Takin* is found in the Mishmi Hills. It appears to be allied to both goats and antelopes.

Over and above them, species found in the district are black panther, Sloth Beer, Small Govetcat, Fishing cat, wild dog, monkey, Langoor monkey, Hollok monkey, Parkapien Ant Eater, Hares, Squirral, Mongoose, Civercat and Binturong. Among the reptiles found in the district mention may be made of Crocodile, King Cobra, Lizard, and Python. The names of birds found in the district are Pelican, wild fowl, wild Goose, wild duck, Blue coot, green pigeon, peacock, parrot, patridge, quail, Florican, Pheasant, Scarlet and Yallow Mi, and Hornbill.

Elephant catching : Mainly two processess are adopted in the district for catching elephant, known as *Mela Shikar* and *Kheda Shikar*. In *Mela Shikar, mahouts* mounted on staunch and well trained elephants pursue the herd, which generally takes to flight. The chase is of a most arduous and exciting character. The great animals go crashing through the thickest jungle and over rough and treacherous ground at a surprising pace, and the hunter is liable to be torn by the beautiful but throny cane brake, or were he not very agile to be swept from his seat by the boughs of an overhanging tree. After a time the younger animals begin to lag behind, and it is then that the opportunity of the

pursuer comes. Two hunters single out a likely beast, drive their elephants one on either side and swiftly throw a noose over its neck. The two ends of the noose are firmly fastened to the *kukis*, as the hunting elephants are called, and as they close in on either side, the captured animal is unable to escape, or to do much injury to his captors, who are generally considerably larger than their victim. The wild elephant is then brought back to the camp where it is tied up for a time and gradually tamed. It is said that the system of *Mela Shikar* was introduced at the time of Purandar Sinha.

The principle of the *Kheda* operation is simple one. In the very thick jungle, near a path used regularly by a herd of wild elephants, the trap or stockade is erected. It consists of a large circle of very strong high fencing, made of tree trunks firmly embedded in the ground and securely roped together. On the outside, to strengthen this fence, a a bulwark of earth is thrown upon it about the height of an elephant and, at intervals, there are buttresses of wood. The entrance is a very strong gate and also made of tree trunks and large branches. Outside the gate-way, on either side, there are barricades leading away from the stockade and away from each other to form a funnel. These barricades are not too obviously foreign to the surrounding jungle, so that elephants do not notice them till it is too late.

When all is ready and a herd of wild elephants is reported to be approching the area, men on tame elephants create a disturbance behind the wild elephants and stampede the herd. In the ensuing excitement, the men drive the younger smaller members of the herd into the funnel made by the two barricades. By the time the elephants realise, that they are in a trap, it is too late, and the only opening they can see, free from men and noise and torches (made of burning branches) leads to the stockade, and the gate is crashed shut behind them. Every effort is made to exclude the large tuskers as they are of no use for training and can cause unlimited troubles and danger. After trapping the younger elephants in the stockades, they are brought out with difficulty and taken to the stockade camp where they are kept till they are made ready for the training camp.

To tie up the wild elephant, a noose is slipped round its neck and the end is fastened to a strong tree whose bark has been removed and the trunk smoothed, so that the rope does not fray readily. The hind legs of the elephant are tied together the rope being passed a number of times from one leg to the other; then the rope is securely fastened to a tree behind the elephant. This is done in such a way that the elephant is unable to bring its hind legs well under its body, in which position it would obtain more advantage when struggling to break its bonds.

Games law and measures for the preservation of wild life :

There are various laws and measures for the preservation of wild life. Shooting, hunting or trapping in a sanctuary is absolutely prohibited except under special licenses issued by the Conservator of Forests to approved sportsman for the exclusive purpose of hunting and killing carnivorous animals. The killing and capture of wild animals and birds are prohibited during the closed seasons as prescribed in Assam Forest Manual of 1947, Under Sections 34(2) (f) and 35(2) of Assam Forest Regulations (VII) of 1891, killing of the rhinoceros in the unclassed State Forests was prohibited, except with the previous sanction of the State Government. The Rhinoceros Preservation Act, 1954 prohibits killing, capturing and injuring rhinoceros. Rules ensuring the protection of fish have also been framed. Under sections 25(g) and 72 of Assam Forest Regualtion (VII) of 1891, the killing of fish by the use of explosive or poison, the netting of fish except under special license issued by the Divisional Forest Officer, the taking of eggs and trapping of birds are absolutely prohibited.

Hunting, shooting or fishing within a reserved forest is prohibited except under license issued in accordance with certain rules. The Conservator of Forests with the previous approval of the State Government may declare any reserved forest or part thereof to be Class I or Class II reserve where the restrictions on hunting, killing or injuring forest animals are made more stringent from time to time to preserve rare birds and animals. Class I forests are in turn divided into shooting blocks none of which remains open for more than 15 consecutive days to be reopened only after a gap of another 15 days. No person or member of a party reserving a block is permitted to kill in any one year more than (1) two buffaloes, (2) two bisons, (3) four sambars, (4) two swampdeers and (5) one spotted deer.

There are also certain legal restrictions with regard to shooting implements. Use of rifles of bore less than 300 for shooting game is prohibited. Cart-ridges loaded with shot larger than No.4 is not be used in reserved forest.

(g) Climate :

The climate of undivided Lakhimpur district is characterised by the absence of a dry hot-summer season, the highest temperatures being experienced during the southwest monsoon season along with aboundant rains and a highly humid atmosphere throughout the year. The cold season from December to February is followed by the season of severe thunderstorms from March to May. The southwest monsoon season is from June to about the beginning of October. October and November constitute the post-monsoon season.

Rainfall :

Records of rainfall in the undivided Lakhimpur district are available for 11 stations for periods ranging from 73 to 95 years. The details of the rainfall at these stations and for the district as a whole are given in tables 1 and 2. The average annual rainfall in the district is 2929.7 mm. The rainfall generally increases from the southeast to the northwest towards the Himalayas. Rainfall occurs nearly all the year round, being least in amount in the period November to February. In the period March to May the rainfall is mostly as thundershowers and the total amount constitutes about a quarter of the annual rainfall. The southwest monsoon arrives over the district by about the beginning of June. The rainfall in the southwest monsoon season from June to September amounts to 66 per cent of the annual rainfall. July is the rainiest month. The variation in the rainfall from year to year is small. In the fifty year period 1901 to 1950, the highest annual rainfall was only 121 per cent of the normal which occurred in 1948. The lowest annual rainfall was in 1950 when it amounted to 80 per cent of the normal. Although rainfall less then 80 per cent of the normal has not occurred in the district as a whole, at individual station there have been such occasions and in the case of three stations such low rainfall has occurred in two consecutive years once during the fifty year period. It will be seen from table 2 that in 33 years out of 50, the district rainfall was between 2700 and 3200 mm.

On an average there are about 133 rainy days (i. e. days with rainfall of 2.5 mm or more) in a year. The number varies from 126 at Moran and Dhakuakhana to 145 at Pathalipam.

The highest rainfall in 24 hours recorded at any station in the district was 339.9 mm at Sadiya on 1908 July 4.

Temperature :

There is a meteorological observatory at Dibrugarh, having records extending to a long period of years. The observatory at North-Lakhimpur was started recently. Another observatory at Digboi is also functioning in the district but the records are meagre. The records for Dibrugarh and North Lakhimpur may be taken as representatives of the climatological conditions over the undivided district in general. By about the end of November both day and night temperature decreases rapidly. January is the coldest month with the mean daily minimum temperature between 8-10°C and the mean daily maximum at about 23°C. In this season cold waves affect the district in the wake of passing western disturbances and the minimum temperature may go down to 5°C or less. From about the beginning of March temperature begins to rise. The period from March to May continues to be pleasant, day tempera-

TABLE —1

Normals and Extremes of Rainfall

Station	No. of Years of data		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual	Highest annual rainfall as % of normal & year**	Lowest annual rainfall as % of normal & year**	Heaviest rainfall in 24 hours* Amount (mm)	Heaviest rainfall in 24 hours* Date
Dibrugarh	50	a	36.6	59.7	103.9	231.1	322.1	494.0	537.0	450.6	359.7	155.7	29.7	16.3	2796.4	116 (1915)	77 (1905)	310.6	1898 Aug 25
		b	3.6	6.1	8.8	13.2	15.8	19.6	21.0	18.7	15.6	8.6	2.4	1.5	134.9				
Doomdooma	50	a	38.1	65.3	122.9	239.3	278.6	431.3	501.4	404.9	290.3	128.0	21.6	16.3	2538.0	140 (1925)	67 (1937)	222.8	1923 Jun 11
		b	3.8	7.1	10.0	14.3	14.6	18.8	20.1	17.4	14.7	7.8	2.2	1.9	132.7				
Jaipur	50	a	33.8	64.5	116.6	268.0	289.3	393.5	482.9	418.3	318.0	163.9	28.5	15.2	2565.5	124 (1917)	74 (1920)	167.6	1881 Apr 6
		b	3.3	6.9	10.0	14.9	15.9	19.6	21.7	19.4	15.8	9.0	2.7	1.7	140.9				
Wilton	50	a	31.0	57.9	113.8	245.1	303.3	442.7	503.9	457.5	327.1	139.5	28.2	15.7	2665.7	144 (1948)	74 (1914)	185.7	1959 May 19
		b	3.1	6.4	8.7	13.7	15.0	18.8	20.9	18.5	15.0	8.2	2.3	1.5	132.1				
Moran	50	a	28.5	52.3	99.8	252.0	288.3	410.2	465.6	383.6	311.1	135.4	25.9	13.7	2471.4	133 (1947)	74 (1914)	167.4	1919 Jul 17
		b	3.0	5.3	8.2	13.8	14.9	18.3	19.5	16.9	14.8	7.9	2.1	1.3	126.0				
North Lakhimpur	50	a	37.6	62·0	93.0	244.3	459.2	667.8	642.9	536.2	495.8	193.3	41.1	18.3	3491.5	141 (1935)	73 (1914)	224.0	1934 Jun 3
		b	3.4	5.9	7.0	13.3	16·3	19.5	20.0	18.3	16.4	8.9	2.8	1.6	133.4				
Pathalipam	50	a	41.9	69.3	92.2	201.4	435.6	880.4	932.2	832.4	717.8	239.3	37.6	23.9	4504.0	143 (1938)	77 (1932)	291.6	1909 Sep 30
		b	4.1	6.2	7.2	12.3	16.7	21.7	23.0	21.4	18.0	9.2	2.8	2.1	145.2				
Harmati	50	a	34.8	53.3	78.5	249.2	438.4	616.5	597.1	474.5	475.0	179.3	38.3	21.1	3256.0	135 (1921)	78 (1922)	262.4	1934 Sep 13
		b	3.3	5.3	6.7	13.7	16.5	20.1	21.3	18.2	16.5	9.0	2.6	1.8	135.3				
Dhakuakhana	50	a	33.8	53.3	90.7	245.4	334.8	430.5	462.5	393.9	355.1	148.6	34.3	15.2	2598.1	136 (1947)	76 (1922)	206.3	1931 Apr 12
		b	3.5	5.4	7.5	13.4	15.5	17.7	18.9	16.5	14.8	8.7	2.4	1.7	126.0				
Margherita	50	a	35.8	64.5	127.3	272.8	266.9	449.3	487.9	433.8	331.2	136.7	27.9	13.5	2647.6	123 (1913)	75 (1912)	174.7	1955 Jul 1
		b	3.4	7.1	9.9	14.8	14.8	19.2	19.9	17.3	14.2	8.2	2.4	1.5	132.7				
Sadiya	50	a	43.9	82.0	128.3	251.2	273.6	492.0	508.5	417.6	304.8	143.3	27.2	20.8	2693.2	169 (1913)	68 (1950)	339.9	1908 Jul 4
		b	4.2	7.4	10.0	14.3	13.8	17.5	18.4	16.5	13.4	7.7	2.3	1.7	127.2				
Undivided Lakhimpur (District)		a	36.0	62.2	106.1	245.4	335.5	518.9	556.5	473.5	389.6	157.8	30.9	17.3	2929.7	121 (1948)	80 (1950)		
		b	3.5	6.3	8.5	13.8	15.4	19.2	20.4	18.1	15.5	8.5	2.5	1.7	133.4				

(a) Normal rainfall in mm. (b) Average number of rainy days (days with rain of 2.5 mm. or more).
* Based on all available data upto 1960. ** Years given in brackets.

TABLE—2

Frequency of Annual Rainfall in undivided Lakhimpur District (Data 1901- 1950)

Range in mm	No. of years	Range in mm	No. of years
2301-2400	1	2901-3000	9
2401-2500	3	3001-3100	5
2501-2600	2	3101-3200	1
2601-2700	2	3201-3300	5
2701-2800	7	3301-3400	2
2801-2900	11	3401-3500	1
		3501-3600	1

tures seldom bscoming oppressive while the nights are cool. July and August constitute the hottest period of the year with the mean daily maximum temperature at 31°C and the mean daily minimum at 24°C. In this season which is also the peroid with the highest moisture content in the year, the weather particularly when not raining is often unpleasant with the damp heat. With the withdrawal of the southwest monsoon early in October the weather starts becoming cooler.

The highest maximum temperature recorded at Dibrugarh was 38. 9°C. on June 8, 1905 and 37.1° C at North Lakhimpur on July 13, 1963. The lowest minimum temperature was 2.7°C. on December 28, 1961 and 2.8°C. North Lakhimpur on January 4, 1956.

Humidity :

The air is very humid throughout the year, the relative humidity being usually over 70 per cent.

Cloudiness :

Skies are heavily clouded to overcast in the southwest monsoon season. In the post-monsoon and cold seasons skies are lightly to moderately clouded. Moderately to heavily clouded skies particularly during afternoons and evenings, are common in the period March to May.

Winds :

Winds are generally light throughout the year and are mostly from directions between north and east.

Special Weather Phenomena :

Cyclonic storms and depressions from the Bay of Bengal do not move into upper Assam. Thunderstorm are frequent in the period from March to September. Those during the period from March to May are similar to the northwesters (*Kalbaisakhi*) of Bengal though coming from the northeast instead of northwest and are violent at times. These are occasionally accompanied with hail. Fog is frequent during winter season, particularly in the vicinity of the Brahmaputra valley.

Tables 3,4 and 5 give the temperature and humidity, mean wind speed and frequency of weather phenomena respectively for Dibrugarh. Tables 3(a), 4(a) and 5(a) give similar data for North Lakhmpur.

TABLE 3

Normals of Temperature and Relative Humidity
(DIBRUGARH)

Month	Mean Daily Maximum Temperature	Mean Daily Minimum Temperature	Highest Maximum ever recorded			Lowest Minimum ever recorded			Relative Humidity 0830	1730*
	°C	°C	°C	Date		°C	Date		%	%
January	22.5	10.2	27.8	1946 Jan	31	3.5	1965 Jan	1	87	78
February	23.6	12.9	30.6	1242 Feb	28	4.4	1905 Feb	13	82	73
March	26.7	15.8	34.4	1960 Mar	29	6.1	1903 Mar	30	73	69
April	28.2	19.2	35.6	1937 Apr	18	10.8	1965 Apr	5	75	73
May	29.2	21.7	36.8	1964 May	29	14.1	1964 May	9	82	79
June	30.2	23.7	38.9	1905 Jun	8	15.6	1910 Jun	9	87	82
July	30.7	24.5	37.8	1956 Jul	5	20.0	1908 Jul	5	88	82
August	30.9	24.7	37.8	1956 Aug	6	19.5	1958 Aug	23	87	82
September	30.2	23.9	36.6	1959 Sep	3	16.1	1905 Sep	26	86	84
October	29.5	21.0	36.1	1907 Oct	20	14.2	1960 Oct	29	81	83
November	27.1	15.6	32.2	1942 Nov	2	7.4	1961 Nov	21	80	80
December	24.0	11.1	28.8	1960 Dec	3	2.7	1961 Dec	28	86	81
Annual	27.7	18.7							83	79

* Hours I. S. T.

TABLE—3(a)

Normals of Temperature and Relative Humidity
(NORTH LAKHIMPUR)

Month	Mean Daily Maximum Temperature	Mean Daily Minimum Temperature	Highest Maximum ever recorded			Lowest Minimum ever recorded			Relative Humidity * 0830	1730
	°C	°C	°C	Date		°C	Date		%	%
January	23.2	8.2	26.7	1955 Jan	23	2.8	1956 Jan	4	80	77
February	23.9	11.7	30.2	1960 Feb	16	5.4	1964 Feb	2	78	75
March	27.1	14.8	32.9	1958 Mar	30	8.1	1957 Mar	2	71	69
April	29.0	18.9	35.1	1962 Apr	26	11.6	1965 Apr	6	74	73
May	29.0	21.3	36.7	1961 May	29	16.2	1961 May	5	82	80
June	30.6	23.5	36.7	1961 Jun	27	20.7	1964 Jun	5	88	82
July	31.3	24.3	37.1	1963 Jul	13	20.6	1954 Jul	21	89	82
August	31.1	24.3	36.7	1957 Aug	22	21.4	1965 Aug	11	90	83
September	31.2	23.5	36.4	1963 Sep	12	20.9	1965 Sep	19	85	84
October	29.7	20.1	35.0	1955 Oct	2	10.6	1955 Oct	31	80	85
November	27.0	13.7	31.7	1954 Nov	5	8.2	1960 Nov	28	77	84
December	24.4	9.4	28.3	1954 Dec	4	3.1	1961 Dec	29	79	81
Annual	28.1	17.8							81	80

* Hours I. S. T.

TABLE 4

Mean Wind Speed in Km/hr.

(DIBRUGARH)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
1.7	2.2	2.9	3.4	2.8	2.7	2.7	2.4	2.2	1.8	1.5	1.6	2.3

TABLE 4(a)

Mean Wind Speed in Km/hr.

NORTH LAKHIMPUR

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
3.0	4.1	4.8	5.4	5.4	6.4	5.9	5.4	4.5	3.5	2.7	2.6	4.5

TABLE—5

Special Weather Phenomena

(DIBRUGARH)

*Mean No. of Days with	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
Thunder	0.7	3	5	6	5	5	5	4	5	1.8	0.2	0.3	41
Hail	0	0	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0	0	0.1	0.1	0	0	0.8
Dust Storm	0	0	0.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.2
Squall	0	0	0	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.1
Fog	11	2	1.2	0.1	0.1	0	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.1	6	9	32

TABLE—5(a)

SPECIAL WEATHER PHENOMENA

(NORTH LAKHIMPUR)

Mean No. of Days with	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
Thunder	1.1	2	4	8	7	9	9	9	8	3	0.4	1.3	61
Hail	0.2	0.1	0	0.2	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.5
Dust Storm	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	·0
Squall	0	0	0	0	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0.2	0	0.3
Fog	3	0.7	0.1	0.3	0	0.1	0	0	0.3	0.1	1.8	3	9

*No. of days 2 and above are given in whole numbers.

CHAPTER—II

HISTORY

(a) Pre-history :

Certain pre-historic finds in different parts of the state of Assam throw some light on the extent of Neolithic culture prevalent in the region. These relate to later neolithic period and probably belonged to the speakers of the Mon-Khmer speech beginning with 2,500 B. C. or a little earlier. "J. D. Anderson mentions a celt from Sadiya and Godwin-Austen describes another from the Khasi Hills. J. Lubbock refers to other specimens, particularly of jade, in Upper Assam, which are supposed to have fallen from the sky and to possess magical virtues. H. B. Medlicott refers to a stone hatchet from Dibrugarh and Peal mentions a celt, said to have been dug out from a tea factory. E. H. Steel refers to a few neoliths, made of jade, found in the village of Namsang Nagas."[1] In some parts of Assam, and Manipur, stone celts were associated with fertility and good fortune. In the Naga Hills, these implements are believed to have been used as the medium of exchange.

Taking into consideration the wide distribution of the existing neoliths or stone celts, it would probably be wrong to associate all these celts with Khasi-Syntengs alone. But to whatever stock of people these stone celts may belong, "they show definite links not only with Burma, Malaya and the oceanic world, but also with Central and Southern India and with the Gangetic valley and the west. The wide distribution of the celts points only to the once wide-spread neolithic culture in the land. The cult of fertility and magic, associated with most of them and which we find working throughout the ancient period, perhaps laid to a certain extent the foundation of Assamese religious life, particularly Tantrikism."[2]

"The neolithic culture in Assam follows a pattern dictated by geographical factors and can be best studied on a regional basis as each group of tools of a particular region show a distinct kinship in material and form."[3] Of the six zones, into which Dr. A. H. Dani has divided Assam for the purpose of neolithic-culture study, two zones namely—

1, P. C. Choudhury—*The history of the Civilisation of the people of Assam to the Twelfth century A. D.*—pp. 59—60

2, Ibid : p, 60,

3, A. H. Dani ; *prehistory and Protohistory of Eastern India, p.* 42

Sadiya frontier and Brahmaputra valley include the undivided district of Lakhimpur. Most of the tools or celts found in the Sadiya Frontier zone are made of Jadeite of one variety or another. The material is not locally available and the nearest source lies in Yunnan in South-west China. "However, a few tools are of gneiss and dolerite, both local rocks, while there is one each of limestone and bone. The tools found here also show markedly regular forms though there is a less typological variation than in the Cachar Hills. The facetted tool has the closest link with types of tools known from Yunnan, while another type, the rounded butt axe, though also known in Yunnan, has a wider circulation in Indo-Pakistan sub-continent. The prolific use of jadeite further strengthens the link with Yunnan. In fact, with the discovery of a specimen in the Mishmi Hill the cultural contact of this region with Yunnan can hardly be doubted. Indeed the main tool types of Yunnan and the Sadiya Frontier Zone are identical and the use of the common material jadeite, firmly establishes the indentity."[4]

The neolithic culture in the Brahmaputra valley zone suggests a blend of cultural features predominant in the surrounding hills and plateaus to the south. But the material available for study is very meagre. "Save for two celts from Dibrugarh and Sibsagar, all other tools come from the chance discovery of Mr. W. Penny in Tezpur district. The majority of Penny's tools are of sandstone. A good number are in quartzite, slate and a rock described as "decomposed volcanic ash" (Coggin Brown, 1917, pp. 131-33), while there is one of gneiss and one of the porphyrite. The sandstone examples are mostly smoothed fragments and pebbles. However, only three grooved hammerstones in this material are known, all other hammerstones are of quartizite. The tools, Coggin Brown's "celts," are made of slate (5 in all), gneiss or porphyrite. At least one "celt" appears to be of the wedge type so common in the Naga Hills (Class G). Another is an irregular shouldered tool, a type well known from the Cachar Hills (Class E). The small flat "celts" resemble those from the Garo Hills. But the grooved hammerstones are peculiar to this zone, that is to say, so far they have not been met with in the other regions of Assam."

(b) Early History :

A mythological account suggests that King Bhismaka ruled in ancient Kundila (modern Sadiya, in undivided Lakhimpur district) in the extreme North-Eastern corner of Assam. There are archaeological remains in the area, of which some are assigned to Bhismaka and Sisupal. The account of Bhismaka and his daughter Rukmini is mentioned in the *Bhagavata* and the *Vishnu Purana*. It is also well narra-

4. Ibid ; p. 44,
5. Ibid ; p. 46

ted by Sri Sankardeva in his "*Rukmini Haran*." Rukmini was betrothed with Sisupal by her father ; but at the time of her marriage, she was carried off by Lord Krishna after a fierce encounter that ensued and defeating Sisupal. The Mishmis, a hill tribe living around Sadiya claims Rukmini as a hill girl of their tribes. It is said that Mishmis as a mark of their defeat at the hands of Lord Krishna, still wear round their foreheads silver badges, otherwise known as *Kopalis*,[6] but little or no reliance can be placed upon this legend and according to the ordinary *Pauranic* account Bhismaka's Kingdom was situated in Berar.[7] Moreover, it seems "strange as well as significant that Krisna came such a long way to a distant place like Sadiya for the daughter of Bhismaka. Bhismak's capital is located in a place where a colony of Kalitas is believed to have settled. The story about Krisna's exploits may be a myth, but that there was a prince of the name of Bhismaka is quite possible. He was probably a king from *Kalita Desa*. The story may have its, origin in the invasion of distant Kamrupa by some Aryan prince during his time or at a time when Naraka flourished and was therefore, associated with Krisna."[8]

The earliest inhabitants of the region including the undivided Lakhimpur district were Tibeto-Burman tribes of whom the Bodos were the most important. "The Bodo tribes are linguistically connected with the Nagas, but whereas the Nagas have always remained isolated and primitive one may say that the Bodos who spread over the whole of the Brahmaputra valley and North Bengal as well as East Bengal, were the most important Indo-Mongoloid people in Eastern India." The Chutiyas and Kacharis are branches of the great Bodo race and the early history of Lakhimpur centres round the history of the Chutiyas and Bara-Bhuyans.

The district of Lakhimpur must have formed part of the old kingdom of Pragjyotish Kamarupa, particularly during the time of the Varman rulers of Assam or at least in the 7th-8th century. During the eleventh century A.D., Sadiya formed part of Kingdom of Pal dynesty. According to Gauhati grant, Purandarapala married "Durlabha who was descended from the royal races of the extreme kingdoms, conquered by the victorious arms of Jamadagni's son."[9]

The reference is probably to the ancient Kundina of Bhismaka (modern Sadiya) as stated above and the existence of which is confirmed by the ruins of forts and temples in the locality. This poli-

6. Hem Barua—*The Red River and Blue Hills* : p. 18
7. B. C. Allen—*Assam District Gazetters— Lakhimpur*, 1905, p, 12.
8, P. C. Choudhury—*The History of Civilisation of the people of Assam, to the Twelfth Century A. D.* 1959 ; p. 131.
9. Ibid—P. 255.

tical status seems to have continued till the Hindu dynasty declined and different small principalities were established by Bara-Bhuyans and Chutiyas, beginning with the 12th Century A.D. or little earlier.

(c) The Bara-Bhuyans :—

Various accounts of the Bara (twelve) Bhuyans are found in local legends which often refer to different groups of chiefs. According to one account, the Bara-Bhuyans who set up principalities, north of the Brahmaputra and west of Chutiya kingdom in the 13th century, were the descendents of Samudra a minister of king named Arimatta, who seized the throne on the explusion of Arimatta's son Ratna Sinha. Lakshmi was the daughter of Samudra's son Manohar and she obtained the love of the sun-god. She had two sons named Santanu and Samanta, Santanu and his sons embraced *Vaishnavism* and shifted to Rampur in the district of Nowgong. Samanta became a *Sakta* and remained on the north bank of the Brahmaputra at Lakhimpur from which the present district Lakhimpur takes its name. Samanta was succeeded by his sons who maintained their independence against the Kachari king who were then ruling in central Assam and against the Chutiya king of Sadiya. They were eventually defeated by the Ahoms.[10]

The title Bhuyan was formerly supposed to indicate a connection with the aboriginal tribe of the same designation in Chota Nagpur. Sir E. Gait has observed in this connection as follows "This, of course, is not the case ; and the late Dr. Wise has clearly shown in connection with Eastern Bengal, where there was also in former times a group of chiefs bearing the same title, that, in this connection, the world "Bhuya or "Bhuiya has nothing to do with caste, but is merely the Sanskrit equivalent of the Persian word "*Zamindar*. It is not clear why the number "twelve" should always be associated with them, both in Bengal and Assam. Whenever they are enumerated, twelve persons are always mentioned, but the actual names vary, just as in the case of the Muhammadan "*Panch Pir*, different saints are counted by different people. It seems to have been the practice in this part of India for kings to appoint twelve advisers or governors. Nar Narayan had twelve ministers of State ; twelve chiefs or *dolois* administered the hilly portion of the Raja of Jaintia's dominions, and there were twelve State Councillors in Nepal. The number may thus have become connected in the minds of the people with all dignitaries ranking next to a Raja, and so have come to be used in a purely conventional sense.[11]

Harinarayan Dutta Baruah has given a different account of the origin of the Bara-Bhuyans. According to him the petty chieftains were known as "*Bhowmik*" during the time of Pala kings. Their domain

10. E, A, Gait—*History of Assam* 1926, p. 39.
11, Ibid pp. 39—40.

was called "*Bhuma*." The word "*Bhuyan*" thus came from the term "*Bhuma*." This view is supported by the fact that Chandibar who came from Kanauj became Bhawmik under king Durlabh Narayan of Gaur. Subsequently he came to be known as Siromani Bhuyan. The term Bara-Bhuyan does not indicate exactly twelve persons. This numeral, as observed by H. N. Datta Baruah, was vaguely used to indicate an indefinite number.[12] The king of Gaur conferred the title Bhuyan on seven Brahmins and seven Kaysthayas who settled in his kingdom. Teesh fourteen Bhuyans were subsequently known as Bara-Bhuyans. They came to the kingdom of Kamata during the time of Durlabh-Narayan and became regional rulers, but lost no time to declare independence when the sceptre passed into the hands of a weaker ruler. This account may be applicable in case of the Bhuyans of the south bank. The same author has also observed that when Biswa Sinha occupied the western part of Kamrup, some of the Bhuyans migrated to the east and settled in Darrang district and North Lakhimpur area. We find a similar account in the *Asom Buranji* written by Padmanath Gohain Barua. According to him twelve Kayastha families and seven Brahmin families left Kanauj following the invasion of Kanauj by Sahabuddin. They came to Gaur and then to Kamata kingdom where king Durlabh Narayan provided for their shelter. Chandibar Bhuyan was made the administrator of the eastern region. All these families were known as Bhuyans.

According to Sarbanada Rajkumar, the Bara-Bhuyans were petty rulers who set up numerous kingdoms on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, extending from the Subansiri in the east, down to the Barnadi in the west[13]. The other branch of the Bara-Bhuyans ruled over certain areas which now form part of Nowgong district, south of the Brahmaputra. The Bhuyans had only a few kingdoms in North Lakhimpur area, important ones being Lakhimpur, Bihpur, Narayanpur, Dhalpur etc. S. Rajkumar believes that the boundary between the territories of the Bhuyans and the Chutiyas passed through Lakhimpur town and Dhemaji Mouza[14]. In the west, the boundary between the tract ruled by the Bhuyans and the Kingdom of Kamrup, varied from time to time. Many of the Bhuyans ruled simultaneously over different areas of the tract north of the Brahmaputra. These petty rulers were independent and had their own territories ; but whenever hostilities broke out between some of the Bhuyans and other kings, the Bhuyans faught under one banner.

The Bhuyans of North Lakhimpur area were *Saktas*. There were many *Sakta*, *Saiva* and *Vaisnava* temples in North Lakhimpur area

12. H. N. Dutta Baruah. *Pracin Kamrupiya Kayastha Samajar Itibritta* (1941) p. 33.
13. S. Rajkumar, *Chutiya, Bhuyan aru Matak Bajya*, pp. 42-52.
14. Ibid, p. 12.

when the Bara-Bhuyas ruled over this tract. Bathavati Gosani, Pancanan (Kali Gosani), Murabhaga, Kechaikhati, Lonpani, Neel Gosani, Sarhi (Haihi Gosani), etc., are some of these temples which were constructed before the Ahoms occupied the Bhuyan kingdoms. The Bhuyans were held in high esteem in those days as is evident from the royal patronage they received at various times. Shri Sankardev, the great saint poet of Assam who stepped up the epoch making *Neo-Vaisnavism* movement in Assam, was a member of a Bara-Bhuyan family. Ahom king Suhungmung alias Dihingiya Raja occupied the territories of the Bara-Bhuyans on the north bank in the year 1505. From this time, some of the articles commonly used by the Bara-Bhuyans constituted part and parcel of the Ahom apparel[15]. In the "*Ahom Buranji*" preserved by Sukumar Mahanta, the Ahom victory over the Bhuyans of the north bank has been described as follows. "Utoi and Tamai were two Bhuyans who mounted upon an elephant that was painted white by lime. They declared that the Ahoms who defeated the Chutiyas would never be accepted as the rulers of the Bhuyans. The Ahom king was piqued at the intransigence of the Bhuyans and attacked their territory."[16] The Bhuyans knew very well that the nemesis had come down on them and tamely surrendered to the Ahoms. Lalowa, Utabar Chapa, Sonabar, Bhedai, Utabar, Kalisk, Somdar Uzir and Tomai were brought before the Ahom king along with the male members of their families. Utoi and Tamai were slaughtered for their arrongance.

It was Pratap Sinha (1603-1641) who finally subdued the Bhuyans whose domain extendeed between the Bharali and the Subansiri. The Bhuyan chiefs discontinued to pay tribute to the Ahom King from the time of the Koch invasion under Sukladhvaj. In 1623 one of the Bhuyan chiefs declared himself independent and was joined by several other chiefs, he was arrested and executed and thus the Bhuyans were bereft of all their powers.

(d) The Chutiyas :

The origin of the Chutiyas who ruled over a large territory which extended as far west as the Disang river, is controversial. What is however known of the Chutiyas is attributed mainly to the Ahom Chroniclers. The early history of the ancient tribe is veiled in some obscuriity but there seems little doubt that the Chutiyas were the members of the great Bodo race and entered the plains from the North east. Colonel Dalton, quoting from an ancient chronicle which is confirmed by local tradition, states that they were originally settled in the hills near the Subansiri river. The tribe lived in large independent villages like

15. *Satsari Asom Buranji* ; p, 135,
16. *Asom Buranji* (preserved by Sukumar Mahanta) ; pp, 12-13 ; quoted by S. Rajkumar ; *Chutiya, Bhuyan aru Matak Rajya* ; p. 51.

the Abors and Miris of the present day. In course of time about A.D. 1189, one Birpal or Birabar who claimed ancestry from the mythical Bhismak, and ruled over sixty families on a hill called Sonagiri seems to have attained certain measure of supremacy over the neighbouring villages, and the process begun by the father was carried on still further by the son, named Sonagiri Pal, *alias* Gaurinarayan. He extended his influence over the wild tribes, brought under subject on all the Chutiyas living in different hills in the area, (Rangalgiri, Nilgiri, Chandragiri etc.) assumed the title of Lord of the Hills and, at the head of his followers, descended into the valley of the Brahmaputra. He defeated a king called Bhadra Sen and founded a capital called Ratnapur, which is said to have been situated in the Majuli or in the North Lakhimpur Sub-division. Gaur was at that time still under the rule of a Hindu dynasty, so the eruption of the Chutiyas must have taken place prior to its (Gaur) conquest by the Muhammadans in 1204 A.D. The Chutiya leader assumed the name of Ratnadhvaj Pal, contracted an alliance with a neighbouring Raja called Nyayapal and generally consolidated his power. He excavated tanks, built temples and constructed a line of forts along the frontier. He then asked the Kamateswar,[17] to give a daughter in marriage with his son, and on the former's spurning of the proposed alliance constructed a road to his territories protected by forts, erected at intervals along the line of march, and so alarmed was the Kamateswar Raja that he handed over his daughter without delay. Ratnadhvaj visited the king of Gaur, and left a son to be educated at his court. The boy died and his body was despatched, so goes the story, to his father, who received it when he was building a new city, called in memory of this event, Sadiya (the place where the corpse was given).

Downfall of the Chutiyas : Ratnadhvaj was succeeded by nine kings, each of whom bore the name of Pal. The ninth of the series, Dhirnarayan *alias* Dharmadhvaj Pal, had one daughter named Sadhani, for whose hand there were so many suitors that the king, with a Jephthah like fatuity, decided to submit the selection of his son-in-law to the arbitrament of the fate. A flying squirrel was seen hovering over trees in front of the royal court, and the hand of the princess was promised to the man who could bring it down with an arrow. A poor young Chutiya was successful, and much to her disgust, the proud princess was united to her lowly spouse. The old king then resigned in favour of his son-in-law, who assumed the name of Nitipal.[18]

17. Presumably Kamatapur in Koch Bihar, which is said to have been founded by Niladhvaj, whose grandson Nilambar was defeated by the Muhammadans at the end of the fifteenth century. This date would be too late for the invasion of the Chutiyas and the expedition against Kamatapur, is probably quite mythical.
18. According to another version the king left an infant son, for whom Nitipal acted as regent.

Naturally enough, he was utterly unfitted for the high position to which he had so suddenly and undeservedly been raised, and the kingdom was soon reduced to a state of anarchy and confusion. The Ahoms seized this opportunity to push home their attacks, and the power of the Chutiyas was once for all lost. Little reliance can, however, be placed upon these legends. The story of the poor Chutiya boy who married the princess is probably a poetical description of the descent of the tribe in the valley, and of the subjugation of the Hindu dynasty reigning in Lakhimpur. The date of the downfall of the Chutiya Kingdom, according to the Chutiya Buranji, is moreover 150 years later than that assigned to this event in the Ahom chronicles, which state that it took place in 1523 A.D.[19]

The Ahom account of the Chutiyas : The Ahom historians say that when they entered Assam in 1228 A.D., the Chutiyas were established at Sadiya, and were masters of the country as far west as the Disang river.

It may particularly be noted that during the expansion of the Mao-Shan Empire under king Sukhanpha and Sawbwa or Sukhanpha of Mong-Mao in the third decade of the thirteenth century A.D., Samlongkha (Khunhsam-Lorg), brother of Sukhanpha and Sawbwa (Chaopha) or Mong-Kawug (Mogaung) in Upper Burma, who is said to be the greatest general and conqueror in South-East Asia at that time, after having conquered the region of the Lushai Hills, Tripura, Cachar and Manipur marched upon the Chutiya Kingdom via Hkanti-Long, conquered it easily and proceeded triumphantly as far as the Namrup Tipam area in Eastern Assam (Wehsali long).

Within a year after Samlongpha had left the Chutiya Capital, the Chutiya feudatory prince, Kesi Raja, revolted against the Mao-Shan authority and killed the Governor, appointed by the Mao-general. At this, Emperor Sukhanpha despatched his causin, Chao Sukapha, with a force to punish the refractory prince. The Chutiya prince, being defeated by Sukapha, fled with his followers towards the west and took refuge in Cachar, and the Chutiya country was finally brought under the great Mao-Shan Empire. Later when Chao Sukapha forced his way across the Patkai hills, conquering the middle region, not conquered by Samlongpha, and entered the Eastern Assam Valley, he took over charge of all the conquered territories including the Chutiya territories on this side from Samlongpha and received the tributes arranged by Samlongpha from them.

19. Mr. H. . Kellner in a manuscript note in the Nowgong office, says that it must have occured before 1503 A.D. The general who conquered the Chutiyas was Phrachenmung Bargohain, who was killed in a great battle between the Ahoms and Kacharis at Kaliabor in 1503.

Hostilities broke out between the two powers towards the middle of fourteenth century. In 1376 A.D. the Chutiyas declared that they were ready to make peace, invited the sixth Ahom king Sutupha to a regatta on the Safrai river, and put him to death as soon as they had got him into their power. The two tribes continued to live in a state of intermittent conflict but at the beginning of the sixteenth century during Suhungmung's reign, the struggle began to assume an acute form. The Chutiyas at first met with a considerable measure of success under Dhirnarayan. They pitched their camp at Dikhoumukh, raided the territory of the Ahoms, and were, at any rate, not worsted in the engagement that ensued. One chronicler makes a poor apprisal of the Chutiyas as their intellect was momentarily surpassed by some trifles. They mistook scare crows sent down the river on rafts for the enemy, and when preparing a night attack by water, they were so drunk that they forgot to unmoor their boats. On waking the next morning they were so puzzled to find themselves still in the same place that they at once retreated without attempting to engage the enemy.

In 1523, the Chutiya king began to negotiate for peace, but declined to accept the Ahom terms, which involved the surrender of ancestral heirlooms in the shape of the royal gold umbrella and bracelets and also the golden cat. The attack was accordingly resumed, and the Chutiya king retreated with his army to the Hills Chantan or Chandangiri. The Ahoms in their pursuit experienced the difficulties, which at a later date confronted the British troops in their transfrontier expeditions. The soldiers at first retreated but they were rallied by their officers, and, in the engagements that ensued, the Chutiya king and his son were killed. Their heads were conveyed to the Ahom prince Suhungmung, more generally known as the Dihingia Raja, and placed by him, according to one account, at the foot of the stairs leading to the house of god at Charaideo. Another version says that the heads were tied by a string in the form of a garland and left dangling on the hill. A more authoritative version says that they were buried at Charaideo raising mounds over them. This is more convincing ; because the Ahom customs was to show respect to the dead when they were royal personages or heroes or nobles even if they be enemies. Even the Muslim General Turbak Khan's body was given a decent burial in the royal cemetery at Charaideo raising a mound over it. The administration of Sadiya was then entrusted to an Ahom noble and the leading Chutiya families were deported to places lower down the valley. But the tribe again rebelled ; it was only with difficulty that this fresh revolt was stamped out, and as late as 1572 A.D. an expedition was sent against the subordinate Chutiya Chief.

We find the following chronological table of the Chutiya kings in the *Deodhai Asam Buranji.*

Name of the king	Year in which ascended the throne	Period of reign	Year of death
	Saka	Years	*Saka*
1. Birabar *alias* Birpal	1111	35	1146
2. Gaurinarayan *alias* Ratnadhvajpal	1146	80	1226
3. Sivanarayan *alias* Bijyadhvajpal	1226	61	1287
4. Jagatnarayan *alias* Bikramdhvajpal	1287	34	1321
5. Pramattanaryan *alias* Gauradhvajpal	1321	45	1366
6. Harinarayan *alias* Sankhadhvajpal	1366	44	1410
7. Goloknarayan *alias* Mayurdhvajpal	1410	41	1451
8. Prajanarayan *alias* Jayadhvajpal	1451	48	1499
9. Satyanayayan *alias* Karmadhvajpal	1499	54	1553
10. Dhirnarayan *alias* Dharmadhvajpal	1553	43	1596
11. Nityapal and Sadhak Narayan	1596	2	1598

We have already mentioned that the Ahoms conquered the Chutiya kingdom in 1523 A.D., but according to the above chronicle this happened in 1676 A.D. Other historical accounts give the first date. The chronological table of the Chutiya kings mentioned above, thus appears to be highly doubtful.

The early religion of Chutiyas consisted of worshipping *Kali* in various forms with the aid of their priests called *Deoris*. The favourite form of worshipping this deity was that of *Kesai Khati*, 'the eater of raw flesh' to whom human sacrifices were made. Even during the Ahom rule this practice was permitted to continue but they usually invoked this custom for the purpose of executing criminals sentenced to death. Failing them, victims were taken from a particular clan which in turn was accorded certain privileges. The person selected was fed sumptuously until he was in sufficiently plump condition to suit the supposed taste of the Goddess and he was then decapitated at the copper temple at Sadiya or at some other shrine of the tribe. This practice of human sacrifices came to be regarded as favourable by the Tantrik sect of Hinduism which is believed to have its origin in this corner of India.[20]

20. E. A. Gait—*History of Assam*, 1926 p. 42.

(e) **The Ahoms** :—From 1523 A.D., till the final expulsion of the Burmese by the British in 1825, Lakhimpur formed part of the territory of the Ahoms, the brave and warlike tribe of Shans who call themselves Tai. These Ahoms or Tai-Ahoms appeared in Eastern Assam by crossing the Patkai Hills from upper Burma under their leader Chao Sukapha and starting from the smallest of beginnings, gradually subjugated the whole of the valley of the Brahmaputra as far as the Manah.

At the beginning of the thirteenth century, there was a problem with regard to the succession to the Kingdom of Mong-Mao or Pong in the upper portion of the Irrawady valley. Pa-Meo-pong was the king of Mong-Mao, but, as he had no son, his sister's son Prince Sukapha was nominated as the successor. But later Pa-Meo-Pong's wife gave birth to twin brothers, Sukhangpha and Samlongpha. Sukapha then abandoned the hope of the Mong-Mao throne and left for his father's kingdom Mong-Mit Kupklingdao (Mong-Mit and kenglao). There he succeeded to his father's throne and ruled over the kingdom for eighteen years, when Sukhangpha, who became a mighty king at Mong-Mao, made him acknowledge his suzerainty and also asked him to join him in a war against the king of Jun-Lung (Yon-lon) who was related to them. Sukapha pleaded against such a course, but Sukhangpha was adamant. Sukapha being apprehensive of strong action by the latter, proceeded with his advisers and a large force to Mogaung where his brother was ruling. Sukapha's force had "cavalry and infantry armed with cannon, guns and gun powder." The Mogaung Chief advised him to conquer with his superior arms the upper Chindwin region (Nara country) and be its independent ruler. Sukapha then led his expedition towards the west but instead of stopping on the other side, he crossed the high hills, later called the Patkai, and entered the Brahmaputra valley in upper Assam. Here he conquered a foot-hold which soon expanded into a small kingdom of which the capital was built on the Charaideo hills.

When Sukapha, the first Ahom king, arrived in 1228 A.D. he found the Chutiya's ruling in the north with an outpost at Safari, and the Kacharis in the south with an outpost at Kenduguri, the river Dilli forming the boundary between the two. In the narrow strip of territory near the hills there were a few families of Barahis and Morans evidently of Bodo origin, whom the Ahom Chief absorbed into his clan in the rough and ready manner of that day.

Sukapha won over to his side the local Matak Chief Badaucha and the Barahi Chief Thakumtha and even encouraged inter-marriage with these peoples. The Barahis were found to be good cooks, some of whom were appointed to prepare meals for the king. The Matak Chief helped Sukapha in conquering the neighbouring hostile tribes. One Mimun Matak was his constant companion.

Steady growth of Ahom power : The struggles between the Ahoms and the Chutiyas[21] have already been described ; but, apart from this gradual movement of expansion towards the east and west, the early history of the Ahom dynasty contains few incidents likely to attract the attention of the historian. A list of the successive Ahom kings will be found in the chronological table appended to this summary, but many of them are names and nothing more, and of their reigns, little or nothing of interest is known. On the whole it seems to have been a cruel and treacherous time ; and in this respect, the Ahoms were no better than their neighbours. It is true that the Ahom king was murdered by his hosts at a regatta to which he had been invited by the Chutiyas ; but a similar ruse was employed by the Ahoms against the Tipamia. When they suspected this people of an inclination to rebel they asked them to feast, and then put them all to death. Though they sinned against the laws of hospitality, they were evidently unconscious of the heinous character of the offence, and the skulls of their victims were hung up on the Tipam-stone to commemorate this grisly banquet. Arbitrary and tyrannical conduct by the Raja was checked or, rather, ended by the principal ministers of state, and more than one king who failed to give satisfaction to his duly constituted advisers, met with a sudden end from the knife or spear of the hired bravo.

Suhungmung Dihingia Raja : (1497-1539) The first Ahom king to step forth from the position of petty local prince into that of a ruler who had dealings with the outside world was Suhungmung or the Dihingia Raja, who came to the throne at the end of the fifteenth century. The reign of Suhungmung Dihingia Raja, 1497-1539 witnessed a marked expansion of the Ahom territories and also of their spheres of influence. The Chutiyas living round Sadiya, the Bara-Bhuyans of the north bank of the Brahmaputra, and the Kacharis of the Dhansiri valley were brought under submission and the territories of the first two were annexed to the Ahom dominions, while the land of the Kacharis was placed under Ahom vassalage. Suhungmung was no less successful in his dealings with the Musalmans and Koches.

The Muslims sent two expeditions up the Brahmaputra valley ; but neither met with much success, and the leader of the second a Pathan, named Turbak, said to be a scion of the family of Gaureswar, was killed, with most of his followers on the banks of the Bharali in 1532 A. D. after three years of protracted war. This was the first important Muslim invasion of the Ahom kingdom, planned probably by the then ruler of Bengal, Nasir-Uddin Nasrat Shah (1519-33), the eldest son of Alauddin Hussain Shah. The survivors of the Muslim army were made prisoners, and are said to have been the ancestors of the Morias, who

21. For details of struggles between Kacharis and Ahom, see the *Assam District Gazetteers, Sibsagar District* ; (1967) pp. 34-36.

earn their living as braziers in Assam at the present day. It was in this war that the Ahoms are said to have first employed fire-arms. The Bharali seems at this time to have been the western boundary of the Ahom kingdom, north of the Brahmaputra. Prince Suklenmung and general Tonkham, a reputed Ahom noble, at the head of an expeditionary force, aided by general Kan-ceng and general Khampeng drove the scattered forces of Turbak across Kamrup and Kamata without much resistance from the enemy and reached the bank of the Karatoya in Bengal. In this drive, the Ahoms received the co-operation of the Kamatas. Being frightened, the Sultan of Gaur negotiated for peace by offering two of his daughters to the Ahom king and a large tract of territory consisting of five parganas as dowry. The peace was concluded and the Ahom generals constructed a small brick temple and excavated a tank on this side on the bank of the Karatoya as a memorial of their victory. One chronicle says that a six men embassy headed by general Tonkham also visited Orissa and met king Vikramasena of that country. While returning, the Ahom general received the homage of the Koch Chief Biswa Sinha, the founder of Coochbehar, to whom all the territory west of Sonkosh received as dowry, was given to be administered on an annual tribute basis. Thus under Suhungmung the Ahom kingdom reached its greatest expansion and Kamrup and Kamata were liberated from Muslim domination. It is recorded that in 1529 A. D. the king took up his quarters at Viswanath, and ordered his generals to plunder the territory lying west of the Bharali. Suhungmung, like so many of the Ahom kings, met his end at the hands of an assassin and was succeeded by Suklenmung (1539-1552), who is said to have founded a capital at Gargaon near modern Nazira.

Sukhampha (1552-1603) : His successor Sukhampha, better known as Khora Raja, enjoyed the throne for forty one years, but he was unable to withstand the victorious armies of the Koch king Naranarayan (1540-84) of Coochbehar who occupied Gargaon and extorted tribute from the Ahom Raja. Other neighbouring rulers and chieftains also sued for peace before the victorious onslaughts of king Narnarayan and warrior brother Sukladhvaj or Chilarai.

It may be noted that the Koches made two successive attacks on the Ahom kingdom in 1562 and 1563 A. D. During the first advance of the Koch army under Chilarai by the Gohain Kamala road on the north bank, the Habung Brahmins and also some *Sudras*, knowing the sentiments of the Koch princes, rode on cows prominently exhibiting the sacred threads and sacred lines on their foreheads to save their lives. Some accounts say that the Ahom king, knowing the scruples of the Hinduised Koches sent forward an armed band of *Sudras*, dressed as Brahmins, mounted on cows to oppose the Koch general. The stratagem had the dramatic effect of forcing the Koch general to retreat avoiding the shedding of Brahmin blood. But on subsequent realization that he

had been out-witted by the Ahoms he made the second advance against the Ahom capital which was successful after the invincible Tipam Raja, called also Deo Raja, who commanded the Ahom army at the mouth of the Sessa river, had withdrawn from the battle field and entered voluntarily a grave at Charing on his amulet being snatched away by a kite at the time of bathing and dropped amidst Chilarai's army. The well known 'Deo Raja maidam' is a standing monument to day in Charing, Sibsagar. The triumph of the Koches was however, short lived and about 1614 A. D. Bali Narayan, the grandson of Chilarai, Narnarayan's brother, was compelled to apply to the next Ahom king, Suchengpha or Pratap Sinha (1603-1641 A. D.) for help against the Muhammadans. The war dragged on in Lower Assam with varying success, but in 1637 the Nawab of Dacca sent up an overwhelming force, which carried all before it. The Ahoms were driven out of Kamrup, and a treaty was made in A. D. 1639 under which the Barnadi was accepted as the frontier between Muhammadan and Ahom territory.

Suchengpha or Pratap Sinha (1603-1641 A. D.) : Suchengpha's experiences from his wars with the Mughals made him undertake elaborate administrative reforms. He created the posts of the Barbarua and the Barphukan, the first being a functionary at the head of the secretariat and the judiciary immediately under the king and the second functionary in charge of the defence of Lower Assam and of diplomatic relations with foreign countries of the west. The latter was placed at Gauhati. The common free population was neatly divided for civil and military purposes into brigades of one thousand, one hundred and twenty men or *paiks*, with a gradation of officers called Hazarika, Saikia and Bora respectively to command them. As diplomatic relations rapidly developed with Dacca and other Indian states, the king selected from among the Hindus, particularly Brahmins, of his kingdom, competent persons knowing the languages, manners and customs of those countries to act as envoys and ambassadors. He introduced the system of registration of foreigners who entered his kingdom. His reign is notable for the development of backward areas, construction of innumerable roads, forts, ramparts and tanks and also for the reorganization of villages on a planned basis.

Sutamla or Jayadhwaj Sinha (1648-63) : In 1648, Sutamla (Jayadhwaj Sinha) ascended the throne. Taking advantage of the confusion that ensued when Shah Jahan was deposed by his rebellious sons, he drove the Musalmans out of Kamrup and Goalpara, and for a short time the Ahoms were in possession of the whole of the valley of the Brahmaputra down to the point at which the river turns south to enter the fertile plains of Bengal. Mir Jumla, who had been appointed the Nawab of Dacca by Emperor Aurangzeb, was not, however, the man to brook such aggressions on the territory of the Mughal Empire, and in 1662, he started with a large force consisting of 12,000 horse and 30,000 foot and

fleet of 323 war-boats mostly manned by Portuguese and Dutch sailors for the conquest of Assam.

Mir Jumla's invasion : No resistance was offered to the Muhammadans during the initial stages of their march, and they occupied the forts at Jogighopa, Saraighat, and Pandu near Gauhati, Gauhati itself, and Kajali on the western frontier of Nowgong without striking a blow. The Ahoms then attempted to destroy the huge flotilla of boats which accompanied the invading host but fortune still declined to smile upon them, and they met with no better success than when engaging the enemy by land. The naval battle was fought above Kaliabor in the night of 3rd March, 1662, and it looked as if the Ahom fleet would swallow up all the Mughal war vessels. But the latter being manned by Portuguese mercenaries, with up-to-date European weapons, withstood the assault. The Portuguese warded it off making a great din with their mortars and matchlocks. Meanwhile the Assamese fleet has the misfortune to be carried down past the enemy position by the strong current of the Brahmaputra. When they veered round to attack, it became advantageous for the enemy to fall upon them with great impetuosity and destroy them. The real strength of the Ahoms lay in the navy, but this time the naval superiority of Mughals coupled with an out break of cholera in the fort at Jogighopa, caused the Ahoms after brief resistance, to retreat nearer their main strongholds and naval centres. But the modernised Mughal navy manned by European soldiers, proved too strong for them. Half of their fleet, which is said to have consisted seven or eight hundred vessels, each armed with guns, was lost and the rest were put to flight. If the Musalman historians are to be believed, the river must at that time have been covered with native craft as the Registrar at Gauhati reported that no less than 32,000 boats had visited that town, more than one-half of which, it is said, belonged to the Assamese.

On March 17, 1662 Mir Jumla entered Gargaon, the capital of the Ahoms, and stationed himself at Mathurapur about seven miles south east of Gargaon, for a few months. The stars in their courses fought, however, on the Ahom side. The rains set in with a severity exceptional even in this rainy land, the country was converted into a swamp, and disease made havoc of the Muhammadans crowded together in their waterlogged camp. The health of the troops at Mathurapur became so bad that it was found necessary to move them to Gargaon. It proved to be impossible to retire even this short distance in good order, and the Muhammadans were compelled to abandon their sick and to leave many of their guns sticking in the mud. At the cessation of the rains the Musalmans began once more to take the offensive, but Mir Jumla's health had become so bad that he was unable to pursue the campaign with any degree of vigour, and a peace was patched at Ghilajharighat in January, 1663. According to the Muhammadan historians, the Ahom

Raja agreed to pay a heavy indemnity, and the country north of the Brahmaputra and west of the Bharali, with Beltola, Dimarua, and the Naga Hills on the south bank of the Brahmaputra, were ceded to the Mughal Emperor. It is, however, doubtful whether these terms were ever carried out. This, at any rate, is certain that only a few years later the Ahoms were once more in possession of Kamrup, and the outposts of the Muhammadans were located not on the Bharali but at Rangamati in the Goalpara district.

Assam as described by Shihabuddin Talish : Mir Jumla was accompanied by an elegant writer named Shihabuddin (poetically called Talish). Talish wrote a very accurate and detailed history of the expedition and description of the country. He gives the Ahoms praise for their bravery in battle, hardiness., enterprising spirit and skill in carving wood. Talish uses the word Assamese for the Ahoms. Assam, as he says, was a wild and dreadful country, abounded in danger and was peopled on the two sides of the Brahmaputra. Total length of Assam, west to east, from Gauhati to Sadiya was about 200 *Kos* of the standard measurement (*jaribi*) ; its breadth north to south, from the hills of the, Miris, Mishmis, Daflas and Landap (not indentified) to the mountain of the Naga tribe, is seven to eight days journey at a guess. Its southern mountains adjoin lengthwise the lofty ridges of Namrup. The land on the north bank is called Uttarkol and southern bank Dakhinkol..... Although most of the inhabitants of the neighbouring hills pay no tax (*baj*) to the Rajah of Assam, yet they accept his sovereignty and obey some of his commands. The Dafla tribe alone does not place its feet in the skirt of obedience, but occasionally encroaches on his kingdom.[22]

In 1663, Jayadhvaj Sinha was succeeded by Chakradhvaj (1663-1670) who was a man of indomitable courage and wonderful foresight. To avenge the defeat he made vast war preparation and organised the navy on a massive scale in the most upto date style. He attacked the Mughals and speedily recovered Kamrup in 1667 and placed at Gauhati, a young and enterprising officer, named Lachit as Barphukan (Viceroy). On hearing the news of Ahom offensive, Emperor Aurangzeb despatched his renowned general Raja Ram Sinha with large army to chastise the Ahoms. But the Ahoms under Lachit Barphukan inflicted a crushing defeat on Ram Sinha in the historic battle of Saraighat in 1671. This victory in the battle of Saraighat earned for Lachit immortal fame as did the victory in the battle of the Nile for Nelson just a hundred and twenty years later.

On the death of Chakradhvaj, a short period intervened in which the nobles with designs of their own proved too strong for the crown,

22. Prof. Jadunath Sarkar : *Assam and the Ahoms in* 1660 *A. D.*, published in the Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society; Vol. 1, Pt. 1, Sept, 1915, pp. 179—195.

and between 1670 and 1681 no less than seven princes were placed upon the throne, only to come to a bloody and untimely end. The Mughals took the advantage of disturbances and regained possession of Gauhati in 1679 but the Ahoms, again during the reign of Gadadhar Sinha (1681-1695) recovered Gauhati in 1682 and the frontiers of Assam were again pushed forward to the river Manah. Gadadhar Sinha also despatched expeditions against Mishmis and Nagas and by his rigorous policy, he reduced to order the hill tribes, who had whenever the Central Govt. was weak, been a source of great annoyance to the dwellers of the valley.

Rudra Sinha : (1696-1714) : The zenith of the Ahom power was reached in the reign of Rudra Sinha. He founded a new capital at Rangpur. He despatched two large armies against the Rajas of Cachar and Jaintiapur, one of which marched through the North Cachar and the other through the Jaintia Hills, and brought both the princes captive to Assam making them acknowledge the sovereignty of the Ahoms. The Miris and Daflas were enlisted as soldiers in the royal army, and at this time, Ahoms seem to have dominated not only the whole of the valley of the Brahmaputra but the outer hills as well. Rudra Sinha died at Gauhati in 1714 when he was engaged in large scale plans for an expedition against the Mughals in Bengal. The Rudreswar temple was erected here by his son Pramatta Sinha in memory of that sad event. Rudra Sinha has been called the Sivaji of Eastern India. 'The personality of Rudra Sinha has an all India significance. Certainly not Assam only but the whole of India can feel proud of Rudra Sinha, Sukhrungpha, the Ahom king.[23] It is because he had formed the noble conception of organising a confederacy of Hindu rulers to fight the Mughals and was on the point of carrying out his plans when he died.

Siva-Sinha (1714-1744) : His son Siva Sinha was a weak prince who was very much influenced by his wives. His wife Phuleswari whom he installed as *Bar-Raja* to avoid the evil effects of a prediction on his royalty excavated the Gaurisagar tank and built temples on its bank. She was a staunch devotee of *Saktism* and insulted the Moamaria Mahanta by compelling him to bow down to the Goddess Durga. She prescribed cremation for the Ahom custom of burying the dead. The name of his second wife Ambika is remembered by posterity as the excavator of the great tank near which the present town of Sibsagar (Siva's tank) stands. The Daflas seem to have given trouble and in 1717 the Dafla Garh was constructed to keep these invading tribes in check. Siva Sinha was initiated into *Sakta* Hinduism. The adoption of *Sakta* Hinduism by the Ahom monarch, followed by the conversion of the principal nobles,

23. Dr. S. K. Chatterjee—*The place of Assam in the history and civilisation of India* ; p. 55.

introduced a new factor in the social and political life of the people.[24] It may be mentioned here that it is during the reign of Siva Sinha that four Europeans are said to have visited Rangpur.

Pramatta Sinha (1744-1751) and Rajeswar Sinha (1751-1769) : The reign of the next prince, Pramatta Sinha was short and uneventful. He built the *Rangghar* in Sibsagar with bricks. During the incumbency of his successor, Rajeswar Sinha, the signs of decay of Ahom power became all too clear. The Raja of Manipur was driven from his home and applied to the Ahom king for aid. Orders were issued for the despatch of an expedition, but the nobles, to whom the command was entrusted, excused themselves on various grounds ; the army advanced opening up a shorter route by cutting immense tangles of forest creepers, lost its way when endeavouring to cross the Patkai. A large number of men perished and the expedition popularly known as the '*Lata kata ran*' failed. A second expedition was despatched in 1762 and though ultimately the Manipur Raja succeeded in regaining his dominions, it is doubtful if the assistance of the Ahoms materially contributed towards his success. yet the very news of the approach of a vast army from Assam frightened the Burmese who then left the occupied country.

The alliance between the Ahoms and the Manipuris was, however, cemented by the bestowal of the Manipuri princess named Kuranganayani whom Rajeswar Sinha elevated to the rank of principal queen. It also led to religious and cultural contacts between the two cuntries.[25]

In 1759, the peaceful tribe of Mikirs is said to have raided on the plains but little difficulty was experienced in putting down this rising. The Rajas of Cachar and Jaintiapur also made demonstration on the southern frontier, but, on troops being despatched to Raha, they came to the conclusion that discretion was the better part of valour. Another expedition was despatched against the Daflas, and the Raja of Khyriem, formally tendered his submission and promised to pay yearly tribute of iron.

Lakshmi Sinha (1769-1780) ;

Moamaria insurrection :- The reign of his successor, Lakshmi Sinha, was signalised by the outbreak of the Moamaria insurrection. The Moamarias were disciples of the Maya-Mara *satra* founded by Aniruddhadeva and mainly comprised of the sturdy Mataks and Morans inhabiting the south bank areas of the present Lakhimpur district. They were *Vaisnavites* of the orthodox School. The causes of their insurrection are not quite clear. According to the chronicles a certain Hatidharia Chungi with one Nahor Kachari came to offer their annual tribute of elephants

24. S. K. Bhuyan, *Anglo-Assamese Relations* ; p. 202.

25. *Revised Gazetter of Manipur* ; p. 51. S. K. Bhuyan ; *Studies in Literature of Assam* ; p. 100.

to the king. The elephant which they tendered to the Barbarua (Kirtichandra) was a lean and haggard animal, and as an expression of his disapproval, the Barbarua cut off their hair and noses, flogged them, and drove them away. Boiling with indignation at this outrage, Nahor proceeded to the house of a Hadi woman, whose daughter he espoused, and from whom he received a set of metal plates, bearing mystical incantations, believed to be efficacious to confound the enemy. He then applied to the Moamaria *gosain* for help, which was readily afforded and the standard of revolt was raised. This is the account given by the Ahom Chroniclers, and it differs to some extent from the story, as told by the Moamaria *gosain* at the present day. According to this authority, the leaders of the rebellion were two Moamarias named Nahor Khora and Ragha Moran, who after they had been punished for failing to deliver the elephants required went for assistance to their *gosain*. The *gosain* declined to listen to their proposals, but they succeeded in winning over his son, Gajin Bardeka, who gave them a weapon consecrated with the magic plates of the *Kalpataru*. The *Kalpataru* was a sacred book which Aniruddha is said to have obtained from Sankaradeva, though the Ahom chroniclers contemptuously assert that it was the property of a sweeper woman. It may be noted that the Ahom—Moamaria conflict was of socio-religious character in its origin, taking in course of time a political colour. The introduction of *sakta* Hinduism into the Ahom court during the reign of Siva Sinha, the insult inflicted on the Moamaria Mahanta by his queen Phulesvari and the disdain with which the Moamarias were generally treated by the Ahoms led to strained relations between the two communities. Ultimately it proved to be the most important factor in bringing about the downfall of the Ahoms.

Success and subsequent defeat of Moamarias :-

From the very first the rebels carried all before them. The royal armies were defeated under circumstances which suggest that men and officers alike were guilty of gross incompetence and cowardice ; and Lakshmi Sinha was driven from his capital and captured. The insurgents then proceeded to appoint Ramakanta or Ramananda, the son of Nahor Khora, to be their Raja, contrary to their promise to enthrone Batgharia Barjana Mohanmala Gohain, the exiled prince and brother of Rajeswar Sinha. It was the presence of this prince whom most people loved, at the head of the Moamaria forces that enabled the latter without facing much opposition to capture the Ahom capital. Once it was accomplished, the insurgents treacherously put the prince in confinement and also murdered the two sons of Rajeswar who were persuaded to co-operate with them. Mohanmala was later poisoned to death. Marauding parties of Moamarias harried the country on every side, and the misery of the common people was extreme. Raja Ramananda sacked the leading Brahmanical *satras* of Majuli and collected an enormous sum of money. He arrested and put into prison the Mahantas of the above

satras. As a punishment he chopped off the nose and gouged out the eyes of Vagish Bapu of Auniati. Ragha, who became the Barbarua, forcibly took as wives many of the daughters of the Ahom nobles and these nobles including the three great Gohains and Barbarua and Barphukan, were put to death at Kautaputa, the abode of the Moamaria Mahanta. A report already gained ground that orders had been issued for the execution of all the former officers of State, and this incited the adherents of the rightful king Lakshmi Sinha to make one final effort.

The signal for the counter-attack is said to have been given by one of the wives of Lakshmi Sinha, the Manipuri princess Kuranganayani. Ragha, who had forcibly taken her as wife was one of the most influential men amongst the Moamarias, and as he was bending down at the *Bohag Bihu* to offer his largess to a dancing boy, she cut him down with a sword. According to another version, the Manipuri princess was secretly requested by the royalist emissaries to make an attempt on the life of Ragha Bar-barua as soon as the alarm should be given and the fortress appear on fire. As pre-planned, in the middle of the night, the assailants entered and the spacious hall was in that moment in flames. The Morans (Moamarias) issued from the edifice from every side but were perished by the swords of the Ahoms. Ragha Bar-barua on the first alarm rushed from his apartment, but was intercepted by the weapon of the Magalu Princess (Manipuri Princess) and he lay wounded at her feet. The Rajas (Ramananda or the Pitri Raja and Nahar Khora or Deo Raja) escaped to Kalugaon, where they soon experienced a similar fate with their wives and families. This verson tallies with the one in the *Tungkhungia Buranji* that 'Raja Ramanada escaped with his chief queen through a tunnel'. On the death of their leader the rebel forces were surprised and scattered, and a pitiless vengeance was taken that spared neither age nor sex. The house of the Moamaria Mahanta was surrounded and the Mahanta was killed with almost the whole of his family, while all the officers appointed by the Moamarias, were seized and put to death. The wives of the rebel prince are also said to have been treated with savage cruelty.

Gaurinath Sinha (1780-1795) :

In 1780, Lakshmi Sinha who had been restored to the throne died, and was succeeded by his son Gaurinath in whose reign the Moamaria insurrection broke out anew and with increased violence.

At first, the king's troops met with some measure of success and orders were issued out-lawing the rebels and authorising any person to kill any Moamaria he might meet, regardless of time, place, sex or age. Such orders seem to have been only too well adopted to the temper of the people and, according to the Ahom Chroniclers, "The villagers thereupon massacred the Moamarias with their wives and children without mercy". The rebels in their turn were not slow to make reprisals ; they plundered the country on every side, and 'the burning villages appeared like a wall of fire'. The ordinary operations of agriculture were suspended, no harvests could be raised, and famine killed those whom the sword had spared.

In 1786, the rebels under Bharat Sinha inflicted a decisive defeat upon the royal troops, and took Rangpur, the capital, by storm. The king fled to Gauhati, and in panic even left his wives behind him. His generals under the leadership of Buragohain Purnananda remained behind in Upper Assam and carried on the contest with varying success. Troops were also despatched to their assistance from Manipur, but most of them were ambushed and cut up, and the survivors had no heart to carry on the struggle. The desolation of the country is thus described by the Ahom Chroniclers :-"The Mataks harried the temples and the idols of the gods, and put to death all the sons and daughters of our people. For a great length of time our countrymen had no home, some took shelter in Bengal, some in Burma, some in Dafla Hills, and others in the fort of the Bura Gohain, who was fighting with the Mataks for years and months together". Bharat Sinha ruled at Rangpur for more than six years and coins are extant which bear his name. Meanwhile, Gaurinath Sinha had been making appeals for help against the Moamarias to the British Governor General Lord Cornwallis at Calcutta and in 1792, a small British force was sent to the assistance of the Ahom king under the command of Captain Welsh. Gauhati was retaken from the usurper Bairagi. Krishna Narayan, the rebellious Raja of Mangaldoi, was subdued, and in March, 1794, Rangpur was re-occupied after a decisive victory over the insurgents. Captain Welsh was then recalled by Sir John Shore who succeeded Cornwallis but the Ahom King was able to keep his enemies in check with the help of sepoys trained on the English system.

Kamaleswar Sinha (1795-1811) :

A few months after the departure of Captain Welsh, Gaurinath Sinha died, and was succeeded by Kamaleswar Sinha. The country was still in a state of great disorder. The Daflas, not content with harrying the villages on the north bank, crossed the Brahmaputra and attacked the royal troops near Silghat, but were repulsed with considerable loss. Even Europeans were not safe and Mr. Raush,[26] a merchant of Goalpara, who had extended his business operations to Darrang was robbed and murdered. These free booters then occupied North Gauhati ; but when they attempted to make good their position on the

26. This Mr. Raush was the first European to interfere in the affairs of Assam. He sent 700 *burkandazes* to Gaurinath's assistance, but they were cut up to a man. A mass of masonary of size of a small cottage, covers the remains of Mr. Raush's infant children at Goalpara.

South bank, they were defeated with heavy loss by the royal troops near Pandughat. The Daflas again harried the Darrang district and even listed Bengali sepoys in their service, but were ultimately conquered and dispersed. Victories were also obtained over the Moamarias and the Khamtis at the eastern end of the valley.

Final collapse of the Ahom Kingdom : Kamaleswar Sinha died in January, 1811 and was succeeded by his brother Chandra Kanta Sinha. Badan Chandra Barphukan, the viceroy of Gauhati, incurred the suspicion of the Bura Gohain or Prime Minister Purnananda and fled to Calcutta and thence to Burma. In response to his entreaties and representations at the Burmese court against the Bura Gohain, a Burmese army crossed the Patkai early in 1817 and reinstated the Barphukan, but shortly after their withdrawal the Barphukan was assassinated, Chandra Kanta was deposed and Purandar Sinha, son of Brajanath and a descendent of Rajeswar Sinha was put on the throne in his stead. The friends of the murdered Barphukan appealed to the Burmese, who, in 1819, returned with a large force and reinstated Chandra Kanta Sinha on the throne. The failure of the Ahom to withstand and repel the Burmese attacks made it clear that they had lost their vigour as a military race, and the nobles frittered away their energies in unseemly quarrels amongst themselves.

The Burmese soon, however, made it clear that they intended to retain their hold upon Assam and in 1821, Chandra Kanta, being disillusioned about their intentions, fled to Goalpara and from British territory began a series of abortive attempts to recover his lost kingdom. The Burmese put on the throne their own puppet and began a reign of terror. They were guilty of gross atrocities during their occupation of the country, the villages were plundered and burnt, and the people were compelled to seek shelter in the jungle. Women who fell into their hands were dishonoured with every circumstance of brutality, and the misery of the unfortunate Assamese was extreme. Fortunately for them, causes of quarrel had by this time arisen between the British and the Burmese. In 1824, war was declared by the British Government, and depending on the goodwill of the harassed Assamese, a force was sent up the valley of the Brahmaputra which occupied Rangpur in January, 1825, and compelled the Burmese to retire to their own territories. In the following year, by the treaty of Yandaboo, of February, 24, 1826, the king of Ava renounced all claims on Assam and her dependencies. The British were already in occupation of Assam. As the Ahom princes and nobles had lost their internal unity and their hold on the people who were utterly distracted at the time, it led to the eventual annexation of Assam to the dominions of the East India Company.

(f) The Ahom Administration :-

The above is but a brief account of the rise and fall of the Ahoms. It now remains to consider what is known of their social institutions, and the conditions under which those subject to them passed their lives.

The King : The king was the head of the administration and his word was the law. He was assisted by three great councillors whose functions were merely advisory so far as the administration of the state and its relations with foreign powers were concerned. However, in matters allotted to them their powers were only next to that of the king. In all important matters such as embarking on war, the king was bound to consult these councillors. The extent to which this rule was observed varied with personal influence and character of the king on one side and of the great nobles, on the other. With considerable regularity, the son inherited his father's throne, subject to having all the requisite qualities, such as absence of blemishes and scars, undisputed legitimacy and direct descendency from Sukapha on the male line. Sometimes the throne passed into the hands of the brothers as in case of four sons of Rudra Sinha each of whom became kings in turn. Under very exceptional circumstances cousins and even more distant connections could reasonably aspire for the throne, with the support of the powerful nobles who, in theory, had the right to make the selection.

The divinity of the king was very carefully reared in every possible manner. They were known by the appellation *Svargadeo* i.e. god of heaven. The fundamental duty of the king was considered to be the protection of the people ; to give them security of life, property and belief. Custom and tradition enjoined on the king the duty to rule in a just and righteous manner.

The Councillors: Next to the king was the council of five which included the Bar Gohain, Barpatra Gohain, Burha Gohain, Bar Barua and Bar Phukan. The offices of the Gohains were confined to certain families and they enjoyed powers commensurate with that position and were allowed the important insignia in the royal court. According to David Scott the Gohains were allotted for their own use 10,000 *paiks*, who were amenable only to their masters. The offices of the Bar Barua and Bar Phukan were not confined to certain families. Bar Barua received the revenues and administered justice in those portions of eastern provinces from Sadiya to Kaliabar which lay outside the jurisdiction of the Gohains. He was usually the Commander of forces. It was his duty to enforce the orders of the king and Gohains. The Bar Phukan was the Governor of the teritories from Kaliabar to Goalpara. The Bar Phukan wielded enormous powers in governing this tract.

Other officials : There were many more local governors such as Sadiya Khowa Gohain, Morangi Khowa Gohain, Salal Gohain and Kajali Mukhiya Gohain, each having the responsibility to govern certain parts of the Ahom kingdom. There were rumerous officials entrusted with various

functions of administration. Amongst these officers the highest in rank were the Phukans, next in rank were Baruas. The elaborate hierarchy of officials was so organised that every little bit of work connected with administration received attention of some of the officials. Thus the Tamuli Phukan had to look after the royal garden, the Khargharia Phukan was the superintendent of gun powder, the Deoliya Phukan looked after the Hindu temples, Choladhara Phukan was the keeper of the royal wardrobe, the Khanikar Barua was the chief of the artisans and craftsmen and the Sonadhar Barua was the mint master and chief jeweller etc.

Besides these officers, there were twelve Rajkhowas, and a number of Kakatis, Katakis and Dalois. A Rajkhowa was commander of three thousand mer and was subordinate to the Bar Barua.

The Paik System : The most striking feature in the economy of the Ahom state, and one which must have outlived its importance on the introduction of British rule, was the *Paik* system or the system of enforced compulsory labour. The lower orders were divided into groups of three or four called *gots*, each individual being styled a *Powa Paik*. Over every twenty *Paiks* was placed an officer called Bora, over every five Boras, a Saikia and over every ten Saikias, a Hazarika. In theory, one *Paik* from each *got* was always employed on duty with the State and while so engaged, was supported by the other members. As a reward of their services, "each *Paik* was allowed two *puras* (nearly three acres) of the best rice land free of rent. If personal service was not required, he paid two rupees instead. He was given land for his house and garden for which he paid a poll or house tax of one rupee". It was this system which enabled the Ahom Rajas to have at their disposal a vast army of labourers to whom they paid no wages. With this force, they were able to construct enormous tanks and great embankmerts which remained to excite the envy of subsequent generations which have been compelled to import from other parts of India almost all the labour required for the development of the State and its industries. Many of the works constructed were of undoubted utility while many others were chiefly intended for glorification. The duty of providing various articles required for the use of the king and the noblility was entrusted to different groups or *khels* which were gradually beginning to assume the form of functional castes. With the advent of the British rulers, these functional groups rapidly abandoned their special occupations under the pressure of foreign competition with the result that a great mass of artisans were thrown out of employment from their traditional crafts, leading to an unprecedented increase of dependence on land.

The Military system of the Ahoms : The Ahoms ruled over Assam for about 600 years. Lord William Bantink referred to the long continuance of the Ahom rule in Assam as almost without parallel in history

and their military achievements as impressive. It were they 'one of the few races in India who could stem the tide of the Moguls' conquest.' [27] Mirjumla could remain in possession of Ahom capital only for a brief period of ten morths during 1862-63 and Kamrup since its first annexation to the Ahom kingdom in 1615, was possessed by the Mughals at varying intervals between 1639-1682 ; the possession extending for a total period of twenty six years only. Another aspect of this achievement is emphasised by Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee. "Assamese kings stopped the Muslim flood from penetrating into Burma and beyond in a wave of aggressive warfare and conquest. Colonisation, proselytisation and then conquest of Arab merchants and thier religious teachers in Indonesia led to the final Islamisation of Indonesia. The Arabs and later on Indian Muslim merchants from Western India found a direct line of access by sea to Malaya and Indonesia, but a land route for aggressive advance was denied to the Indian Muslims by the Ahoms of Assam. Otherwise, the history of Burma and Siam and Indo-China might have been different." [28]

The military organisation was not, however free from defects which became pronounced under the weak generalship when the Ahom power began to decline. Even in time of Rudra Sinha, one of the powerful Ahom kings, faults have been found with the military dispositions, suggesting want of due deliberation in design and a feebleness and lack of method in execution. In his expeditions against the Kacharis and Jaintias, the Ahoms lost 3,243 persons and the practical results obtained seem to have been insignificant. The Kachari prince sent tribute, but only "a string of pearls, a *dugdugi* (locket) and a horse", assuredly a very small return on the quantity of human life and treasure expended, though at the same time it must be admitted that the loot obtained on this occasion was not inconsiderable. At the conclusion of this dangerous and troublesome expedition, each *paik* received a gratuity of four annas *batta*. The descriptions of Ahom campaings against Moamarias, clearly show that the generals were often guilty of incompetence and cowardice while the rank and file do not seem to have realized dangers that beset a defeated army. Conditions such as these must of necessity have been disastrous to the private soldier.

The Muhammadan historians of the invasion of Mirjumla give, however a more favourable account of the Ahom Military dispositions, [29] Their resources seem to have been considerable and in the course of the expedition Muhammadans captured 675 guns, 1000 ships besides a

27. Dr. S. K. Bhuyan,—*Anglo Assamese Relations* - p. 7.

28. Dr. S. K. Chatterjee—*The Place of Assam in the History and Civilisation of India* - p. 47.

29. An interesting account of this invasion will be found in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* Vol. XII. Part I. p. 49—100.

large number of match locks. Ahom forces were more than equal to the Mohammadans in a foot encounter but were much afraid of cavalry. This *corps-d-elite* did not, however, exceed some 20,000 men and the ordinary villagers who were pressed into the service were ready to fling away their arms and take to flight at the slighest provocation.

Character of Government : Uncertainty of tenure, under which the ministers and kings held office, was another factor which made the functioning of good government impossible. During the Ahom rule, the ministers were continually being deprived of their portfolios, and not infrequently of life itself. Hardly less precarious was the position of the king, and in short space of 33 years between 1648 and 1681, no less than two monarchs were deposed and seven came to a violent end. Buchanan Hamilton, writing at the beginning of the nineteenth century, states that the administration of justice, under the Ahom rule was fairly liberal. Important trials were conducted in open court, the opinion of the assessors was consulted, the evidence recorded, and the capital punishment inflicted only under a written warrant from the king. It is true, no doubt, that few persons possessed the power of imposing the death sentence but punishments could be too traumatic to any living being.

Abundant evidence is available in the Ahom chronicles to show the arbitrary way in which the royal authority was exercised[1]. The following instances are quoted from the reign of Pratap Sinha (1603-1641). One Kataki, or envoy charged with diplomatic relations with foreign powers, asked the Muhammadan commander on his frontier to supply him two jars. His conduct was reported to the king who immediately ordered him to be put to death. Another Kataki reported that he had heard from a down-country man that Muhammadan force was advancing up the valley. The king enquired of the Kataki responsible for watching the movements of the enemy whether this information was correct. This man declared that he was unable to obtain any confirmation of the rumour, whereupon the first Kataki was executed for presuming to meddle into matters with which he had no concern.

Another incident that occured in the reign of Lakshmi Sinha (1769-1780) is typical of the uncertainties of the times. One Ramnath Bharali Barua incurred displeasure of his superior officer, Barbarua, by appearing mounted on a horse The matter was reported to the king who directed that both Ramnath and his brother should be deprived of sight. The injured man, however, approached his friend Kalita Phukan who had his private reasons for desiring the downfall of the Barbarua. The Phukan went to the king, poisoned his mind against his minister with the suggestion that a conspiracy was afoot and in a short time, the heads of the haughty Barbarua, his two uncles, and of his brothers were rolling in the dust. It is needless to multiply instances of the savage

violence of the time which besmears the pages of medieval history even of Europe, but the different forms of punishment in vogue call for some remarks. Where life was spared, the ears, nose, and hair were cut off, the eyes put out or the knee pans torn from the legs, the last named penalty generally proving fatal. Persons sentenced to death were hung, impaled, hewn in pieces, crushed between two wooden cylinders like sugarcane in a mill, sawn asunder, burnt alive, fried in oil, or, if the element of indignity was desired, torn off their hands and feet and placed in holes, which were then utilised as latrines.

Social life among the Ahoms : The old chronicles are full of details of wars, religious festivals and rise and fall of successive families of kings and ministers and it is very seldom that they throw light on the social condition of the people. The kings seem to have indulged in frequent tours of their territories. They were fond of fishing, shooting and hunting of wild elephants. On the occasions of coronations and royal weddings, a week was generally devoted to the festivities which seems to have consisted for the most part of the prolonged feasts, accompanied by music. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, acrobats and jugglers were imported from Bengal who amused their royal patrons with clever tricks.

Religious life of the Ahoms : "The religious temper of the period" remarks Sir E. A. Gait, "was one of non interference and tolerance." The Ahoms as a rule patronised different religious sects ; built temples and made lard grants for smooth managemaent of the religious institutions of different religious sects, although instances of religious persecutions, as mentioned above, were not quite infinitesimal. It was a fine blend of the Hinduism with the old Ahom religious faith and practices that the monarchs followed when they adopted Hinduism and the Hindu way of life. Hindu gods and goddesses came to be indentified with those of their Ahom counterparts to such an extent that the Ahom subjects were made to have the implicit faith in all the pantheons of the two peoples. Despite the resistance put up by the Ahom priests, the *Deodhais* and *Bailungs*, to the adoption of Hinduism, it became the predominent religion pre-eminently since the reign of Siva Sinha.

Pratap Sinha's (1603-1641) reign saw the tremendous increase of the influence of the Brahmins. Temples of worship of *Siva* were erected under king's orders at Dergaon and Biswanath. It is interesting to note that *Saivism* had a distinct impact on many of the Ahom kings and the most of the prominent temples of *Siva* and his consort were built during the later part of the Ahom period.

Godadhar Sinha was the first king to usher in the *Saktism* to the Ahom royalty. *Vaisnavism* had attained remarkable dimensions at this

time. Under orders of the king the followers of *Vaisnavism* were tortured and many of them were even put to death. *Saktism* continued to receive the royal patronage for long and finally received a big jolt from the followers of the *Vaisnavism* at the time of Moamaria rebellion which has been described above. It is however a fact that the Ahom kings, with a few exceptions, showed due respect and courtsey to the apostles of *Vaisnavism* and some of them were initiated to this faith.

The nobles were usually converted to the religious sect to which their kings belonged. The overzealous converts very often displayed a very keen interest in their newly acquired faith, even at the peril of neglecting the affairs of the state. It was one of the several factors that hastened the downfall of the Ahom kingdom. With the shifting of allegiance from one sect to another the political ideology also underwent significant changes. Such changes, at times, impaired the harmonious growth of different religious sects and contributed to the subversion of the Ahom power.

The Position of women : The Ahoms held their women folk in honour and *purdah* was almost unknown in the country inhabited by the Assamese. The Ahom princesses have taken a prominent part on ceremonial occasions and not unfrequently exercised considerable influence on affairs of State. In the middle of the seventeenth century two queens almost usurped the reigns of the government. Siva Sinha (1715-1744) is said to have abdicated in favour of his queens hoping thereby to defeat a prophecy which declared that he would be deposed ; and coins have been found bearing the names of four of these queens. It was not, however, only the princesses of royal blood who concerned themselves with public matters. At the time of Moamaria insurrection, one Luki Rani was sent against the rebels and the victory over Turbak in 1531 is partly ascribed to the courageous action of Mula Gabharu, the widow of Bargohain, Phra-sen-Mong, who was killed in a previous engagement by the Muhammadans. Joymati Kunwari, wife of Gadapani (king Gadadhar Sinha) earned eternal fame by sacrificing her life at the hands of her tormentors for the safety of her husband who was sought to be disabled for kingship by her predecessor on the throne.

Gifts of the Ahoms to Assam and India : It is necessary to and a few words about the gifts of the Ahoms to Assam and to India. "The gift of the Ahoms to Assam," says Dr. S. K. Chatterjee, "was primarily in their military organisation and their administration. Nothing so practical and elaborate and efficient appears to have existed not only in Assam but also in the whole of Eastern India. The Ahoms were so powerful that the kingdom they carved out for themselves came to be associated with their name as a nation." It is presumed that the name 'Assam' was derived from the tribal name of the Ahoms.

"The Ahoms unified Assam. They fought the Muhammadan invaders and after varying fortunes in war they finally drove them out of their territory in 1681 when they fought with the Mughals during the heyday of their power." Thus' Assam became the last stronghold of Hindu independece in Eastern India in medieval times. The Ahoms had a keen sense of history and they made history writing a distinctive thing of Assam both in the Sino-Tibetan Ahom and the Aryan Assamese languages. The Ahom word for history is *'buranji'* and this word, with the art of history writing was taken over by the Aryan speaking Assamese. The result was the development in the Assamese language of a terse and vigorous and withal exceedingly picturesque prose style for writing history. This certainly has been one of the greatest gifts of the Ahoms to an Indo-Aryan language, Assamese which they ultimately adopted.

(g) The British period :

Condition of Assam at the time of British annexation : In estimating the effects of British rule that that lasted from 1826 to 1947, it is necessary to form a clear idea of the state of the terrirory of Assam at the time when it passed into Brirish possession. Some historians maintain that the British did not conquer Assam in the sense in which that word is usually employed. The system of Government had completely broken down, the valley was in the hands of cruel and barbarous foreigners, and it was not as conquerors but as protectors and avengers that the English at fiirst came. For some time after the expulsion of the Burmese the East India Company were doubtful whether they would retain latest acquisition, and an attempt was even made to administer the upper portion of the valley through a descendant of the Ahom kings.

The condition in which the British found the country was stated to be lamentable in the extreme. For full fiifty years it had been given over to desolation and anarchy. Life, property, honour were no longer safe and the people in their misery had even abandoned the cultivation of the soil, on which they depended for their very livelihood. Bands of pirates used to raid up the valleys of the Dhansiri and Kakadonga, and return with their boats laden with booty, leaving ruin, death and desolation in their wake. The hill tribes were no longer kept in order and the Daflas descended and harried the sub-montane tract, and even extended their depredations to the south of the Brahmaputra. The treatment meted out to the unfortunate villagers can be judged from the protest made by the hill men to Rajeswar Sinha, shortly before the collapse of the Ahom government, when they begged him "not to pull out the bones from the mouths of dogs". Buchanan Hamilton writing in 1809 A.D., states that north of the Brahmaputra "there is no form

of justice. Each power sends a force which takes as much as possible from the cultivator."

The memories of this miserable time survived long after it had passed away. In 1853, Ananda Ram Dhekial Phukan, wrote as follows to Mr. Moffatt Mills.[30] "Our countrymen hailed the day on which British supremacy was proclaimed in the province of Assam and entertained sanguine expectations of peace and happiness from the rule of Britain. For several years antecedent to the annexation, the province groaned under the oppression and lawless tyranny of the Burmese, whose barbarous and inhuman policy depopulated the country, and destroyed more than one half of the population, which had already been thinned by intestine commotions and repeated civil war. We cannot but acknowledge with feelings of gratitude that the expectations which the Assamese had formed of the happy and beneficial results of the Government of England, have in a great measure been fulfilled ; and the people of Assam have now acquired a degree of confidence in the safety of their lives and property which they never had the happiness of feeling for ages past.[31]

Mr. David, Scott, the Commissioner of North East Bengal, administered the country, Captain Adam White being appointed in December, 1825 to assist him in Lower Assam, and Captain Newfville in March 1828 to have charge under him of Upper Assam. The Moamarias, who had contributed so largely to the downfall of the Ahom powers, and whose country (known as Matak) was the present district of Dibrugarh, south of the Brahmaputra, were left under their own ruler, styled as Bar Senapati, who in May, 1826, executed an agreement of allegiance to the British Government. Sadiya and its neighbouring villages were left to the Khamti Chief of Sadiya, called the Sadiya-Khowa and on 15th of the same month, he was confirmed as the company's feudatory in possession of that tract.

Purandar Sinha's territory : Reference has already been made to the hesitation with which the East India Company undertook the administration of Assam. In 1833, the experiment was tried of placing the portion of the valley lying between the Dhansiri, and Dihing south of the Brahmaputra, and between Viswanath, and Sadiya on the North Bank, under Raja Purandar Sinha. The Raja was accorded the position of a protected prince, was entrusted with full civil powers, and was required to pay an annual tribute of Rs. 50,000 to the Government. It was thought that this arrangement would prove acceptable to the old nobility and the Assamese people, but experience showed that this was not the case. In 1838, Captain Jenkins,

30. Judge of Sadar Court at Calcutta who was sent to Assam by the Bengal Govt. to prepare a report on the administration of the Province which then formed a part of Bengal,

31, Mills, *Report on the Administration of the Province of Assam* XXXI

Agent to the Governor General on the North East Frontier, travelled the Raja's territories and recorded in the journal of his own that he was met on every side by complaints and charges against the Raja's administration. North of the Brahmaputra the country was left unprotected, and the people were harried by the Daflas, who carried off their women and children and held them to ransom. Small guards of sepoys were occasionally sent to protect the frontier, but, as the villagers were expected to provide them with all that they required their presence and absence alike were felt to be a grievance. The distasteful system of compulsory labour was still maintained ; duties of as much as one anna in rupee were levied on everything except rice sold in the markets, and the people who remained were required to pay the poll tax of others who had died or had migrated to the territory directly under British administration.

There are reasons to believe that Purandar Sinha's administration was generally unpopular, but it is difficult to resist the conclusion that it was never really given a fair chance. Major White estimated that the revenue of his territories amounted to about Rs. 80,000[32] of this no less than half a lakh was earmarked as tribute, and the Raja was left with a nominal Rs. 30,000/- per annum from which to defray the expenses of his court, to satisfy the demands of the priests, and to carry on the business of the administration. It is hardly a matter for surprise that little was spent on public works, that the army was small and inefficient and that it was impossible to remit taxation. The natural tendency of mankind to cavil at the Government seems to have been overlooked, and too much importance was attached to every murmur of complaint. The Muhammadan settlers in the country professed that they had serious grievances, yet Captain Jenkins was himself constrained to admit that those who came to see him were far better dressed than he expected and that, judging by externals many of them were well off. The resumption of this territory in 1838, was however an act which secured to agreat extent general approval of the majority of the persons affected and on that account alone it was justified by the British authorities. In July, 1839, a proclamation was issued by the Governor General-in-Council annexing the territory and dividing it into two districts, Sibsagar and Lakhimpur and directing that these two districts should be administered in the same manner as the districts of Lower Assam. Purandar Sinha was offered a pension of a thousand rupees but he declined to accept it. His further representations for restoration were turned down

32. Letter No. 80 dated 6th July, 1838, from Captain Jenkins, A letter from Purandar Sinha's son states that when his father accepted the Raj he had no idea what a large proportion of Rs.50,000 bore to the total revenues of the country. Colonel Cooper, he says, had made a settlement of Rs. 170,000/- but neither he nor any of the British officers who succeeded him could collect more than Rs, 70,000 or Rs. 80,000/-.

by the British authorities. It must be said that he and his descendents were not fairly treated by the Company's Government with the result that the germs of disaffection were nourished by this royal house till 1857 when Kandarpeswar Sinha, became the centre of a plot to overthrow the British power.

Reforms of Purandar Sinha : Mention may be made of certain reforms initiated by Purandar Sinha, during the short span of his rule. *Paik* system of administration which was the backbone of the economy of the Ahom State showed signs of deterioration and was almost unmanageable at the time of occupation of Assam by the Britishers. *Paiks* residing in the *Khels* were scattered over the whole of Assam and this necessitated the appointment of a large number of subordinate officers to effect collection. This led to many corrupt practices in collection and the *Paiks* were harassed by the greedy officials. The *Kheldars* who were responsible to look after the interests of their subjects in respective *Khels* also neglected their duties and became idle loungers in the royal courts.

Some attempts, to rectify the structural defects and mismanagement by making partial settlement of land were made by the administration of East India Company but as their occupation was interim one, no exhaustive reforms were carried out and thus the defects of the indigenous system continued without check.

Purandar Sinha, after restoration, undertook certain reformative measures in consultation with the political Agent, Mr. White and other leading officials of the State. The system of partial land settlement introduced by the Britishers was given up and the old *Paik* system based on personal service with some modifications was restored as it was found to be more congenial to the habits, customs and temperament of the people.

The territory was again divided into *Khels* with definite boundaries. A list of *Paiks* was prepared and an allowance of two *puras* of land was given to each *Paik*. Settlement with *Kheldars* was made for a period of four years and were asked to reside within their respective *khels*. They were also allowed a small commission out of collections in addition to the personal services of a number of *Paiks*. They were allowed to issue receipts against collections. To save them from the unjust exactions of the king it was also provided that *Kheldars* could not be dismissed without regular trial of '*Patra Mantri*.' To encourage agricultural production ryots were allowed to bring fallow lands under cultivation and hold the same for two years free of rent. Education was encouraged by establishing one school in each *Khel*. It was also provided

that after three years, no illiterate would be placed in charge of revenue. Members of other classes who were found literate were placed in charge of *Khels* in preference to many Ahom nobility who did not have the elementary knowledge of education.

Many short comings were noticed in the system of administration of justice introduced by the Britishers. The complicated system of deciding cases with its huge paraphernalia failed to deliver speedy justice to the people. Hence reformatory measures were needed to bring the justice within the easy reach of the people. *Kheldars* were invested with magisterial authority to try petty criminal cases and offences of graver nature being reserved for the trial of Magistrate Court at the Sadar. *Kheldars* were also invested with the powers to try minor *dewani* cases. They were also empowered to investigate cases of extractions against the subordinate revenue collectors as preferred by the ryots under them.

Four District Civil Courts, with powers to try '*Dewani*' cases upto Rs. 100/- and to hear appeals against the judgement of the *Kheldars*. Court, were established, one each at Bassa, Rangpur, Majuli and Lakhimpur. It was also provided that no written pleadings or depositions would be required in cases fixed for hearing before the *Kheldars* and District Courts. The Court of Bar-Barua or Sadar Court was empowered to try civil cases upto Rs. 1000 and pass sentence of imprisonment upto three years in criminal cases. The Judge's position was also made secure by laying down that no district judge was to be dismissed without a regular trial. They were also given pay out of the fines and fees realised from the litigants.

With a view to encourage commerce and free flow of trade, customs houses on the Brahmaputra were abolished and boats laden with merchandise plying in the Brahmaputra were not subjected to any duty. To encourage industry, *Kheldars* were called upon to receive produce from the ryots on payment of revenue at a fair price.

The Mataks : As mentioned earlier, the Bar Senapati, the Chief of the Mataks, entered into an engagement with David Scott, in May, 1826, whereby he acknowledged the supremacy of the British Government and agreed to furnish the paramount power with a contingent of 300 *paiks* in time of war as well as in time of peace. No tribute was however, demanded from him. The jurisdiction of Matak Raja was confirmed within the following boundaries : west and south the Buri Dihing, north the Brahmaputra, the Dibru river and its tributary the Dangori, and east an imaginary lire drawn from a point south of Saikhowa to the Dihing. To cheek the flow of emigrants into the kingdom of the Bar Senapati from Upper Assam, an officer was maintained at his capital who was empowered to collect poll taxes from the absconding

paiks on behalf of the British Government. Everything passed off smoothly and nothing marred the friendly relation that existed between the vassal and the paramount power. At the time of Singpho insurrection, however, the fidelity of the Bar Senapati was doubted by the local officers, but his repeated offer of help to the British Government proved beyond doubt that the old chieftain was decidedly faithful to his engagement and finally convinced Mr. White of the sincerity of his purpose.

Mr. White, who was deputed to study the internal conditions of Bar Senapati's dominion found Mataks well-cultivated and prosperous people. He did not think it wise to attempt an assessment during the life time of the Bar Senapati. However, he recommended to the supreme Govt., that after the death of Bar Senapati, his son should be retained in the management of the respective division allotted to them on agreeing to pay to the British Govt. half of the revenue collected by them. As the British Govt. was not willing to decide during the life time of Bar Senapati as to what arrangement should be made for the territory of the Matak Chief in the event of his death, Mr. White's suggestion was not accepted by the Calcutta authorities.

Towards the end of 1838, the Bar Senapati, whose health was rapidly deteriorating, made a new arrangement regarding the administration of his territory. In consultation with his sons, *Kheldars* and other prominent men of his territory, he appointed his third son, Maju Gohain as the Manager of State affairs. This arrangement was referred to the British Govt., for approval and the same was accepted only as a provisional measure during the life time of the Matak Chief. Mr. White on receipt of information of Matak Chief's death in January, 1839, moved into Matak territory and arrived on 20th January at Rangagora, the capital of Matak kingdom. Finding peace and tranquility in the territory and the willingness of the eldest son Bor Gohain to carry out the will of his deceased father, Mr. White approved the nomination of Maju Gohain as the head of kingdom with the title of Bar Senapati and with the same powers as enjoyed by the deceased Chief. Still he felt that the introduction of British rule would have been advantageous to the interest of the British Govt., as well as to that of the country providing one uniform law and one system of administration throughout Assam. As the Moamarias were accustomed to a very light assessment and as this was not likely to meet the expenses of the costly British administration, Mr. White hesitated from announcing such a drastic step at that time. Other political considerations such as the fear of Burmese invasion and the dread of Shan incursion, also influenced his decision and so, he thought it expedient not to adopt any step which might drive the Matak Chief to the enemy camp.

But when Mr. White proposed to the assembly of the Matak Chief that Maju Gohain should pay an annual tribute of Rs. 10,000/-, the proposal was opposed not only by Maju Gohain but also by his elder brother Bor Gohain and other nobles of the realm. The other two proposals of Mr. White regarding the setting aside of waste lands for cultivation of tea and the appointment of a British officer for adjudication of disputes arising between the Moamarias and the European Tea Planters were acceptable to Maju Gohain. The princes, however, informed Major White that after performing the '*Sradh*' ceremony of the deceased Chief, they would ascertain the number of *paiks* and would let him know the amount of contribution they would be in a position to pay.

Sometime after this, there was Khamti insurrection and Mr. White fell a victim of it. Captain Vetch was appointed Political Officer of Upper Assam in his place. The eldest son of the late Bar Senapati, rendered great help by supplying large number of soldiers to the British Govt. in suppressing Khamti revolt. Captain Vetch also supporting, the contention of Mr. White conveyed to Jenkins, the Agent, that imposition of Rs. 10,000/- as a tribute would create dissatisfaction among the Matak people. So, he proposed to Maju Gohain that a fresh census of *Paiks* should be undertaken and on the basis of the formula previously suggested by Mr. Scott, the Maju Gohain should undertake himself to supply the two-thirds of the *paiks* who would either supply labour to the paramount power or to commute their personal services into a money payment, The suggestions of Mr. White were approved by the Supreme Govt. and he was instructed to enter into an agreement with the Maju Gohain on the line laid down by the Political Agent. The settlement of this vexed Moamaria problem seemed to be near solution : but the untimely addition of two more conditions by the supreme Govt., ceding from kingdom the upper part of Bar Senapati's dominion known as Moran and that all the jungle tracts of the country along with the waste land prevented the settlement.

Captain Vetch was further instructed to proceed to Rangagora to negotiate a settlement of the tracts with the Maju Gohain on the basis of terms laid down by the the Spreme Govt. He was also empowered to take the possession of the tract in case of the break down of the negotiation. Fearing that the terms might not be acceptable to the Matak Chiefs and they might refuse to hand over the posession of the country, arrangement for securing peaceful occupation was made by posting of soldiers along frontiers of the Matak territory. On 12th Nov. 1839, Captain Vetch escorted by 300 men of Assam light Infantry and 150 recruits of upper Assam 'Sebundies' proceeded to the capital of Matak

through Upper Moran. On the way, he found the country side well-cultivated with cotton and sugarcane. Physical features of the people also impressed him no less and he thought of forming a company out of them for warfare on the frontier. At the headquarters of Upper Moran, he was waited upon by the Gohain and other respectable men all of whom expressed their desire not to be placed under the administration of Bar Senapati's family on the ground that they were the followers of *Vishnu* and wanted not to be ruled by men holding different religious belief. Except this, they did not complain of any mal-treatment or injustice at the hands of Bar Senapati or his sons.

After arriving at Rongagora, Captain Vetch announced the new terms to the Gohian brothers before an assembly comprising of the heads of villages and *Khels*. The proposal for ceding of Moran was vehemently opposed by the parties present and they, all with one voice, refused to undertake the administration of the country if Upper Moran was not included in the Matak Kingdom. The conference was postponed and Captain Vetch tried to persuade the sons of the late Bar Senapati individually but they all declined to accept the terms of settlement offered by the East India Company to them. Finding no possibility of any agreement, Captain Vetch issued a Proclamation announcing the assumtion of direct management of the country by the East India Company and in 1842 the entire tract was annexed to the Lakhimpur District. The country accepted the decision with apparent calmness.

The arrangement made by Captain Vetch was approved by the Supreme Govt. and Captain Jenkins was instructed to make suitable provisions for the maintenance of the late Bar Senapati's family, who had left ten sons, five daughters, three widows, a brother and a large number of dependents. It was proposed to give more than half of the total revenue aggregating seven thousand rupees a year, of the country by way of pension. But it could not be finalised as Gohain's brothers objected to the payment in cash. Moreover, it was considered very inadequate by the local officers for he maintenance of Bar Senapati's family.

Soon, however, it came to light that the assumption by the British of the administration of the Matak country was not accepted meekly without protest. The Mataks in the meantime had been intriguing with the frontier tribes and preparing to rise in revolt against the British Government under the leadership of their disgruntled chiefs. As a precautionary measure two companies of 36th Regiments were recalled from Upper Assam and three most influential sons of the late Bar Senapati were brought down to Gauhati as a hostages for the good behaviour of the family. As the late Bar Senapati's family was quite large, it was suggested that out of one-third of the land revenue each of his sons

should be paid partly in cash and partly in lands. It was further suggested that they should be given from 1,000 to 1,500 acres of land so that each might be provided with ample estates. But the three sons were not satisfied with this proposal and they demanded that one-third of the country in one compact block should be handed over to them in lieu of the proposed pension. With a view to put down the rebellious activities of the sons of Bar Senapati completely, Captain Jenkins ultimately removed them along with their principal advisers to Biswanath (in the present Darrang district) and settled them near the British cantonment. They were given pensions wholly in cash as was proposed originally and thus ended the reign of Bar Senapatis family of the Matak territory in 1842.

The Khamtis : The tribe who descended from hills to the east in the middle of the eighteenth century and settled themselves with the permission of the Ahom Raja, on the bank of Tengapani, overthrew the Ahom Viceroy of Sadiya, known as the Sadiya Khowa Gohain in 1794. They had a Raja and a Deka Raja of their own, but attributed the title Sadiya Khowa Gohain to the ruler of their own race. They were suppressed in Kamaleswar Sinha's reign (1795-1811) but rose to power again during the subsequent commotions.[33] As mentioned earlier, after the Burmese expulsion, Mr. David Scott, the Agent to the Governor General on the North East Frontier, entered into an agreement with the Khamti chief in 1826, similar to that contracted with the Bar Senapati. He was allowed to collect poll tax from the villagers, and required in lieu of tribute or taxes, to maintain a contingent of two hundred men who were armed by the British Govt. and were drilled for four months in the year by a local officer of the Assam Light Infantry. The internal management of the Khamtis vested in their own chief, who also dalt with petty cases amongst the local Assamese and collected from them a poll tax of one rupee per head. This amount was remitted to political Officer, who tried serious offences committed by the Assamese. Everything went on smoothly until the death of the Sadiya Khowa Gohain which took place early in 1835. His eldest son who succeeded him as Sadiya Khowa Gohain was a man of great intellectual powers. Though a Buddhist, he was well acquinted with Bengali and the doctrines of the Hindu religion. A dispute arose between him and the Bar Senapati the Matak Chief, regarding a certain tract of land over which both of them asserted claims. To prevent a collision, Captain White, Political Agent stationed at Sadiya, attached the land and called upon the disputant chiefs to appear before him to place their respective claims.

33. E. A. Gait, *History of Assam*, 1926, P. 214—292,

But the Khamti Chief openly disregarded the instructions of the Political Officer and took forcible possession of the disputed land. The matter was referred to the Agent (Mr. Jenkins), who deposed the Khamti Chief and brought the whole tract under the direct administration of the Company. As regards the internal arrangement, the Khamtis were left as before under their own Chiefs. However, they were deprived of their control over the local Assamese who constituted nearly two-thirds of the population of the region. The slaves were declared free and were taxed at the rate of Re. 1/- per head in lieu of their personal services and also for revenue and judicial purposes they were brought under the control of British officers.

But the above mentioned measures created a sense of disaffection among the Khamti Chiefs, as they could not tolerate the loss of slaves, their only source of wealth. Apprehension of a Govt. design to tax them and to lower their status to that of the ordinary Assamese also began to haunt their minds. British Govt. apprehending further trouble, removed Sadiya Khowa Gohain to a station out of reach if intrigues. An attempt was also made of creating a division of interest among the Khamtis by appointing Captain Gohain to the Intelligence Department but the appointee proved to be shallow in intellect and devoid of requisite energy.

A sudden change towards reconciliation was noticeable among the Khamti Chiefs. Taoa-Gohain started learning English and even Ex-Sadiya Khowa Gohain sent his son to an English School. They also rendered valuable services to the Govt. in suppressing the formidable Singpho out-break which occured in 1835 and as a reward for their valuable help, the Khamti Chief was permitted to return from exile The Khamti Chiefs appeared to be pacified but actually they were in a state of simmering discontent. Their apparent calmness was a lull before the storm and the first indication of which was heard as early as in 1837. Rumours were afloat that Khamti Chiefs were intriguing with the Burmese and with the Dafla Gaum and accordingly military establishment at Sadiya was strengthened and measures were kept ready to remove Taoa Gohain and Ex-Sadiya Sadiya-Khowa Gohain to Bisvanath. But nothing happened as was apprehended and rumours of Khamti insurrection died away gradually.

But suddenly in 1839, the storm bursted out most unexpectedly and Khamtis had struck. On the 28th January, 1839 a party of 500 Khamtis led by their chiefs made a sudden and swift attack on Sadiya "The whole regiment was wiped out. Major White himself fell in the action. The whole of the barracks, including the military shed which contained guns and ammunition was burnt to the ground. Medical

stores were also destroyed. The attack was conducted in a very systematic manner. The Assamese nobles residing at Sadiya were privy to it. The whole town lay at their mercy. Then contrary to all expectations, they suddenly retired. It was the boldest attempt ever made by the hill tribes. Had they combined with the Matak Chiefs or with the Singphos, the whole of upper Assam would have been lost to the British. The inhabitants were greatly alarmed and they became further terror striken by the rumour that the Burmese had been comine in the rear of the Khamtis. Immediate succour came from the eldest son of the late Bar Senapati whose timely arrival with a body of men tended much to restore the public confidence.[34]

A punitive force was at once despatched and normalcy was restored at Sadiya. Reinforcements were further despatched to different directions to trace the movements of insurgents. All the Khamti villages and settlements were found to be deserted ; men, women and children had left towards the Mishmi Hills. All the Khamti villages were burnt down and soldiers returned to Sadiya without making a single arrest. Rewards were also offered for the arrest of rebel chiefs but this also failed to produce the desired effects. At last due to the cleavage among Khamtis one of their chiefs surrendered to the British Govt. It took the British Govt. five years to put-down the rising. Several expeditions were sent to the Mishmi Hills and the insurgents surrendered in batches, the last batch submitting in December, 1843 and since that time they remained peaceful.

The Singphos :—Like the Khamtis, the Singphos were also a source of trouble on the eastern frontier to the Britishers in the early days of their rule. They live intermixed with the Khamtis in the country watered by the Burhi Dihing, the Noa Dihing and the Tengapani which formerly belonged to the Ahoms. Their real home is in the hilly country between the Chindwin river and the Patkai, where they are known as Kakhyens. The name by which they are known on the Assam frontier is simply the tribal word for man. They made their appearance on the outskirts of Assam during the Moamaria rebellions.[35] They had their encounter with the Ahoms in 1798 in which they were put to flight. Lateron, during the Burmese occupation, they made constant raids on the eastern frontier and took thousands of Assamese as slaves. Even Sadiya Khowa Gohain and Bar Senapati could not escape the fury of their attacks. Both appealed to the Britishers and on their intervention the Singphos desisted from attack and entered into negotiations. In June, 1825, they made common cause with the Burmese, and Captain Neufville advanced with a party of the 57th Native Infantry upto the Noa Dihing, destroyed

34. R. M. Lahiri—*The Annexation of Assam* ; p. 210.
35. E. Gait, *History of Assam* ; 1967—p. 376.

their villages and released a large number of Assamese, estimated no less than six thousands, whom they kept as slaves.

The rivalry between their two principal chiefs, Bisa Raja and Duffa *Gam*, had the effect of keeping the south eastern frontier in a perpetual state of unrest. In 1830, a raid was organised by Wackum Khoomjao who, "along with the *Gams* of Laotra and Tengapani, surprised the outpost at Sadiya. The insurgents numbering about 3,000 were provided with muskets, spears and swords. They were beaten back to Laotra by Capt. Neufville where they entrenched themselves in a stockade. Subedar Zalim Singh made a frontal attack on it and they were driven into Burma.[36] Five years later Duffa *Gam* descended from the Patkai, raided Bisa's village and killed ninety persons and troops were despatched to drive him back into the hills. In 1837, with the hope of finding definite system of management of the Duffa *Gam*, Captain Hannay and Dr. Griffiths proceeded across the Patkai to meet the Burmese representatives but found their claims unreasonable and unworthy of consideration. In 1843, the Singphos again revolted, probably at the instigation of Tipam Raja of Assam, who left Assam with the Burmese and had been made the Governor of Hukong by the king of Burma. He attacked the British outposts at Ningroo and Bisa. An expedition was sent against them and operations dragged on for months and ultimately Singphos were suppressed and brought under the British control.

Relation with the Frontier Tribes :—As noted above, during the early part of their administration in Assam, the British had to face a lot of trouble from the war-like tribes of the Frontier such as the Khamtis, Singphos, Miris, Mishmis, Abor, Daflas and the Nagas. When the British took over the control of Assam from Purandar Sinha in 1838, they found that the warlike tribes of the frontier were becoming aggressive as a result of the breakdown of the authority of the Government and for the remainder of the century they largely followed the policy of the Ahom kings. They did what they could to make friends with the tribes : they protected the plains people against their raids ; they established outposts in the foothills and from time to time imposed blockades and made punitive expeditions into the interior.

The first important step towards some kind of elementary administration at least in the foot-hills, as well as for the establishment of more friendly relations was the appointment of an Assistant Political Officer at Sadiya in 1882. This was J. F. Needham, who continued there till 1905, making a number of long tours in hitherto unknown country, and remaining at his post for a sufficient time to win considerable influence. Another method of creating friendliness was through

36. S. B. Choudhary : *Civil Disturbances during the British Rule in India*, Calcutta—1955 ; p. 110.

trade and a number of fairs were held at Udalguri and Sadiya.

Since then the task of creating better relations between the tribes and the rest of India continued slowly, though it was marked by such incidents as the murder of Williamson and Gregorson in 1911, which led to a serious conflict with the Adis of Siang. In the following year two new charges were created under the names 'Central and Eastern Sections, North-east Fontier' and 'Western Section' which in 1914 were renamed as 'Sadiya Frontier Tract' and 'Balipara Frontier Tract' respectively. In 1941 'Tirap Frontier Tract' was constituted by excluding 103 square miles from Lakhimpur and joining them with a portion of Sadiya Frontier Tract and a portion of the Naga Tribal Area. Sadiya subdivision of the Sadiya Frontier Tract was converted into a full fledged district under the name 'Mishmi Hills' in July 1948. Likewise at the same time, Pasighat subdivision of the same tract became a district—'Abor Hills.' The plains portion of these two districts and of Tirap Frontier Tract were re-transferred to Lakhimpur district in March 1951. In the same year the Naga Tribal Area constituted into Tuensang Division within N. E. F. A.

Finally in 1954, the Frontier Divisions were given their present names of Kameng, Subansiri, Siang, Lohit, Tirap and Tuensang, but at the end of 1957, Tuensang was reunited with the Naga Hills district as the new Naga Hills and Tuensang Area. Soon it attained statehood as Nagaland within the Indian Union. When we look back over the hundred years of constant conflict and compare it with the astonishing friendliness and ever growing co-operation between the people of hills and plains that we see today, we may well take pride in the tribal policy and achievements of the national Government.

Although in the past the relations of the district with the frontier tribes were marked by hostility and resentment, at the same time, there has been a tradition of trade and natural friendliness between the tribes of the foothills and the people of the Brahmaputra valley. The Sherdukpens, and some of the Daflas, have intimate relations with the villages around Charduar. The Noctes, who were influenced early by the *Vaishnava* preachers, have had long business connections with the merchants of Margherita. The Mishmis have for a century past brought their special products to barter for cloth and other goods in the plains. Many of the leading tribal people, and particularly those along the foot hills speak Assamese well.[37]

37. Dr. Verrier Elwin—*A Philosophy for N.E.F.A.*, Shillong 1960. The *Sadiya and Balipara Frontier Tract Gazetteer* Vol. XI Parts I & III give very interesting account of the period between 1905—1925 in the history of frontier relation.

(h) The Freedom movement :

First Phase—The great Rebellion of 1857 :—Although the great Rebellion of 1857 left Assam without much convulsion, signs of revolt were however, noticed in different parts of Assam. During this period at Dibrugarh, there was a large number of Hindustani Sepoys in the 1st Assam Light Infantry as well as in local artillery corps. In September, 1857, an uneasy feeling began to display itself among the men of the Dibrugarh regiment, owing to letters received by some of the Hindustani Sepoys from Sahabad, where many of them had been recruited ; and some of them were found to have entered into a conspiracy with the Saring Raja, a scion of the Ahom Royal family that resided at Jorhat, Colonel Hannay, the Commandant, at once deprived the Hindustani members of the regiment of the opportunity for communication with each other and for combination, by sending them to the small outlying outposts while he concentrated in Dibrugarh the loyal Gurkhas and the hillmen attached to the corps. The prompt measures prevented further trouble.

The Second phase :—Although the district does not have a Peoli Phukan or Maniram Dewan, nor a Kushal Konwar, nor Kanaklata to highlight its participation in the national struggle for freedom, its response to progressive movements, political or otherwise has not been slow. As long ago as 1830 when Peoli Phukan organised a revolt against the British for their intention to hold Assam in subjugation after the Burmese war, his emissaries visited the Khamti and the Singpho Chiefs for support and received favourable response. These Chiefs continued to resist British authority for a considerable time before they were finally subdued by the superior arms of the British. The Bar-Senapati of the Mataks was noted for this spirit of independence, and on the death of Matibor Barsenapati who entered into friendly relations with the British his sons refused to accept humiliating terms of tribute and preferred to be deprived of their estates and territories. The Maju Gohain, the third and the most capable of the sons had plans of joining with the Singphos to resist British authority in that area.

But as alien rule was consolidated over the district as in the rest of the province, the natural resources of the undivided district of Lakhimpur such as coal, oil and timber and its excellent soil for growing tea attracted large scale investment of European capital for the development of these industries. The growth of the tea industry brought into being planters community which was mostly European and whose interest was to exploit the wealth of the district by keeping down all progressive movements which might effect the permanence of British rule in Assam or the authority and influence which the planting community exercised. The growing industries in oil, coal, timber, tea brought in

various other non Assamese elements into the district whose interests were initially not at variance with the interests of other employees in the tea gardens and other concerns. Under the circumstances the common people in the district long remained in a state of doldrum, political as well as economic. But Dibrugarh although a tea town in its development had become a centre of enlightenment and with the turn of the century it became a focus for expression of views and opinions of the issues of the day. The Assam Association, the moderate political organisation of the Assamese people of the Brahmaputra valley in the first two decades of the present century had held its inaugural session at Dibrugarh. When therefore, in 1920-21, the messages of the Indian National Congress and Mahatma Gandhi reached this part of the country the people gave a spontaneous response. The different movements of the Congress beginning with the non co-operation had their reactions in different parts of the district, though not so pronounced as it was in 1942.

North Lakhimpur in particular played a memorable role in the "Quit India" Movement of 1942. Like other districts and in some instances with greater valour and determination, the people of North Lakhimpur took up the challenge of the reactionary British imperialism to crush the national will of the people by arresting their leaders on the 9th of August, 1942. Although situated in the easternmost corner of India and for the greater part of the years practically cut off from the rest of India due to bad communication, the people on hearing the news of the offensive launched by the Government, came out on the streets to record their deep sense of protest and resentment against such unwarranted action of the British Government spontaneously and in the most disciplined way. Prior to this mass upheaval, there was no talk of a movement in the district. People and especially the Congress workers were busy in working out the Congress programme of 'Self protection' and 'Self sufficiency' (so that they can escape from the inevitable evil consequence of the total war.) Santi Sena *Sibirs* (camps) were set up in different parts of the district and training in non-violent self protection and village protection was given to the volunteers. People were asked to grow more food and taught to think in terms of community life. It was the only sort of political education given to the people and no training was given, nor even speeches made in terms of a mass movement. Yet, the news of the arrest of the foremost leaders of the people was so revolting and provoking that people could not help coming out on the streets to express their resentment and record their protest and in the successive days and months, a real people's movement to achieve the release of the leaders and wrest freedom from the unwilling hands of the British Government, took shape out of it and almost made the functioning of the agencies of the bureaucratic

Government impossible. The people remained non-violent inspite of the leonine violence of the British Government and not a single case of murder, grievous injury, violence of any sort, incendiarism or illegal interference with public property was reported. Only at Dhalpur a house was set fire to and there was some interference with telegraphic wires near Nakari. The probability was that some agent provocateurs did it to give a pretext to the police for carrying out ruthless oppressions, of unprecedented character on the unarmed and non violent people. Here the movement took the form of leading peaceful processions, picketing courts and schools and forming Panchayats in villages to run the village administration and try cases to avoid going to British courts of Justice. Evidence unmistakably establishes the fact that these processionists and picketers were non-violent throughout, that they carried no arms nor sticks with them during such activity nor even did they shout any slogan that might incite the people to violence. They quietly subjected themselves to all sorts of humiliations heaped on them except the one of submitting to the dispersal orders. The most striking features of these processions were that these were very huge and demonstrated their spontaneous character, and last but not the least, that they were joined by the hundreds of ladies, old and young always in the forefront and who seemed to be surcharged with the spirit of freedom more than any one else. But even these young girls and old ladies along with their menfolk were the victims of unprecedented wrath and violence of the authorities. They were lathi-charged, bayonetted and belaboured. Even the sanctity of *Namghars* (place of worship) and shrines were violated. The amount of violence used by the authorities was never warranted by the situation. Evidence proves that nowhere in the undivided district of Lakhimpur such violence on the part of the police was called for and in every instance, the police transgressed the limits of law and propriety.

On 8.9.42, one aeroplane was crashed in the paddy field at Dhalpur in North Lakhimpur Sub-division. There were two American occupants in the plane and they were rescued by the people and were taken to the local police station. The people unaccustomed to such happening and ignorant about aeroplane came to see the plane from surrounding villages. But the plane was not touched by anybody nor any part of it was taken away by any one. Yet, the police smelt something in it and from the next day the police *julum* in the locality began. This police vandalism was of such a vile nature, that people had to take shelter in nearby forests. The police extorted money from the people threatening that if money was not paid, a greater amount of collective tax would have to be paid by them. Madhuram Chutia, Bhogeswar Chetia and Pohor Gogoi were the victims at the hands of Police. The only public school of the locality was occupied by these armed men

for about two months and no rent was paid by the Government on this occasion. Some 80 cft. timber of the school were cut to pieces and used as fuel by these guardians of peace.

These were some of the typical incidents in North Lakhimpur. The minor ones are countless. At Nakari, three school children were whipped on the false allegation that they interfered with telegraphic wires there. The villagers of Khaliamari and adjacent villages were forced to guard the telephonic lines running by these villages, for ten months without any remuneration. These were winter months. They were neither given warm clothes, nor were they provided with lamps in the dark nights. But the consequences of disobeying Government orders were serious and they submitted to extreme hardships. The way the processionists near Dikrong Ghat were assaulted and subsequently pushed into the flowing river was the most criminal act of the whole drama. In the town of North Lakhimpur, two volunteers were once handcuffed together and hung by the wrists for more than an hour. Not seldom volunteers were arrested and forced to gaze at the blazing sun for hours together. Even the system of hostage was introduced. Father or brother being assaulted for son's or brother's action was very common. Although the law does not allow to attach father's property for the son's action, it was frequently done. Collective fines were realised without giving any receipt and very often more than the due was realised. Nocturnal searches and roundups were rather the rule than exceptions for on such occasions they could easily fill the pockets illegally. During these months about ninty persons were arrested and convicted in different parts of the sub-division. Collective fines to the tune of Rs. 10,000/- (Rupees ten thousand) were imposed on the people of Lakhimpur. Of this, Dholpur alone paid Rs. 5,101/2/- and Rs. 4,339/15/- was realised from Narayanpur with a total of Rs. 9.708/1/- in all from the whole district. Thus arrests, collective fines, looting, assault, terrorising etc., at last succeeded in suppressing the outward manifestations of the people's movement to win freedom, but the spirit remained as high as ever.

When at length Independence came to India in August, 1947 in fulfilment of the people's aspirations, the district of Lakhimpur, which had immense sacrifices at the alter of Freedom, proudly participated in the jubilations that marked the end of slavery. The martyrdom of its people had not been in vain, trials and tribulations suffered by the people in their fight for freedom under the banner of the Indian National Congress, with Gandhiji's motto of "truth and non-violence" were not too high a price for freedom. In the post independence era, the district administrative machinary has been sufficiently reoriented to enable it to carry through the plans and programmes of development

in different directions and an urge for better living has been noticeable in the endeavours of the people.

(i) Archaeological remains:

Some of the interesting remains of archaeological importance of the district are given below.

(a) **Tamreswari Mandir** :— It is about 18 miles to the north east of Sadiya and is situated on the bank of the river Dhal. It is presumed that this ancient temple was built possibly by the Chutiyas in the 15th century. It is described as a small stone building, nearly square built without cement, the stones joined by iron pins not clamped The roof was of copper, but it fell in, and lay there. The interior is eight feet square. The whole is inclosed within a brick wall 130 feet by 200. Near the grand entrance in the western wall is a small stone tripod. Human sacrifices took place in this temple annually but the Ahom kings allowed those victims for sacrifice in the temple who were sentenced for capital punishment. However, the system of human sacrifice was stopped by Sargadeo Gaurinath Sinha (1780-94). It is also assumed by the Deuris that the Ahoms lost their kingdom because of the fact that they had stopped the practice of human sacrifice continued for so long in the temple.

Raidangiya Dol :—It is in Larua Mauza in Dibrugarh Sub-division. This is a brick temple with decorated plaques containing images of gods and goddesses. It is presumed that the Raidangiya Dol was constructed in late mediaeval period. It is said that the temple and its adjoining pond were given as dowery by Sargadeo Pramatta Sinha to Raidangiya Barua. The temple is now in a most dilapidated condition. Out of 24 stone images embedded in the body of the temple only fourteen are now extant. These are stated to be fine specimens of Assamese sculpture. It was possibly a Siva temple.

Sarhi Devalaya :— It stands on the bank of the historic river, Sarhi, which fringes the boundaries of Machkhowa and Govindpur mauzas. Sarhi Devalaya is avery ancient Devi temple. There are many beautiful and rare images of *Siva, Durga, Manasa, Ganga* etc. In some of the images the eyes are decorated with a fine coating of gold. It is believed that the Devalaya was erected before the reign of Ahom kings. Sarhi Devalaya is now commonly known as Harhi temple.

Lonpani Dol :— Remains of an ancient stone Devi Mandir are noticeable near the river Garulua in the Laluk mauza. A round shaped stone, 2½ feet wide is lying broken by the side of a big tank along with an architectural lion gate and a *yoni* like curved stone. Local people used to worship this *yoni* like stone in the midst of the forest for many years. It is said that now two pillers of the Lion-gate along with the round stone have been placed in the Dakbunglow at Laluk. Dr. Wade mentioned about this place in his *famous Account of Assam.* In the ancient time there was a famous *devalaya* in this place to which the Akas, Daflas, Miris, Abors and other hill people came for worship. The probable date of its establishment is not known.

Maghnowa Dol :—It is situated in the Dholpur mauza. It stands to the east of the Pichala river and to the north of the Maghnowa *bil.* This Maghnowa Dol is covered on all sides by about 5 feet high brick walls. It is a brick built temple decorated with plaques bearing floral designs. Probably it was constructed in the late medieaval period. The Dol is now standing in a broken condition. It is also known as Phulbari dol.

The Dol was very attractive. It was recorded in the old Darrang District Gazetter that it was constructed by king Rudra Sinha about 1705 A. D. But Phulbari Devalaya is not in the Darrang District. It is in the North Lakhimpur Sub-division though it finds no mention in the old District Gazetter of Lakhimpur.

During the time of the Burmese invasion, Burmese soldiers camped in the temple and used to slaughter cattle there. They also demolished the Dol. In order to save the image the priests of the Dol had thrown it into a *bil.* After the restoration of peace under the British rule the priests could not find it and so, they re-established another image at Kalabari in the Gohpur mauza in the Tezpur Sub-division. Fortunately however, after some years the actual image was recovered by the fishermen in the Gabharubil of Narayanpur Kheraj khat mauza in the North Lakhimpur Sub-division. From that time, that region is also known as "Deotala." The priests reestablished the image at Kalabari because the Maghnowa Dol had been made impure by slaughtering cows by the invading Burmese. That image is now available at Kalabari and people call it "Barkalika *than.*" [33]

Murabhaga Dol :—This temple of Goddess Durga is situated in Perabhari village in Nowboisa mauza. Worship is still in vogue in the temple. The place where the temple stands was also formerly known as Murabhaga. This Devalaya finds mention in Dr. Wade's book, '*An Account of Assam.*' The probable date of its establishment is late mediaeval period.

Nil Devalaya :—This is a temple of Goddess Durga and probably it was constructed in the late mediaeval period. It was shifted to Ghoramara village in Lakhimpur mauza from Bebejia.

Basudeva Than : Norwa Satra :—This famous Basudev Bishnu *than* exists near the Champora river in the Gohaingaon mauza. There

38. Dr. Maheswar Neog : '*Pabitra Asam*'

is a big image of Basudev which cannot be carried by less than sixteen persons. It is a remarkable image curved with skill in a nice black stone. Reference is to be found in copper plates about its worship during the time of king Lakshmi Narayan in 1323 Saka. In the *Kalika-Purana*, it was mentioned that in the region of Dikkarbasini worship of Basudev was continued. Dr. Wade in his book "*An Account of Assum*," has mentioned that in the place known as Norwa, there was a temple of Thakurbari. Every year, many people including those from Nepal visit this image of Basudev. It is also known from the "*Thakur Charit*", a manuscript in *Sanchi* leaves that the king Jayadhvaj Sinha installed this image at Norwa *than* bringing it from Kundit (Sadiya)[39] It seems that once this beautiful and huge image of stone was at Kundil or Sadiya under the disposal of the Chutiya king.[40]

Bura-Buri temple :—The Bura-Buri temple is situated at a distance of about ten miles to the north east near the confluence of the Dikrong and Deopani rivers. It is very old temple. According to the Hindus, this temple belongs to Mahadev (*Siva*) but according to Col. Hannay, it is a Buddha temple. But from historical accounts it would appear that the worshippers of the temple are not pure Hindus, they are simple Deuris. They call Bura-Buri, Gerasi Geri. This Bura-Buri temple is the an ancient and holy spot in the Upper Assam.

Miscellaneous :—The standing four head figure of *Vishnu* from Dibrugarh is a fine speciman of the Assamese bronze art of 11-12th century A. D.[41] A curved image of *Surya* found at Sadiya depicts the deity of a chariot drawn by seven horses.[42] Other ruins at Sadiya include building of temples with "Various sculptural designs of human figures, animal, birds, flowers, geometrical designs and some are depicted in erotic style like those at Dimapur.[43]

The descriptive account of some of the important temples and *thans* is available in Chapter XIX—Places of Interest.

---

39. Dr. Maheswar Neog : '*Pabitra Asam*'.
40. All these things find ample description along with the traditions in an article written by Dr. Maheswar Neog entitled—'*A Place of Vasudev worship in Assam*.
41. Ba. K. Brua, '*A Cnltural History of Assam*'; Vol. 1 Nowgong, 1951. p. 188.
42. Ibid. p. 186.
43. Dr. P. C. Choudhury—'*The History of Civilisation of the People of Assam to the 12th Century A.D.*; 1959 ; pp. 472-73.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

A.D	AHOM KINGS.
1228	Sukapha.
1268	Sutenpha.
1281	Subinpha.
1293	Sukangpha.
1332	Sukampha.
1364	Sutupha-treacherously killed by the Chutiyas at a regatta held on the Safrai river to celebrate a cessation of hostilities between the two tribes.
1376—1380	Interregnum.
1380	Sukemthi, a weak and tyrannical prince, assassinated by his ministers.
1389—1398	Interregnum.
1398	Sudangpha.
1407	Siyangpha.
1422	Suphukpha.
1439	Susingpha-defeats the Nagas.
1488	Suhangpha-defeated by the Kacharis in 1490, and murdered by a convict.
1493	Supinpha, a cruel prince assassinated by his ministers.
1497	Suhungmung *alias* Sarga Narayan or Dihingia Raja. Conquers the Chutiyas and annexes their kingdom in 1523 : repulses two Muhammadan invasions, the second being that under Turbuk in 1532, who was routed near the Bhareli river ; bills Kachari king and sacks Dimapur his capital in 1536. Assassinated 1539.
1539	Suklenmung-built Gargaon (Nazira).
1552	Sukhampha.
1603—1641	Suchengpha or Pratap Sinha, assists Bali Narayan against Musalmans, besieges Hajo but is driven back. The Bar Nadi accepted as frontier between the Muhammadans and Ahoms in 1637.
1641	Surumpha. Deposed.
1644	Sutyinpha.
1648—63	Sutumla or Jayadhaj Sinha, Ahoms occupy Goalpara 1658. Driven back by Mir Jumla who enters Gargaon 1661.
1663	Chakradhwaj. Ahoms reoccupy Gauhati in 1667.
1670	Udayaditya Sinha, assassinated.

1672	Suklumpha-poisoned. Musalmans reoccupy Gauhati.
1674	Suhung-assassinated.
1674	Teenkungiya—assassinated.
1674	Suhungpha—blinded and murdered.
1677	Sudinpha—assassinated.
1679	Sulekpha (Lora Raja) assassinated.
1681	Gadadhar Sinha-Ahoms recover possession of Gauhati.
1696—1714	Rudra Sinha—founds Rangpur, defeats the Kachari and Jaintia Rajas, publicly adopts Hinduism as his religion. The period represents the height of the Ahom power. Dies at Gauhati.
1714—1744	Siva-Sinha—a weak prince who resigned in favour of his wives. Excavated a tank at Sibsagar.
1744—1751	Pramatta Sinha.
1751	Rajeswar Sinha. Decline of Ahom power.
1769—1780	Lakshmi Sinha. Out-break of the Moamaria rebellion—King deposed for a time, but subsequently reinstated.
1780—1795	Gaurinath Sinha. Driven to Gauhati by Moamarias. Reinstated by Captain Welsh in 1792, who is however, recalled in 1794. Krishna Narayan, Darrang Raja asserts his independence in 1792, but is defeated by Captain Welsh.
1795—1811	Kamaleswar Sinha ; deposes Krishna Narayan.
1809	Chandra Kanta Sinha—the Burmese are invited into Assam by Bar Phukan. Deposed 1816.
1816	Purandar Sinha—Burmese again enter Assam. Deposed 1818.
1818	Chandra Kanta Sinha—the Burmese decline to leave-Chandra Kanta driven from Assam in 1820.
1824	War declared between the British and Burmese Governments.
1825.	Rangpur taken.
1826	Treaty of Yandaboo by which Assam was ceded to the East India Company.

TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES LIBRARY
No. 26267
EGMORE, MADRAS-8

CHAPTER—III

PEOPLE

(a) Population :

Total population (male and female), according to Subdivisions and Thanas.

According to the **"Provisional Population Totals"** of 1971 Census, undivided Lakhimpur district had a total population of 2,118, 386 persons of whom 1,133,080 were males and 985306 females. The district was bifurcated on October 2, 1971. At the time of bifurcation, the subdivisionwise break-up of population of the two newly created districts was as follows [1] :—

Subdivision-wise distribution of population : year—1971.

Name of the newly created district.	Name of the subdivision	Total population	Males	Females
Dibrugarh	Dibrugarh	1,409,414	757,897	651,517
Lakhimpur	North-Lakhimpur	397,269	210,162	187,107
	Dhemaji	311,703	165,021	146,682

The following table indicates the Thanawise population of the undivided Lakhimpur district, according to 1951 and 1961 censuses.

Thanawise distribution of population of the undivided Lakhimpur district.

Name of the Police-Station	Area in sq. miles	Population as per 1961 census			Total population
		Males	Females	Total	as per 1951 census
1. Bihpuria P.S.	302	72,365	62,835	135,200	92,162
2. North-Lakhimpur P.S.	570	84,340	67,602	151,942	104,815
3. Dhakuakhana P.S.	473	44,925	40,436	85,361	53,542
4. Dhemaji P. S.	446	34,294	30,590	64,884	33,230
5. Sadiya P.S.	739	18,783	15,343	34,126	—
6. Dibrugarh P.S.	548	128,142	101,499	229,641	189,738
7. Tinsukia P.S.	278	98,376	76,944	175,320	127,557
8. Doom-Dooma P.S.	313	90,540	78,845	169,385	124,978
9. Moran P.S.	156	45,790	40,339	86,129	66,252
10. Bardubi P.S.	275	70,590	60,049	130,639	92,803
11. Digboi P.S.	273	49,566	38,838	88,404	56,608
12. Jaipur P.S.	329	81,950	70,061	152,011	106,546
13. Margherita P.S.	310	34,218	26,582	60,800	34,156

1. Source : Director of Census Operations, Assam.

G
V27722
N76

he two censuses of 1951 and 1961 revealed different rates of increase of population in every thana area. In 1951, Digboi thana registered the highest growth (33.7 percent), as against the lowest (4.8 percent), returned by Dhakuakhana thana. In 1961, total population of Dhemaji thana increased nearly twofold (95.26 percent), as against the low rate of growth (20.50 percent), recorded in Sadiya thana.

Growth of Population : general trend : The first census of the undivided Lakhimpur district, taken in 1847-48, disclosed a total population of 81,917 persons in the district. The methods employed were hardly exhaustive, but the accuracy of the enumeration was to some extent confirmed by the census of 1852-53 which gave a total of 85,296 persons.[2] For the next twenty years there was no census. In 1872, the first census of whole of the province was taken, though the operation was deseribed as a non-synchronous one. According to this, the population of the district stood at 1,21,267. In 1881 this figure rose to 1,79,893, showing an increase of 48 per cent. The growth of population registered during these nine years was perhaps due to underestimation in the census of 1872. In the following two decades, the district registered steady growth of population which in 1891 stood at 2,54,053 and in 1901 at 371396.[3] The rate of increase was as high as 41 and 46 percent respectively in these two decades. Within 29 years since 1872, the population of the district trebled itself. This enormous increase was mainly due to influx of the labourers who came in large numbers to work in the tea gardens of the district. The satisfactory growth of indigenous population, that is to say, the natural growth of population measured by the increase in number of those born and censused in the district also contributed to the increase in population. The district had a density of 82 persons per square mile in 1901. However, there were wide variations in the density of population in different parts of the district. In Dibrugarh tahsil which at the time comprised an area of 265 square miles, there were 314 people to the square mile, and in the Palonga and Chabua mauzas which adjoined it on the east the density was as much as 377. The Khowang and Jaipur mauzas had a density of 84 persons, Tipling 27 and Makum 38 persons per square mile while east of Makum Buri-Dihing Mauza had hardly any population. North of the Brahmaputra, population was very sparse and it was only near the subdivisional head quarters and the Nakari mauza immediately to the north, that it exceeded 100 to the square mile. In Dhemaji and Sissi mauzas, west of Diburgarh, the average density was only 31. The density of population in North-Lakhimpur subdivision stood at 72 persons per square mile in 1901 as against 94 persons per square mile in Dibrugarh sibdivision.

2. *Report on the Province of Assam*, by A. J. Moffatt Mills, Appendix A., Calcutta 1854.

3. *Census of India*, 1961, *District Census Handbook*, *Lakhimpur*, 1961 p. 216, places the figure at 370957.

The increase of population during the decades of 1881-1891 and 1891—1901, was more pronounced in the Dibrugarh subdivision and its percentage of increase stood at 51.1 and 50.3 respectively, as against 18.0 and 33.7 respectively in North-Lakhimpur subdivision. According to the census of 1901, more than three-fourths of the population of the district lived in the Dibrugarh Subdivision as it was having many extremely prosperous tea gardens, oil wells and coal mines which afforded occupation to a large number of labourers and artisans. During these two decades the population of the subdivision was more than double and the greater part of this enormous increase was due to immigration. In 1901, no less than 47 percent of the inhabitants were those who had been born outside the province while many of the persons returned as "born in Lakhimpur" obviously were of outside parentage. Only 21 per cent of the people censused in North Lakhimpur subdivision had been born outside the province, which showed that the increase in population in this subdivision was mainly due to natural growth.

In 1911, the population of the undivided Lakhimpur district was 4,68,480 persons of which 2,48,746 were males and 2,19,734 females. During the decade of 1901-11 population increased by 97,523 persons, or by 26.29 percent.

During the decade of 1911-21, there were some changes in the total area of the district. Lakhimpur Frontier Tract situated on the east and then under the control of the Deputy Commissioner, was extended by 83 square miles, containing 13 Naga villages. There was another extension of 206 square miles with some Abor villages in the North. These changes added about 1700 persons to the population of the district. On the other hand, the district also lost an area of 22 square miles to Balipara district which was constituted in 1914. The whole mauza of Sadiya and some other portions were transferred, with an area of 389 square miles, to Sadiya Frontier Tract in 1912. In 1911, only some Miris living along the bank in this part were censued. This area had a population of 16,996 persons. In 1921 no attempt was made to enumerate or even to estimate, the remoter tribes who were under loose political control but a regular census was taken up in new areas under direct control. These areas which accounted for 17,649 souls were Pashighat Subdivision, the tracts containing the Khamptis, the Abors and the Mishmis in the Sadiya Subdivision and new Lohit Valley Road, leading north-east to the Miju Mishmi country.

The natural population of the district had grown by 20.5 percent and actual population showed an increase of 30·5 percent within the decade ending in 1921 and its actual population was 588295 persons.[4]

4. *Census of India*, 1961, *District Census Handbook*, *Lakhimpur*, p. 216 places the total population at 6,28,101 with a percentage variation of 34.07. This is somewhat discrepent with figures mentioned in the *Census of India* 1921, *Volume III Assam part Report* p. 13-14 and 26.

The actual increase was 136891 persons of whom the increase of 1700 persons was due to the addition of new areas. A little less than half of the total increase was attributed to the natural growth. The rest was due to the increased immigration, chiefly to tea gardens. Mauzas of Jaipur, Phakial, Tipling, Sissi and Naobaicha had very large increases. Population of Dibrugarh mauza decreased by 6,500 persons or 32.06 percent of its 1911 population ; a few other mauzas also showed some decreases. The density of Dibrugarh Subdivision was 180 person per square mile and that of North Lakhimpur 105. Dibrugarh thana had a density of 334 persons per square mil. The density of a few mauzas also rose to 400 and Jamira had 607 persons per square mile. There were frequent outbreakes of cholera between 1914 and 1919. The district death rates were much higher and the birth rates lower than the provincial averages recorded in the influenza years of 1918-1919. It was thus surprising that the rate of natural increase of population was the highest in the province, the paradox was probably due to the vital statistics being vitiated by serious inaccuracy and a very large number of deaths among the new immigrants.

During the next two decades of 1921-31 and 1931-41 the population of the district rose to 7,78, 313 and 9,54,950 persons with an over all increase of 150212 and 176647 persons respectively. The percentage of variations during these two decades were 23.92 and 22.70 respectively. In 1951, the population further rose to 11,26,294 persons, 6,13,657 males and 5,12,637 females ; but the percentage of increase during this decade was less than in previous two decades. The overall increase was 1,71,334 persons and the rate of increase was 17.94 percent only.

The 1961 Census brought some surprises in its wake. During this decade the population increased by 38.85 percent which is the highest percentage of decennial growth during the last seventy years. In 1961 the total population of the district was 1,563, 842 persons of whom 853,879 were males and 709,963 were females. North Lakhimpur subdivision had a population of 372,503 persons and Dibrugarh 1,199,339 persons. During this decade the population of Dibrugarh Subdivision increased by 35.36 percent, while North Lakhimpur subdivision registered an increase of 51.31 percent. The unprecendented rate of growth, particularly in North Lakhimpur subdivision is ascribed to immigration, and various other factors that contributed to the natural growth of population. Among the districts of Assam, undivided Lakhimpur district ranked third in 1971, second in 1961 which was an improvement over its third position in 1951, in respect of the total strength of population. Kamrup district had been maintaining the uniform record of having the largest population in Assam, during the last three decades ending in 1971.

In 1971, the undivided Lakhimpur district registered further growth of population by 35.46 percent during the decade. The entire region north of the Brahmaputra which covered about five sevenths of the total area of Dibrugarh Subdivision, had approximately half of the total population of the latter. In other words, the north bank, despite the high rate of growth during the decade 1941-51 continued to be the low density area of the undivided district. In respect of the rate of growth, undivided Lakhimpur district occupied the sixth position among the districts of Assam as per 1971 census. The Mikir Hills district had registered the highest growth rate of 67.59 per cent during the decade ending in 1971.

The following table shows the growth of population of undivided Lakhimpur district during the last seventy years.[5]

Year	Persons	Decade Variation	Percentage of Decade Variation	Males	Females
1901	370,957	—	—	199,122	171,835
1911	468,480	+ 97,523	+26.29	248,746	219,734
1921	628,101	+159,621	+34.07	335,885	292,216
1931	778,313	+150,212	+23.92	428,012	350,301
1941	954,960	+176,647	+22.70	517,149	437,811
1951	1,126,294	+171,334	+17.94	613,657	512,637
1961	1,563,842	+437,548	+38.85	853,879	709,963
1971	2,118,386	+554,554	+35.46	1,133,080	985,306

Density of population : In respect of density the undivided Lakhimpur district occupied the last place among the plains districts of Assam, since 1901 till 1971. The district having the highest density of population in Assam, according to the "**Provisional Population Totals**" of 1971 Census, is Nowgong where it is as high as 302 persons per square kilo-metre and the district having the lowest density among the plains districts of Assam is undivided Lakhimpur where it is only 164 persons per square kilometre. The density of population is different in the newly created Dibrugarh and Lakhimpur districts. Dibrugarh district has on the average 195 persons per square kilometre whereas the Lakhimpur district on the north bank of the Brahmaputra has on the average 125 persons per square kilometre. According to 1961 census, the density of population in Dibrugarh Subdivision was 325 persons per square mile and that of North-Lakhimpur subdivision was 275 persons per square mile. There has been considerable change in the area of both the subdivisions following the creation of the Dhemaji subdivision in 1970. As such, the picture of density of population of the two subdivisions, as revealed in

5. *Census of India* 1961, *District Census Handbook, Lakhimpur*, p. 216 ; *Census of India*. 1971, *Provisional Population Totals*, pp. 5-7.

1961 Census cannot be compared with the corresponding figures of 1971 Census. Because of the large industrial complex, the Dibrugarh subdivision has been a thickly populated area ; but the north bank where agriculture is the prime avocation of the bulk of the people, is relatively thinly populated. The density of the district was much lower in the northern part, than in the southern part even in 1951, when the thana-wise density per square mile was as follows : Dhemaji (75), Dhakuakhana (173), North-Lakhimpur (176). The densest part of the district was its central belt, consisting of Moran Thana (425), Tinsukia (459), and Doom-Dooma (399). The overall density of the district was as low as 265 persons to per square mile in 1951.

The position remained more or less the same even in 1961 census. The density of population varied widely in different police stations and the north bank remained a low density area. This has been described in the **District Census Handbook of Lakhimpur** district as follows ; "The Bihpuria Police Station with an area of 302 square miles is the most thickly populated place in the North Lakhimpur subdivision. The density of this police station is 448 persons per square mile. The North Lakhimpur Police Station which is the second biggest Police Station of this district with an area of 570 square miles holds the density of 267 persons per square mile. The Dhakuakhana Police Station covers an area of 473 square miles. During the last decade the percentage increase of population in this Police Station was 59.43 and now it holds the density of 180 persons per square mile. The Tinsukia Police Station with the density of 631 persons per square mile is the most thickly populated area of this district and has an area of 278 square miles. Next come the Doom-Dooma and the Moran Police Stations with areas of 313 and 156 square miles respectively and with a density of 541 and 552 persons per square mile. The rates of increase of population of these Police Stations during the last decade were 35.53 and 30.00 per cent. The Dibrugarh, Bordubi, Digboi and the Jaipur Police Stations are also maintaining high densities of population. In the last decade the rate of increase of population in the Digboi Police Station was 59.17 percent. Margherita and the Dhemaji Police Stations with a area of 310 and 446 square miles have registered the density of 196 and 145 persons. The population of the Dhemaji Police Station in 1951 Census was only 33,230. But during the last ten years the population has increased by 95.26 percent. Now the total population figure of this Police Station has reached the level of 64,884 persons. The Sadiya Police Station is the biggest Police Station with the least population. It comprised an area of about 739 square miles with the density of only 46 persons per square mile. The population figure of this Police Station in the last decade has decreased at the rate of 20.50 percent. The decrease of population of this Police Station is due to the devastating effect caused by

the great earthquake of 1950 and the subsequent floods which made the people shift to other places."[6]

Sex ratio : All the censuses held so far revealed the low proportion of women to males in the district. On several occasions the proportion of females in the district has been the lowest in plains districts of Assam. The following table indicates the number of females per one thousand males.

(Figures relate to the actual population as distinct from natural population).[7]

Year	Females per one thousand males	
	Undivided Lakhimpur district	Assam
1881	867	953
1891	863	942
1901	863	949
1911	883	940
1921	875	926
1931	816	909
1951	839	881
1961	831	871
1971	870	901

Although the population of females to males in the district has indicated a very sharp rise during the decade ending in 1971, yet it has never been at par with the all Assam average. The preponderance of the males is an important feature of the sex ratio of the district.

B. C. Allen attributed the extremely low ratio partly to the disturbing effect of immigration.[8] In the 1931 Census Report it has been observed that the great expansion of oil industry at Digboi which employed nearly 800 men and where female population was very small might be one of the causes of the fall in the proportion of the females.[9] In the Census Report 1911, the causes of the low proportion of women to men were discussed.[10] The factors are (1) high mortality of females, (2) neglect of female children, (3) evil effects of early marriage, and premature child-bearing, (4) high birth-rates, and primitive methods of

6. *Census of India* 1961, *District Census Handbook, Lakhimpur*, p. 14.
7. The natural population means actual population, minus immigrants and plus emigrants—*Censns of India* 1951, *Vol. XII. pt. I-A*, p. 314.
8. B. C. Allen ; *Assam District Gazetteers—Lakhimpur*, 1905, P. 103-104.
9. *Census of India*, 1931, *Vol, III, Assam Pt. I*, P.79.
10. *Census of India*, 1911, *Vol. III, Assam* Pt. I, P. 64.

midwifery, (5) the hard life of the widows where their remarriage is forbidden, (6) hard work done by women. These factors do not fully hold good under the changed circumstances of the present. Mr. R. B. Vaghaiwalla, the Superintendent of Census operations for Assam, Manipur and Tripura observed, in 1951, in this connection as follows. "Personally, I have no doubt that early marriages and lack of proper parental attention and care are mainly responsible for the low proportion of females to males in the natural population of Assam".[11] This observation was applicable in case of the undivided Lakhimpir district as well.

Migration : For decades the population of the undivided Lakhimpur district has gone up owing partly to the large scale immigration. In the absence of any official agency or organisation for registration of immigrants as and when they arrive, the birth-place figures give a clue whether a person is immigrant or not. This process, however, does not reflect the actual movement of people, because it takes no account of those who come and leave between two censuses. Whatever may be the method applied to determine the extent of migration, it has been observed that undivided Lakhimpur district has proved to be a veritable "El Dorado" for the immigrants from East Bengal, large number of businessmen from Rajasthan, artisans from the Punjab, graziers from Nepal, employees of private and public concerns from other States of India, tea gurden labourers from central India, and various categories of workers such as barbers, rickshaw pullers and wage-earners from Bihar, U. P. and some other States of India. No wonder the undivided Lakhimpur district had in 1951 the largest number of immigrants among all the districts of Assam. As per 1951 Census it had 2,79,000 immigrants who roughly constituted one fourth of the total population. The extent of immigration in 1971 cannot, however, be ascertained before the publication of 1971 Census Report. We shall briefly indicate below the important trends of immigration into the district.

The fertile alluvial plains of Assam attracted large number of immigrants from East Bengal, who settled in the riverain areas, and other fallow lands. In 1931, the Superintendent of Census, Mr. C. S. Mullan observed as follows : "Where there is waste land thither flock Mymonsinghias. In fact, the way in which they have seized upon the vacant areas in the Assam Valley seems almost uncanny. Without fuss, without tumult, without undue trouble to the district revenue staffs, a population which must amount to over half a million has transplanted itself from Bengal to the Assam Valley during the last twenty five years".[12] Compared to other districts of lower Assam, the influx of these immigrants was rather low in Lakhimpur district till 1921. In 1911 and

11. *Census of India*, 1951, *Vol. XII, Pt. I-A*, P. 312.
12. *Census of India*, 1931 ; *Vol. III, Pt. I*, P. 51.

1921 the figure stood at 14,000 approximately ; but in 1931, it rose to 19,200 persons. The stream of these immigrants has been continuous even after partition and in 1951, 61,000 persons, born in districts now in Bangladesh were enumerated in Lakhimpur district.

It may however, be mentioned that 13,965 immigrants were shown as displaced persons in 1951 Census. During the period from 1930-50, 117000 acres of land were settled with immigrants other than ex-tea garden labourers, in Sadiya and Balipara. The proportion of settlement of land with these persons was much higher in each district of the Brahmaputra Valley.

The effect of immigration from East Bengal has been viewed from various perspectives on various occasions. Mr. Bentink, a former Deputy Commissioner of Kamrup observed "In industry and skill they are an object lessons to the local cultivators ; they have reclaimed and brougut under permanent cultivation thousands of acres...."[13] However, the observations of Mr. Bentink do not hold good now if we take into consideration the rapid growth of population in the plains districts of Assam and of the fact that the mechanised cultivation has rendered vast areas of fallow land cultivable. The immigration has brought in its wake various social, political and economic problems. In 1951, Mr. R. B. Vaghaiwalla observed in this connection, as follows: "Their hunger for land was so great that in their eagerness to grasp as much land as they could cultivate, they not infrequently encroached on Government reserves and on lands belonging to the local people from which they could be evicted only with great difficulty.[14]

Undivided Lakhimpur district has also witnessed a phenomenal growth of Nepali population during the last seven decades. There were 49,902 Nepalese in 1961 as against only 400 in 1901. The bulk of the Nepali population lived in rural areas. The 1961 Census has revealed that 42,054 Nepalese live in rural areas. They earn their living as graziers and some of them have settled down to cultivation. Sugar cane is a crop to which they have devoted considerable attention.

There were 2,212 Punjabi speaking people in the district in 1961 as against a few hundreds in 1901. Most of them have migrated from the Punjab, and by profession are contractors, drivers, mechanics, and carpenters who find employment mostly in the railways and tea gardens. The other categories of immigrants such as businessmen from western India, and labourers other than tea garden labourers from various parts of India have migrated to the district in the last few decades ; but they constitute only a tiny fraction of the total population of the undivided

13. *Census of India*, 1921; *Vol. III, Pt. I*, p. 41.
14. *Census of India*, 1951 ; *Vol, XII, Pt. I-A*, p.77.

Lakhimpur district. In 1961, there were 2614 Marwaries, of whom 1,902 lived in towns,. In the beginning of this century the Marwari merchants found a lucrative bussiness in the numerous tea gardens. For long, they virtually controlled the wholesale trade of the district.

There were about one lakh and seventy nine thousand labourers, working in tea gardens, mines and quarries etc. in 1961. Majority of these persons or their ancestors migrated from various parts of central India and northern India and most of them settled permanently. The process of mass immigration from other parts of India to the tea gardens of Lakhimpur slowed down after 1930 ; even then the percentage of tea garden immigrant population was as high as 25.7 per cent in 1951.

Distribution of population between Urban and Rural areas : Towns : In 1901 undivided Lakhimpur district contained only one town with a population of 11222 persons. Within a few decades the urban population and the number of towns increased manifold. As against only one town in 1901, there were four in 1921, nine in 1961 and twelve in 1971. The impact of urbanisation in 1971 has been more pronounced in the undivided Lakhimpur district than in any other district of Assam. According to 1971 census, "*Provisional Population Totals*" 243,173 persons live in twelve towns of the district. They constitute 11.48 per cent of the total population and 12.90 per cent of the entire rural population of the district. This is the highest proportion of the urban population to the total population among all the districts of Assam. Mizo Hills district occupied the second place in this respect having 11.55 per cent of the urban population to the total population of the district.

The 1971 Census shows the progress of urbanisation in the two newly created districts. There are only two towns in Lakhimpur district as against ten in Dibrugarh district. Our of seven lakhs nine thousand persons inhabiting Lakhimpur district in 1971, only twenty five thousand persons live in towns. Thus, in Lakhimpur district the urban population constitutes only 3.52 per cent of the total population. On the other hand, Dibrugarh district has the urban population of two lakhs and eighteen thousand persons. The total population of this district in 1971, being approximately fourteen lakhs and nine thousand its urban population thus constitutes 15.42 per cent of the total population. Rapid industrialisation has changed the face of Dibrugarh district whereas present Lakhimpur district on the north bank of the Brahmaputra still presents a panoroma of rural homogeneity. The growth of urban population in the undivided Lakhimpur district since the beginning of this century is indicated in the following table.

Undivided Lakhimpur district.
Growth of Urban Population in 1971
with variations since 1901.[15]

Name of the Subdivision.	Name of the town	Year	Persons	Percentage of decade variation
Dibrugarh Subdivision	(1) Dibrugarh	1901	11,227	—
		1911	14,563	+29.71
		1921	16,007	+ 9.92
		1931	18,734	+ 17.04
		1941	23,191	+ 23.79
		1951	37,991	+ 63.82
		1961	58,480	+ 53.93
		1971	80,344	+ 37.39
	(2) Tinsukia	1921	3,080	—
		1931	5,160	+ 67.53
		1941	8,338	+ 61.59
		1951	12,245	+ 46.86
		1961	28,468	+132.49
		1971	55,392	+ 94.58
	(3) Doom Dooma	1921	1,162	—
		1931	1,900	+ 63.51
		1941	2,177	+ 14.57
		1951	3,099	+ 42.35
		1961	8,192	+132.07
		1971	10,425	+ 27.59
	(4) Naharkatiya	1961	8,877	—
		1971	10,786	+ 21.51
	(5) Chabua	1961	2,533	—
		1971	3,929	+ 55.18
	(6) Digboi Town Committee	1961	18,235	—
		1971	16,605	+ 8.94
	(7) Digboi Oil Town	1961	16,793	—
		1971	15,626	– 6.95
	(8) Makum	1971	5,987	—
	(9) Duliajan Oil town	1971	10,542	—
	(10) Namrup	1971	7,965	—

15. *Census of India*, 1961, *District Census Handbook Lakhimpur* ; pp. 219-220 ; *Census of India*, 1971, *Assam Provisional Population Totals* , pp. 8-13.

Name of the Subdivision	Name of the town	Year	Persons	Percentage of decade variation
North Lakhimpur Subdivision	(11) North Lakhimpur	1921	1,966	—
		1931	2,120	+ 7.83
		1941	2,790	+ 31.60
		1951	3,094	+ 10.90
		1961	6,576	+112.54
		1971	20,215	+207.41
	(12) Bihpuria Tin Ali	1961	3,198	—
		1971	5,356	+ 67.48
Dhemaji Subdivision	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

Villages :In 1901 there were only 1123 villages in the undivided Lakhimpur district. The old records show that at the turn of this century these villages were not well defined units ; but were merely clusters of huts which stood out clearly in the centre of fields tilled by their inhabitants. Rice, the staple crop was grown in wide plains, dotted over with clumps of bamboos and fruit trees in which were buried the houses of the cultivators. It was groves and not villages that the traveller saw when riding through the more densly populated portions of the district, and not a house could usually be seen till he had penetrated this jungle of plaintains, betelnut trees and bamboos. There was generally no dearth of building sites, there were no communal lands, and there was nothing to keep the population together. It was difficult to tell where one village ended and another began, or to which of the larger clumps of trees should be assigned the smaller clumps which were freely dotted about amongst the rice fields. The result was that the statistics showing the size of villages were of little practical importance ; but taking them for what they were worth, it appeared that in 1901 about nine tenths of villages were small hamlets with less than 500 inhabitants.

During the last few decades the district has made enormous progress in the fields of industry, agriculture, medical aid etc. However, life that jogs numerous villages is even today, largely tradition bound. A cross-country soujourn, even now, becomes an occasion of unrelieved tedium, except for the idyllic beauty of the countryside. With the growth of human habitation more villages have sprung up, robbing the nature of its wilderness ; the villages with undefined boundaries, as described in the old records have gradually been transformed into more

homogenic units, having schools, roads and many other basic amenities of modern living.

Though the villages of the interior areas do not pulsate with activities yet in the foreground there are numerous villages which have been electrified and have many of the suburban characteristics. Particularly the villages adjacent to important towns of the district fall into this category. Even in some remote areas one comes across villages which have more than one school, a library, a dispensary, a Panchayat office and even one or two playgrounds. In the evening, the elderly people of the village assemble either in front of the Panchayat office or in the library premises to listen to the evening broadcasts of the All India Radio and specially its rural programme. In more advanced villages the percentage of literacy is fairly high and the incidence of diseases is relatively low. In these villages the houses are well laid-out in spacious compounds along a network of good roads. Besides the groceries, there are, in many villages, shops where cosmetics, wearing apparels, toys etc, are tastefully displayed. Life in villages is becoming increasingly dependent on the towns not only for its employment potential but also for articles of daily necessities which in earlier times were produced by the villagers themselves.

There were 3721 villages in the undivided Lakhimpur district in 1961. 1232 villages, where population was less than 200 in each village accommodated 10 percent of the total rural population. 1260 villages fall in the population group of 200 to 499. As many as 3,99,154 persons living in these villages constituted 28 percent of the total rural population. 346944 persons constituting 25 percent of the entire rural population lived in 520 villages where population varied from 555 to 999 persons. One group of villages, comprising 174 villages held 1000 to 1999 persons. About 18 percent of the total rural population, numbering 2,49,109 persons lived in these villages. The next higher population group of 2000 to 4999 was found in 79 villages inhabited by 2,38,523 persons or 17 percent of the total rural population. 35,136 persons consisting only 2 percent of the total rural population lived in six villages of Makum, Margherita, Samdang T. E., Deamuli T. E., Rutrui T. E. and Borpowai T. E., each falling in the population group of 5000-9999 persons. It is interesting to note that no less than 65 percent of villages are small hamlets with less than 500 inhabitants.

Displaced persons : In the wake of partition large number of Hindu refugees migrated into Assam. It was revealed in 1951 Census that the large majority of refugees settled down in the Assam plains. The impact of this migration was not so keenly felt in the undivided district of Lakhimpur as in some other districts of Assam, such as Cachar, Goalpara, Kamrup and Nowgong. Only 13,965 refugees migrated into the

undivided Lakhimpur district. This contributed to an increase of 1.6 percent over 1941 population of the district. Only 2959 refugees were censused in the urban areas, while the remaining 11,006 displaced persons settled in rural areas. From time to time large number of refugees have migrated into the districts of Assam, since 1946, till 1971.

(b) **Languages and dialects** : In 1961 the people of Lakhimpur district spoke as many nintyseven different languages and dialects. Assamese was the most widely spoken language, followed by Bengali which claimed approximately one eighth of the Assamese speaking population. The rest of languages and dialects are spoken by an infinitesimal fraction of the total population. Nearly 62.99 percent of the total population spoke Assamese, 8.17 percent Bengali, 7 percent Hindi, 4.07 percent Miri, 3.59 percent Oriya, 3.19 percent Nepali, 2.46 Munda (unspecified), 1.19 percent Mishing and 1.03 percent Sadan or Sadri. Speakers of nearly other eighty dialects constitute even less than seven percent of the total population. The following table indicates the position of different languages in the district.

Statement of languages, dialects spoken in the district.[16]

District or Subdivision		Assamese	Bengali	Hindi	Miri
District	T	985157	127874	109594	63746
	R	939787	71808	79582	63641
	U	45370	56066	30012	105
North Lakhimpur Subdivision	T	261751	11049	9084	48236
	R	255199	9728	7923	48156
	U	6552	1321	1161	80
Dibrugarh	T	723406	116825	100510	15510
	R	684588	62080	71659	15484
	U	58818	54745	28851	25

District or Subdivision		Oriya	Nepali	Munda	Mishing	Sadri or Sadan
District	T	56237	49902	38525	18653	16243
	R	55407	42054	38337	18645	16236
	U	830	7848	188	8	7
North Lakhimpur Sub-division	T	3402	8463	5516	539	5519
	R	3397	8345	5483	539	5513
	U	5	118	33	—	6
Dibrugarh	T	52835	41439	33009	18114	10724
	R	52010	33709	32854	18106	10723
	U	825	7730	155	8	1

16. *Census of India* 1961. *District Census Handbook, Lakhimpur*, pp. 333-343.

The above figures are in striking contrast to the corresponding figures showing the numerical strength of different linguistic groups in 1901 when there were only 39 per cent Assamese, and 53 per cent of the total population spoke languages commonly spoken outside Assam. 21 per cent of the total population professed to speak Bengali ; but as observed by B. C. Allen "it is doubtful whether, to an Assamese, Bengali means anything more than a foreign tongue, and this term probably included many forms of speech which would have been by no means understanded of the people of Nadiya".[17]

The origin of Assamese which is the principal language of this district goes back to antiquity. Dr. P. C. Choudhury has observed that epigraphs, though written in Sanskrit, show that as early as the 7th century A. D. some of the Assamese formations were used in the epigroahs in their present forms and in the same sense.[18] Several scholars, including Grierson, S K Chatterji are of the view that Assamese, Bengali, Oriya and Bihari originated from the eastern variety of Magadhan Prakrit.[19] Dr. B. Kakati has shown that both Assamese and Bengali "started on parallel lines with peculiar dialectical predispositions and often developed sharply contradictory idiosyncrasies"[20]. He has further illustrated how the Austric, Kolerian, Malayan, Bodo and other elements have enriched Assamese vocabulary. "The substratum of both the Mon-khmer and Tibeto-Burman speech in Assamese vocabulary" observes Dr. P. C. Choudhury, "points definitely to the early evolution of their dialects".[21] Dr. S. N. Sarma has shown that the evolution of Assamese literature on independent lines took place from the middle of the tenth century[22]

The present Assamese script is not an outcome of natural evolution but is the product of certain historical factors. The earliest specimen of Assamese script is provided by the copper plates and various inscriptions of Assam. Dr. S. N. Sarma has observed that the ancient Assamese script was the corrupt form of the East Indian script of the Gupta period.[23] This however differs from the script that was used in the Ahom period. From the thirteenth century till the nineteenth century the bark of the aloe wood (**sancipat**) was used in place of paper.

17. B. C. Allen—*Assam District Gazetteers, Lakhimpur* (1905), p. 106.
18. Dr. P. C. Choudhury—*The History of the Civiliasation of the People of Assam to the Twelfth Century* A. D. ; p. 391.
19. Grierson—*Linguistic Survey of India* ; Vol. I, pt. I, p. 126 ; S. K. Chatterji ; *Origin and Development of Bengali language* ; pp. 139-40.
20. Dr. B. Kakati ; *Assamese—Its Formation and Development* ; 1972 ; p 8.
21. Dr. P. C. Choudhury ; *History of the Civiliasation of the People of Assam upto the Twelfth Century*. A. D. ; p. 391.
22. Dr. S. N. Sarma ; *Asomiya Sahityar Itibritya*, 1959 ; p. 6.
23. Ibid p. 8.

These books were written in early Assamese script which Dr. Sarma divided into three categories, *Gargayan*, *Bamuniya*, and *Kaytheli* or *Lahkari*. Assamese script which is currently in use differs widely from its earlier specimens. The Missionaries brought out several books in Assamese in the nineteenth century from Bengal and used the same script for both Bengali and Assamese books. During this period Bengali, was taught in schools for more than fifty years. The present Assamese script has several letters such as 'ৰ' 'ৱ'; the latter is absent in Bengali script and the former is written differently.

Some of the pastoral ballads, such as *Bihu-geet* which is popular among the Assamese speaking people of the district, represent the early specimen of unwritten Assamese poetry. However the Buddhist *dohas* and the writings of the Tantrik Buddhist *siddhas* are supposed to be the earliest forms of Assamese written literature. The Ahoms who ruled this district for several centuries patronised Assamese literature not only by maintaining poets, writers and scholars on their staff but also endowing on many of them land grants and liberal largess. Large number of chronicles which were known as *Buranjis*, written during this period constitute an unprecedented golden chapter of Assamese literature ; these *Buranjis* are believed to be the precursor of the modern Assamese prose writtings. Bhattadeva (1558-1638) whose superb prose writings constitute some of the priceless gems of Assamese literature is regarded as one of the earliest prose writter in the regional languages in India. Assamese literature of this period was prodigious and variegated. Not only Sanskrit epics and Puranas were translated but also many valuable treatises on cattle diseases, astronomy, dance poses, sexology, dramas and biographies etc. were written in Assamese during this period. Besides the royal patronage, the Vaishnavite movement which swept the land during the mediaeval period immensely contributed to the growth and development of Assamese literature. Sankardeva (1449-1568) and his disciples composed literary works based on Sanskrit *Sastras*, with a view to propagate religious doctrines and tenets. They possesed wonderful gift of translation and their writings were couched in terms which rendered tough diducticism easily intelligible. They wielded their pen not merely to glean the abstruse philosophical doctrines of the Sanskrit epics and Puranas, but to render these into rare gems of poetry.

The Treaty of Yandaboo, which was concluded in 1826, may be regarded as the watershed of the political, social and cultural life in Assam. Apart from bringing an end of the ancient regime, it also ushered in a new era of Assamese literature which derived a large fund of inspiration from the western literature. In 1836, Bengali was made the court language and medium of instruction in Assam, following manoeuvres repugnant to the basic needs of the indigeneous people. The myth of efficacy of this arrangement was exploded by several scholars including A. J. Moffat Mills who observed in 1853 as follows "An English youth is not taught Latin until he is well-grounded in English, and in the same manner an Assamese should not be taught a foreign language until he knows his own".[24] Being deprived of its legitimate place in the courts and in educational institutions, Assamese lost its initiative to grow during this period. The rejuvenation of Assamese literature started in new vigour when Assamese was restored to its legitimate place in 1873. Meanwhile the American Baptist Mission most judiciously gave this language a fresh fillip and brought out scores of books and the first Assamese magazine, the *Arunodoi* which marked the beginning of the modern phase of Assamese literature. The phenomenal progress which Assamese literature has made in all its branches since then has not only earned her a place in the Constitution of India as a major regional language, but also put her at par with other recognised regional languages of India, both in repsect of its depth and expansiveness.

Assam-Burmese branch of Tibeto-Burman linguistic group ; Several tribes of the undivided Lakhimpur district have dialects of their own. Some of the scholars have regarded these dialects as language. A few of these are discussed below.

Chutiya : It has been pointed out earlier that the Chutiyas ruled over extensive parts of the undivided Lakhimpur district in the past. They spoke in the language of their own ; but it is now fast dying out and is confined among the Deuris, who formed the priestly caste of the Chutiya tribe. Grierson has observed as follows "They have preserved, in the midst of a number of alien races the language, religion and customs which they brought about a hundred years ago from the country east of Sadiya and which, we may presume, have descended to them with comparatively little change from a period anterior to the Ahom invasion of Assam. Their present seats are on the Majuli islands in Sibsagar, and on the Dikrong river in North Lakhimpur. Of all the languages of the Bodo Group, owing no doubt to its religions associates, it appears to have preserved the oldest characteristic, and the approach most nearly the original form of speech from which they are all derived. It and Kachari represent the two extremes the least developed and the most developed of the group. Like the latter, it exhibits the remarkable faculty for forming compound verbs to which attention has already been drawn. This is probably a characteristic of all the dialects of the Bodo group, but it is only these which have been throughly studied, so that we cannot as yet be certain about the others"[25] At present, the Deuris speak this dialect. Dr. U. N. Goswami has recently made an elaborate

24. A. J. Mills ; *Report on the Province of Assam*, Calcutta, 1854.

25. Grierson ; *Lingusistic Survey of India*, Vol. I, pt· I, p. 24.

analysis of Deuri language showing its distinctive characteristics.[26] Dr. Goswami has observed that only the people of Dibongiya Khel speak it at present, and in the field of phonology the language posseses seven vowels and eighteen consonants with two semivowels.[27]

Moran : The Moran is the name of a tribe. They rose into prominence during the Ahom period. Grierson has recognised their language as a distnict one. Their language belonged to the Bodo group, but they have nearly all abondoned it in favour of Assamese.[28]

Boro : There are large number of people belonging to Boro, Boro-Kachari community in the undivided Lakhimpur district, as revealed in 1961 Census. Dr. P. C. Bhattacharya has observed "The Boro (Bodo) language belongs to the western branch of Barish section under Baric division of the Sino-Tibetan family, as per the classification given by Robert Shafer. The *Linguistic Survey of India* describes the Boro or the Boro-Kachari as a member of the Boro (Bodo) sub-section under the Assam-Burma group of the Tibeto-Burman branch of Sino-Tibetan or Tibeto-Chinese speech family. The Boro speaking areas of Assam at present are stretching from Dhubri in the west to Sadiya in the east. In N. E. F. A., Tripura and Nagaland also we have a small number of the Boros or Boro-Kacharis. In Jalpaiguri and other adjacent districts of Bengal, the Boros are known as Mech. The Boro language of Assam has at least four clear-cut dialect areas with a sufficient number of dialectal variations ; these may be called north-western, south-western, north-central and southern dialect areas with phonological, morphological and glossarial differences."

"The Boro language is said to have no inherited script at present. Shri Bishnu Prasad Rabha, the famous artist of Assam, told me that in ancient times there were a kind of *Deodhai* script among the Kacharis (Boros and Dimasas). Shri Rabha gathered a few specimens of *Deodhai* alphabet from an informant of Dimapur area which was noted for the Kachari reign and remains representing the art and architecture. At present the Boros make use of the Assamese alphabet and the Roman alphabet as modified to suit their need. The Boro Christians only usually write their text-books and religious matters in the medium of Roman scripts ; other Boros forming a clear majority write in the modified Assamese scripts. The Boro Sahitya Sabha has accepted the modified Assamese scripts for use in their text-book and literature. Since 1963 the Boro language has been introduced as the medium of instruc-

26. Dr. U. N. Goswami, '*A note on Deuris and their language*,' published in the *Journal of the University of Gauhati* Vol, X, No. I, Arts 1959. *An analysis of the Deuri language*, published in *the Journal of the Assam Research Society*, Vol. XVII, 1966.
27. Dr. U. N. Goswami ; *Some socio-linguistic aspects of the Deuris*, published in *the Journal of the Assam Research Society*, Vol. XVII, 1966.
28. Grierson ; *Linguistic Survey of India*. Vol. I, Pt. I, p. 65.

tions in the Boro predominent primary schools of Kokrajhar subdivision in the district of Goalpara. The literacy is slowly but steadily increasing. In 1954 there were eighty seven graduates of Arts, Science, Medicine and Engineering among the Boros".

"The Boro literature consists of the vast amount of oral literature including folksongs, folktales, ballads, and proverbs and of the considerable amount of written and published literature in Assamese and Roman scripts. The published literature comprises of books relating to prayers and songs, poems stories on the one hand and journals and magazines with different types of prose and verse on the other hand. There are unpublished novels and dramas too so far my knowledge goes. The themes and beauties of Boro literature will reveal their mode of life and attitude towards nature. The rhyming metres of Boro verse and songs always appeal to the reader's ear and heart".[29]

Grierson has observed as follows, "Their language is a fairly rich one, and is remarkable for the great base with which roots can be the compounded together, so as to express the most complex idea in a single *portmanteau* word. For instance, the sentence "go and take and see and observe carefully" is indicated by a single word in Kachari. Of all the languages of the group it is phonetically developed, and here and there shows signs of the commencement of that true inflexion which is strong to most agglutinative languages."[30]

Ahom languages : There are four important linguistic groups in Assam. These are,—(1) Austro-Asiatic, (2) Tibeto-Chinese, (3) Dravidian and (4) Indo-European. The second is divided into two sub families, Tibeto-Burman and Siamese-Chinese. Only the Tai group of the Siamese-Chinese linguistic group is found in Assam. The Tai group includes the language of the Ahoms, the Khamptis, the Turungs, the Phakials, the Noras and some other kindred groups. People belonging to this language group, though scattered in several parts of Assam, are mostly found in Lakhimpur, Dibrugarh and Sibsagar districts.

The Ahoms who ruled Assam for about six hundred years used their own language which had a script of its own. Besides being the language of the ruling section, it was also a store-house of invaluable chronicles known as *Buranjis* which contained careful, reliable and continuous narrative about the Ahoms. In the latter period *Buranjis* came to be compiled in Assamese. In course of time Ahom language ceased to be popular among the Ahoms and came to be confined to a section of their priestly caste. Hem Barua has thus observed "The Ahoms no doubt built kingdom here, but the pressure from the bottom *enmasse* was

29. P. C. Bhattacharya ; '*A few elements of the Indo-Mongoloid Boro Culture*' Published in the *Journal of the Assam Reserch Society*, Vol. XVI, 1964.
30. Grierson ; *Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol. I. Pt. I, pp. 62-63.

such that the captors, so far as linguistic and culture history is concerned, became ultimately the captives. Finally, in course of time, they abandoned their own language and adopted and assimilated the language of the people they ruled ; the only people who know their language today to some extent are the *Deodhais* and *Bailungs*, tribal astrologers and priests."[31]

Miri : Miri belongs to the Tibeto.– Chinese group of languages. In 1911 the Abor-Miri group was spoken by 56794 persons in Assam but in 1961 it was the mother tongue of more than sixty one thousand Miris of undivided Laikhimpur district.[32] They have a wide range of pastoral ballads and folk tales most of which are yet to come out in print.

Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh districts are melting pots of many tribes and races. The multiplicity of dialects of the people of these two districts has so far eluded a comprehensive study. We have discussed above only a few of these, not because these are richer or more popular than their sister dialects, but because materials on others are rather scanty and the dividing line between many of these dialects is too thin to afford an exclusive treatment.

Bilingualism : Many of the scheduled tribes of the two districts have their own languages and dialects as shown above. Because of their age-old association with the people of other linguistic groups, the members of these tribes speak some other languages as subsidiary languages besides their own. Thus, in 1961 Census it has been revealed that the mother tongue of 37498 persons of Kachari (including Sonowal) tribe is Assamese ; among them 3549 persons speak English, Hindi and Kachari as subsidiary language. Among the Boro, Boro-kacharis, Assamese is the mother tongue of 6,876 persons, and 1134 persons of this group speak Hindi, English and Bengali as subsidiary language. Kachari is the mother tongue of 8816 persons belonging to Kachari (including Sonowal) tribe ; 4092 persons of this group speak Assamese, English and Hindi as subsidiary language. Out of 61964 Miris, not less than 58670 persons speak Assamese, and only 129 persons speak Bengali, English, Hindi and Nepali as subsidiary language although Miri is the mother tongue of all the Miris of this group. Mishing is the mother tongue of 18653 Miris and it is significant that none of them speak subdidiary language. 44469 Miris have shown Assamese as their mother tongue, and 1076 persons among them have some subsidary languages. It is interesting to note that nearly sixty thousand persons belonging to various tribes such as Boro-Borokachari, Deori, Kachar including Sonowal, Lalung, Mech, Miri

31. Hem Barua ; *The Red River and the Blue Hill.* (1962) pp. 99-100.
32. *Census of India*, 1911, Vol. III, Pt. I, p. 104 ; *Censns of India*, 1961, Lakhimpur, district, p. 414.

and Rabha speak Assamese as their mother tongue ; but only about nine thousand persons of this group have subsidiary languages, In case of other groups whose mother tongue is one of the tribal languages or dialects, a large section of people have boen returned as having Assamese as a subsidiary language.

(e) Religion and Caste :

Hindusim and other religions : According to 1961 Census, 99 per cent of the total population of the undivided Lakhimpur district are the followers of three religions—Hinduism, Islam and Christianity in the order of numerical strength, Buddhists, Sikhs and Jains are also there but they constitute less than one per cent of the total population. The fact that more than 89 per cent of the total population are Hindus clearly shows the Hindu preponderance in the district. The following table gives a religionwise break-up of the total population.

Total population : 1563842 (1961 *Census*)

Religion	Population	Percentage of the total population
Hindu	1407035	(89.97%)
Muslim	88242	(5.64%)
Christian	54309	(3.47%)
Buddhist	8212	(.52%)
Sikh	2670	(.17%)
Jains	1610	(.1%)
Other religions	1702	(.11%)
Religion not stated	62	

The currents of the religious life of the district is both wide and variegated. Hinduism, as is professed in the district, can be broadly classified into three sects—*Saktism*, *Saivism* and *Vaishnavism*. A small percentage of the total population observe religious rites having very deep roots in the primitive religious practices and observances which are described as Animism. It is now generally believed that the old classification into Hindusim and Animism is meaningless. The process of integration which has been at work for centuries has brought the tribal people closer to Hinduism in the sense that the tribal people not only cater to a constellation of malevolent spirits but also worship trees, plants, the sun, the moon and some gods belonging to the Hindu pantheon. Apart from the fact that the sun and the moon are included in the multigod pantheon by the Hindus, they have no objection to pay homage to a few tribal gods or goddesses. The Christianity and Buddhism also rocked the bastions of primitive religion slowly but steadily,

bringing in its fold many people who were euphemistically called Animists.

Different Sects of Hinduism : Saktism : Thirty four percent of the Hindus of the undivided Lakhimpur district returned as such in 1901 described themselves as followers of *Sakti* or worshippers of the reproductive powers as manifested female. More than half of these *Saktists* were, however, from the tea plantations, and a considerable number of those living in the villages were probably ex-tea-garden labourers. The great majority of these persons were no doubt so styled, because they ate meat and drank liquor, though this in a garden labourer is often not so much as indication of his adherence to the goddess *Kali* or *Durga*, as of the uncertainity of his sectarian creed.

Assam is believed to have been at one time the home of *Tantrikism* The Kamakhya temple at Gauhati, the Kachaikhati temple at Sadiya and other *Sakta* temples at Dergaon, North Lakhimpur and other places bear proof of *Tantrik* influences in ancient Kamarupa. *Tantrik* rituals in their debased forms are known to have been practicised in Assam in the centuries preceding the *Vaishnava* revival. Ahom monarchs, when they were Hinduised, were at first initiated into *Vaishnavism* which was the predominent faith in Assam at that time. Gadadhar Sinha who succeeded *Lora Raja* in 1681 and his son Rudra Sinha showed leanings towards *Saktism* and from the father's death onwards that faith became the creed of the Ahom sovereigns and of the principal nobles and officers. That *Saktism* was widespread in the undivided Lakhimpur district in the past is evidenced by many *Sakta* temples which stand on either bank of the Brahmaputra. Human sacrifice was prevalent in the past in the temple of Tamreswari. Goddess *Kachaikhati* is believed to be a manifestation of the goddess *Durga* or *Kali*. Goddess *Kachaikhati* was also worshipped at various places of the district. Now, the *Durga Puja* has emerged as one of the biggest festivals of the district.

Saivism : *Saivism* is the counterpart of *Saktism* and is concerned with the worship of the procreative energy as manifested in the male. In 1901, 9079 persons in undivided Lakhimpur district professed this special form of Hinduism ; but it is doubtful whether the distinction between the worshippers of *Siva* and *Sakti* was very meticulously followed in this census. There are many *Siva* temples in this district. *Siva-Ratri* is observed with great eclat not only by the *Saivas* but also by the people of other sects.

Vaishnavism : The worship of *Vishnu* was prevalent in Assam from early times. Kings of ancient Kamarupa traced their lineage to *Vishnu* through Naraka, and many of them were worshippers of *Vishnu*. Bhaskaravarman is described in Bana's *Harsacharita* as a descendent of the *Vaishnavaa* family. *Vaishnavism*, however, occupied a subordinate position

during the later period. Decay and degeneration in the religious field led to a revival of the *Vaishnavite* faith in the fifteenth century. The harbinger of the *Vaishnava* Renaissance in Assam was Sankaradeva (1449-1568), who was ably assisted in this task by several disciples chief among whom was Madhavadeva (1489-1596).

Madhavadeva was born in a village at a small distance from Narayanpur of the present Lakhimpur district. The exact location of the place of birth of this great saint-poet is still a matter of controversy. Two separate *Satras* have been set up in two separate villages on the basis of some proofs about the place of birth of Madhavadeva. In his youth Madhavadeva was a staunch *Sakta* and was proud of his learning. In 1522 A. D., the *Sakta* youth Madhava, came to have a religious disputation with Sankaradeva at Dhuwahat, as he found that the *Vaishnava* leader was interdicting people from the worship of, and blood sacrifices to the *Devi*. The hot debate, which went on vigorously for quite a few hours, ended in the immediate conversion of Madhava, and he very readily gave up his occupation, and dissolved a maturing proposal for marriage to choose a life of celibacy and ardent devotion and service to the *guru*. He became Sankaradeva's dearest and closest disciple, supporting the *guru* in his proselytising and literary activities, and the greatest apostle of the newly found faith, giving poise and strength to the organisation of the *Vaishnava* order in Assam.

But soon followed a period of unrest for the *Vaishnavas* due to the hostility of the Brahmin priesthood, who found that its authority was being challenged by the new-fangled creed, which placed the Brahmin and the *pariah* alike on the same religious footing and opened the portals of sacred knowledge to the common man by rendering religious texts into the local language, minimised the importance of ritualism by extolling the *kirtana* form of worship and discarding the worship of many gods in favour of rigid monotheism. Sankara's followers were openly molested. He, therefore, arranged to meet the scholarly section of the hostile camp, and in the discussions that ensued the latter was completely routed. The opposition then vilely abused the ears of the Ahom monarch Suhungmung (1497-1539), against the religious rebel, who was immediately hauled up for trial, but the saint acquitted himself well in the presence of the king, and was let off with honour. All the same, there was no cessation of hostility ; and although Sankara's cousin Ramaraya, seems to have some administrative responsibility under the Ahoms, the Bhuyans, always suspected as a possible source of mischief, soon earned royal disfavour, and there was an order for the arrest of some of them including Sankaradeva. Madhava pursuaded the Master to go underground for a time ; and he himself and Sankara's son-in-law, Hari Bhuyan, were apprehended and taken to the capital at Gargaon

for trial. Hari was beheaded ; and Madhava, but an ascetic was kept under detention and then released.

This incident filled Sankara's mind with disgust which led him to leave the Ahom kingdom. The king of the western state of Koch Behar Nara Narayana (A. D. 1540-1584) and his brother and commander-in-chief of the Koch army, Sukladhvaja (the author of the *Saravati* commentary on the *Gitagovinda*), already well-known for their learning and wisdom, were leading an attack on the northern parts of the Ahom-kingdom. Some of the Bhuyans related to Sankaradeva and his group, had already joined the Koch camp. Sankara and his followers seized this opportunity, and rowed down the Brahmaputra for safety within the Koch State. Sankaradeva visited the Koch capital several times after this ; and it was here that he passed away in 1568 A. D. His teachings and his message of love have permeated into the very being of the people and enlivened their national consciousness. His name is ever on his nation's lips, and his music in the country's heart.

Sankaradeva was the founder of Neo-Vaishnavism in Assam. He did away with the worship of images, the elaborate rituals and sacrifices and the esoteric rites practised by the *Saktas*. His creed is known as the *Eka-Sarana-Nama-Dharma* or the religion of the worship of only one god *Vishnu* through recitation of his name, in hymns and prayers. He prescribed *bhakti* or devotion of the '*dasya*' school for his followers. As his teachings were based mainly on the *Bhagavata-Purana*, it is also known as the *Bhagawati Dharma*.

Sankaradeva nominated Madhavadeva (1489-1596) as his successor to hold charge of the order. Madhavadeva sent out holy men as apostles of the *Bhakti* faith, the chief among them being Gopaldeva of Bhavanipur, Padma Ata, and Gopaldeva better known as Vamsigopal. The nomination of Vamsigopala, a Brahmin, was also approved by Damodaradeva, another Brahmin saint. These three apostles and their deputies established *Satras* mostly in Assam, that is the Ahom kingdom. Some of their *Satras* are very rich, and each claims a large and widespread laity. Gopaldeva of Bhavanipur (1541-1611) spread the message of the *Bhagavata* among the Ahoms, Morans, Kacharis and Chutiyas in addition to Brahmins, Kayasthas and Kalitas. Twelve *Satras* were established under the auspices of Gopaldeva.

The followers of Gopaldeva formed into a school, characterised by catholicity and democratic outlook and freedom from the tyranny of creeds. It particularly thrived and acquired large followings in the north-eastern parts of Assam where the Tibeto-Burman population was predominating and brought under its fold large number of people from animistic practices. His disciple, Aniruddha founded Moamaria sect and a *Satra* on the bank of Moamaria *beel* of North Lakhimpur. The followers of this sect rose in revolt as one man against royal oppression

(1769) and succeeded in subverting the Ahom power for sometime. The history of *Vaishnavism* in Assam is one of many conflicts and persecutions. The course of political history of this eastern part of India also had been changing considerably from time to time. But the Renaissance, which had its beginnings in the activities of Sankaradeva, has brought itself into fulfilment in many ways, and marked out a definite place for Assam in the cultural map of India.

Several *Vaishnava* apostles were born in some parts of the present Lakhimpur district. Apart from Madhavadeva who was born at Narayanpur area, Srihari (1540-1659) another *Vaishnava* apostle was born at Narayanpur. Badaluwa Padma Ata who is considered to be the junior-most of the disciples of Madhavdeva, directly appointed as apostle by him, was born at Narayanpur. Aniruddha, the founder of Mayamara *Satra* and one of the twelve apostles appointed by Gopala Ata was born at Dhalpur mauza.

The Institution of Satras : There are a number of *Satras* in Lakhimpur district. These *Satras* are more or less religious colleges of the Hindus resembling in some respects the mediaevel monasteries. There is a head called *Adhikar* in each *Satra* who is considered as *Guru* at the time of initiation by an adult before marriage. The *Gurus* are installed in most cases under conventional rights of succession and inheritence ; in one or two cases selection by election also takes place. The law of primogeniture is usually followed in the house holding *Satras*, while in the *Satras* of celibates one *Deka Adhikar* succeeds him ceremoniously.

In some *Satras* the *Bhakats* (resident monks) earn their livelihood by cultivation. In the rest, especially in those having large estates of *Devottar* or *Lakheraj* lands, some villages of disciples or lands are pegged to each *Bhakat* who collects from these people some gifts and gets a share out of these collection for his maintenance. The members of the *Satra* establishments viz., *Pathak* or the reader of prayer, the *Bhagawati* or the expounder of the *Bhagawat Purana*, *Bharali* or the storekeeper, the *Al-dhara* or *Satradhikar's* personal attendants etc., are either paid in cash or kind, or in both.

Most, of the Assamese Hindu families are associated with one *Satra* or the other by initiation. With a few exceptions these *Satras* preach *Vaishnavism*. Sankaradeva was the founder of the *Satra* movement in Assam. He brought about a religious, social and cultural revolution in Assam. The religious dramas known as *Bhaonas* introduced by him are still performed in *Satras* with equal pomp and gaiety. The *Satras* are also treasure houses of beautiful articles. Important *Satras* of Dibrugarh district are Dinjan *Satras*, Moran Tiphuk *Satra*, Gorpara *Satra*, Madarkaat Mayamara *Satra*, Dihing Namati *Satra*, Khatpara *Satra* etc. Of the numerous *Satras* of the present Lakhimpur district, the following

may be mentioned : Naroa *Satra*,' (in Gohain mauza), Gharmara *Satra* situated near Lakhimpur town, Barmahara *Satra*, Madhabar *Satra* situated near Bihpuria, Kangsapara *Satra* near Narayanpur, Gajala *Satra* situated at North Lakhimpur, Nachinipur *Satra*, Narayanpur' *Satra*, Gobindpur *Satra* in Mechkhowa mauza, Dahghar *Satra*, Dhal *Satra*, Toali *Satra*, Lengdi *Satra*, Bishnu-Balikuchi *Satra*, Dabarapar *Satra* etc.

Islam : In 1872, there were only 3826 Muhammadans in the undivided Lakhimpur district ; but by 1901, their number had risen to 11925, forming three percent of the total population. In 1951, total population of this community stood at 52482 constituting 4.66 percent of the total population. In 1961, the district had a Muslim population of 88242 persons constituting 5.64 percent of the total population, and revealed a rise by 68.14 percent over 1951 population. Of this 69189 persons came from the rural areas and the rest 19053 were in the urban areas.

The first batch of Muhammadan immigrants in the district is said to have settled about 160 years back at North Lakhimpur and Jaipur. With the advent of the Britishers, Muhammadan sepoys were brought and stationed at Dibrugarh. These sepoys in due course entered into marital alliances with local people and settled themselves in the cantonment areas. There were other Muslim migrants such as boatmen and traders from Bengal, besides a certain number of tea garden employees. There are sixteen mosques in the Dibrugarh town and of them Mirjabag Masjid is the biggest edifice. Near the Dibrugarh railway station, there is one mosque known as *Boga Babar Majar* where people of different communities congregate and offer candles and oil lamps.

It may be noted that the local Muhammadans, like the Hindu families have adopted some of the titles of high offices held previously under the Ahom rule. They actively participate in the observance of the *Bihu* festival which is the national festival of Assam. The *Muharram*, *Id-ul-fitre* and other Muslim festivals are celebrated by them in their own traditional manner.

Christianity : Undivided Lakhimpur district contained large number of converted Christians as in other districts of the Brahmaputra valley. In 1881, there were only 610 converted Christians ; in 1891, 1248 and by 1901 the figure stood at 2608. The Christian population further rose to 35690 in 1951 and the 1961 Census revealed that in undivided Lakhimpur district, there were 54309 Christians, constituting 3.47 of the total population. Most of these Christians are members of American Baptist Mission or Anglical Communion. A number of churches were established, throughout the district and some of these are : All Saints Church at Chabua ; Saint Patric Church at Athabari in Dibrugarh ; Saint Margaret Church at Margherita ; Cathedral of the

Sacred Heart of Jesus ; Church at Gabhorupathar ; Saint Theresa of the Child of Jesus Church at Digboi, Roman Catholic Saint Franchis Church at Naharkatiya and Roman Catholic Saint Joseph's Church at Doom Dooma.

Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes : The 1961 Census revealed that 10.64 per cent of the total population of undivided Lakhimpur district belongs to the Scheduled Tribes comprising Boro-Borokachari, Deori, Kachari including Sonowal, Lalung, Mech, Miri and Rabha tribes. People belonging to Bansphor, Bhuinmali, Mali, Brittial Bania or Bania, Dhupi or Dhobi, Dugla or Dholi, Hira, Jhalo, Malo or Jhalo-Malo, Kaibartta or Jaliya, Mahara, Mehtar or Bhangi, Mudi or Pishi, Namasudra and Sutradhar castes who are broadly grouped under the Scheduled castes constitute 4.94 per cent of the total population. Thus, in 1961 there were 77,271 persons who belonged to the Scheduled castes and 1,66,525 persons who belonged to the Scheduled Tribes. A number of communities, castes or tribes come under the group "Other Backward Classes" which include Moran, Matak, tea garden labourers, ex-tea garden labourers, Ahom, Jogi, Chutiya, and Nepali (i.e.Thapa, Gurung, Lama, Newar, Lohar, Domai, Rai, Chetri, Limbu) etc. People belonging to these tribes, castes and classes enjoy a wide range of privileges as enshrined in the Constitution which aims at promoting their economic interests, and creating conditions congenial for improvement of their lot.

Principal Communities, Castes, Classes and Tribes : The undivided Lakhimpur district has ever been the melting pot of tribes and races. Waves of people belonging to various ethnic groups pouring into this region from time immemorial have effaced the isolation of racial groups inhabiting this eastern corner of Assam. The functional classification of the tribes which is supposed to be the root of the caste system gradually gave way to a more fluid type of social set-up and the rigidity of caste distinction markedly receded with the passage of time, particularly during the last few decades. In the context of the changed social pattern a detailed account of castes and tribes is bound to have its own limitation. Salient features of some of the castes and tribes inhabiting the district are indicated below.

Brahmins : The Brahmins are believed to be the early inhabitants of Assam. The Nidhanpur Grant shows that as early as the 6th century A. D., Bhutivarman (510-555A.D) donated lands to as many as 205 Brahmin families. Various other epigraphical and liiterary evidences clearly indicate that the Brahmins enjoyed a privileged position in Assam from the 5th-6th' century A.D. The kings of Varman and Pala dynasties of ancient Kamarupa performed *Yajnas* (sacrifices), presumably engaging the Brahmin priests. During the mediaeval period we find

ample references to Brahmins in the Assamese literary works many of which were composed by erudite Brahmin scholars of Assam. According to Dr. P. C. Choudhury the orthodox Brahmanical culture made a strongholds in Kamarupa (ancient Assam).[33]

It is interesting to note that Parasurama is believed to have washed his blood stains of matricide at Brahmakunda and regained his sainthood. Traditional account also indicates that Parasurama settled Brahmins near the present Parasurama Kunda. Many of the old temples were constructed by the Bhuyans in the north bank of the district, where deities were worshipped. All these show that from early times the Brahmins inhabited the tract which now comprises Dibrugarh and Lakhimpur districts. The population of this caste possibly swelled up following the influx of Brahmins from other parts of India at various times. However, the Brahmins constitute only a small fraction of the total population of the undivided Lakhimpur District.

Apart from observing the sacramental rites prescribed by Halayudha or Pasupati, the Brahmins also paractise *Sandhya* and *Yapa*. The *Upanayan*, or the ceremony of investiture of the holy thread is strictly observed by the Brahmins. Although they do not eschew meat or fish in general, the widows are not expected to touch these things. Worship of various Hindu gods and goddesses in the private prayer halls forms an important part of the religious activities of the Brahmins. Usually a Brahmin maintains a family deity. The Brahmins do not plough the land by themselves ; but work with the spade, and they constitute the priestly section of the Hindu society.

Kayastha : Kayasthas are believed to be Kshaytrias ; and in some *Smrities* such as *Visnu* and *Yagnavalka* Kayasthas are mentioned as administrative officers and keepers of public accounts. In *Kamrup Sasanavali* it has been shown that in the Nidhanpur grant the terms Karanika and Kayastha are used in the sense of officers and scribes.[34] Among the donees of the Nidhanpur grant there were Kayasthas and Nagar Brahmins with surnames *datta*, *soma* and *nandi* etc. The Kayasthas constitute a distinct caste who, according to Dr. P. C. Choudhury, made their way to Assam at an early period.[35] The Bara-Bhuyans who settled in areas which are included in the North Lakhimpur subdivision were Kayasthas ; but a few among the Bara-Bhuyans were Brahmins as well. Sankaradeva, the great saint-poet of Assam was a Kayastha by caste.

The Kayasthas observe some of the sacramental rites such as *Annaprasanam* and *Sudakarana*. The marriage and *sradha* ceremonies are

33. Dr. P. C. Choudhury ; *The History of Civilisation of the People of Assam upto 12th Century* ; p. 427.
34. P. N. Bhattacharya ; *Kamrup Sasanavali* ; p. 43.
35. Dr. P. C. Choudhury ; *History of the Civilisation of the People of Assam, upto 12th Centuary A.D.*, p. 338.

performed according to the *sastras*. The Kayasthas do not plough the land by themselves and earn their livelihood mostly by intellectual pursuits. There are many *Satradhikars* (heads of religious institution called *Satra*) of this caste. These people have been traditionally associated with preaching of Vaishnavism and have large number of disciples.

Kalitas : According to Dr. B. Kakati, Kalitas are not indigenous people of Assam.[36] They came to Assam, from Mithila, Kanauj and some other places of India, during the reign of Dharmapla (1095-1120 A.D.). In the *Kathaguru-charita*, we find reference to the *Kalita-desha*. Dr. B. Kakati believes that this *Kalita-desha* was located at a distance of about fifteen days walk to Assam plains from the Abor and the Miri Hills. Thus, it appears that Lakhimpur district was once the stronghold of the Kalitas. The traditional account of their origin that they were Kshaytrias who concealed their caste for fear of Parasurama has been rejected by some scholars of Assam.[37] That the Kalitas were a powerful caste in the past is proved by the accounts of foreign travellers such as Shihabuddin who divided the people of Assam into two groups the Ahoms and the Kalitas. Dalton has described the physical features of the Kalitas as follows. "The Kalitas exhibit a greater variety of complexion, and on the whole, are not so fair as the Ahoms and Chutiyas ; but they have oval faces, well shaped heads, high noses, large eyes, well-developed eye lids and eye-lashes and the light supple frame of the pure Hindu."[38] M. Martin, says about the Kalitas who served as priests of some other castes. Dr. B. Kakati, however believes that Mr. Martin, might have alluded to the Moamarias of Assam, in this connection.[39]

Whenever necessary, the Kalitas engage Brahmin priests to conduct the religious rites. They have professed various religious faiths and observe several sacramental rites prescribed in the *Dharma Sastras*. One section of the Kalitas were known as Barkalitas ; but this classification has now lost its earlier significance. Although the Kalitas are mainly agriculturists, they have taken to many more avocations to earn their livelihood.

Rajbansi or Koch : The Koches are one of the race castes of Assam. Originally they were an aboriginal tribe, apparently of Mongolian origin which at the beginning of the sixteenth century rose to power under their great leader Visva Sinha. His son, Nara Narayan, extended his conquests as far as upper Burma, and by the middle of the sixteenth century the Koch had attained a position of such power that the abori-

36. Dr. B. Kakati ; *Kalita Jatir Itibrittya* ; p. 2.
37. Kaliram Medhi ; *The Kalitas* ; published in the *Journal of the Assam Research Society* ; Vol, III, No. 3 ; p. 75.
38. Dalton ; *Ethnology of Bengal*, p, 77-78.
39. Dr. B. Kakati ; *Kalita Jatir Itibritya* ; p. 16.

ginal people were anxious to be enrolled as members of their tribe and called themselves Rajbansis. The result is that the present day the name is no longer that of a tribe but of a caste. In Sibsagar and Lakhimpur these converts still retain their tribal names and the Koch is a caste which has not broken up into various subdivisions. This is not the case in Lower Assam where different groups differ in their social status, which is dependent on the time that has elapsed since conversion and the extent to which aboriginal habits have been shaken off.

Keots : While in certain places, as for example, in the Barpeta subdivision of Kamrup, they are generally known as Kamars or blacksmiths, in Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh districts this profession of blacksmithy has been adopted by even Kalitas. Besides this occupation, they have taken to agriculture and other trades. The observance of sacramental rites by these people, is confined only to a few major ones.

Baria : The Barias are a caste peculiar to Assam and the term Baria is said to have been derived from '*Bari*' meaning a widow. In general, they are said to have originated from the offspring of a Brahmin widow by *Sudra* husband. The children of Brahmin girls married to *Sudras* are also called Barias. The marriage of a Brahmin girl by a *Sudra* however does not make the latter Baria now a days, although the sub-cast includes the people who happened to be regarded as Barias in the distant past. Some of the people of this sub-caste call themselves Sut ; but Sut is a different subcaste.

Sut : The appellation is believed to be derived from Sut, the expounder of the *Puranas* who was himself the son of a Brahmin widow. A large section of the Suts are followers of *Vaishnavism*. They observe those customary rites which are common among the Kalitas, Keots etc. and their manners and customs do not differ materially from those of other castes who till the land by themselves.

Yogi (Nath) : They are known as Naths, Nath-Yogis or Jugis and Katanis in various places of Assam. In upper Assam however there are many Katanis who at one time were weavers by profession. In the *Ballala Charitam*, a Sanskrit book, supposed to be written in the 12th Century A.D. we find mention of a sect of people who lived on the banks of the Brahmaputra and were known as "Jungis." They were drum-beaters, whose descendents are still found in some parts of Assam, and are known as "Kendra-Jugis" (Yogis). Their original profession was drum-beating, palanquin-bearing, quackery, snake-charming etc. They have now taken to agriculture. "Judging from literary records and legends still prevalent amongst the Yogis of the Nath order, it appears that the Nath-cult has grown with general air of *Saivism*."[40] The yogis

40. Dr. S. B. Dasgupta ; *Obscure Religious Cults* ; p. 228.

wear the holy-thread which they call *yogapatra*, but unlike the Brahmins they plough the land by themselves. They observe the permissible limits of relationship in marriage. Previously the pre-puberty marriage and widow marriage were prevalent among the members of this community, however the former practice is now totally obsolete. People of this sect living in Cachar follow the practice of burial of the dead body ; but those of the Brahmaputra valley follow the practice of cremation. They observe only ten days as the unclean period after the death of an adult, and three days in case of a minor. After the period of uncleanliness *Sradha* ceremony is performed according to rules enshrined in the *smritis*.

Kaivartta or Jaliya : They have been associated with water, and fishing is their main profession. Some of them have, however, taken to agriculture and other trades. They have in general, been following many essential tenets of Hinduism. It is interesting to note that most of the members of this community are followers of the *Vaishnavism*. In the observance of marriage and other customary rites they have many things in common with other castes. It has been mentioned earlier that they have been given a place among the Scheduled Castes.

The remnants of other functional groups of the Hindus are divided into several subcastes and classes such as Mali (gardener), Kumar (potter), Sonar (goldsmith), Hira (potter), Napit (barber) and Dhoba (washerman), which are more or less functional. Of these castes Kumar and Napit have been enlisted among the Other Backward Classes, and Hira comes under the Scheduled Castes. Although most of these people have abandoned their traditional professions yet amongst them there are some who carry on the trade.

Ahoms : The Ahoms are the descendants of the Shan tribe who migrated into Assam in the 13th century from Burma. They entered Assam in the early part of the thirteenth century (1228 A. D.) and gradually extended their sway over the whole of the Brahmaputra Valley. Their social set-up has been described as follows : "There were seven principal Ahom clans or *phoids* who were well known under the name of *Satgharia* Ahoms or the Ahoms of the seven houses. Although opinions seem to differ with regard to the last four houses, there is unanimous opinion as regards the first three, to which belonged the royal family and the families of the Burha Gohain and the Bar Gohain. Four of these *pholds*, according to one opinion were Duara, Dehingia, Lahan, and Handiqui ; according to another they were the Deodhai, Mohan, Bailung and Siring families of priests and astrologers. The families of *Satgharia* Ahoms were exogamous groups, each family being derived from one common ancestor. The *phoids* were further subdivided into a number of subgroups which were named after the places where they settled. Thus we have seven sub-houses of the royal family ; eight of the Burha Gohain family, sixteen of the Bar Gohain family, twelve

of the Deodhai, seven of the Mohan and eight of the Bailung family. The original Barpatra Gohain's family, known as Kenduguria Barpatra *phoid*, was absorbed in the family of the king, as its founder Kancheng was a prince of royal blood. The non-royal Barpatra Gohain families were Kalugayan or Gargayan Patar and Moran Patar.

The whole of the superior exogamous groups are divided further, into two main divisions, called Gohains and Gogois, but there are some decidedly inferior *phoids*, such as Chaodangs, who were the public executioners in old days, as well as Likchous, Gharphalias and others, with whom Ahoms of the upper classes will not intermarry".[41] The Ahom priests called Deodhais, Mohans and Bailungs conserved the original Ahom tradition in the past and conducted worship at the Ahom shrines according to their own beliefs. The Ahoms are further divided into four sections, the *Chamuas* or gentry, the *Kheluas* or functional sections, the *Meluas* or servants of the royal family and the *Karis* or the ordinary labour class. These sections are not endogamous, though there is a natural tendency for men to take wives from families in their own rank of life, and intermarriage between certain families was prohibited for reasons of social status.

Their complexion is fair, the cheek bones high and the face usually broad. The Mongoloid features are prominent among the Ahoms. Though their original religion approached Taoism, most of them have embraced Hinduism and only a few are Buddhists. Even then their marriage, known as the *Chaklang*, is quite different from that of the Hindus. Agriculture is the chief occupation of the caste. Some other important aspects of the Ahoms such as their language and marriage system, have been briefly discussed elsewhere in this chapter. The Ahoms have traditionally displayed the ardency for assimilation. Dr. S. K. Bhuyan observes : "The number of Ahoms who had come with the first conqueror Sukapha was very small, and those who came in later were restricted in number as Shans are reluctant to leave their homes where there is plenty of food and happiness in their own self-sufficient villages situated amidst pastoral surroundings. With such small numbers the Ahoms found it impossible to maintain their comparatively extensive dominions in Eastern India, peopled by heterogeneous races and tribes, with the powerful Muslim and Koch rulers on the west as a source of perpetual danger. The Ahoms were therefore compelled to increase their community by conferring upon the new entrants the status and privileges of the members of the ruling race. The records of these affiliations were very carefully maintained and they were checked in every reign, the most exhaustive scrutiny being carried out during the reign of Swargadeo Pratap Sinha. From these records, some leading Ahom families appear to have been founded by patriarchs belonging to the

41. E. A. Gait ; *History of Assam* ; 1957 ; pt. 257-58.

following non-Ahom races, tribes and communities: Barahi, Chutia, Garo, Koch, Kachari, Moran, Hindu Kalita, Hindu Dhoba, Miri, Mogul and Muslim".[42]

The Miris : The Miris, also known as Mishings, were originally a hill tribe living in the hills between the Dafla and the Abor territory in the present Arunachal Pradesh and came down to the plains in the reign of the Ahom kings in Assam. In the plains they settled near the banks of the Brahmaputra and the Subansiri rivers and their tributaries taking to agriculture as their principal occupation. They belong to the Tibeto-Burman family of Mongoloid people that followed the Austro-Asiatic races in India and all akin to the Bodo. The Miris claim certain ethnological affinities with the Padams and Pasi-Mayongs of Arunachal. The Abors and the Miris are of distinctly Mongoloid type. They have square set face, prominent cheeck bones, scanty beard and moustache with almond shaped eyes. They are strongly built with fine developed limbs. They are cleaner in their persons than many of the Tibeto- Burman tribes and fully appreciate the advantages of the bath.

The Miris are divided into two main endogamous sects : (a) Baregam (twelve gams) and (b) Dahgam (ten gams) which are again subdivided into large number of minor groups. The main clans which fall within the category of Baregam are Pegu, Dolois, Kutum, and Patar. The Pegus are again sub-divided into Gapit, Gadang, Kari and Dolois into Gazera, Letum and Ledang. The clans which are enlisted as the Dahgam are mainly these : (1) Chayang or Chayangia, (2) Moing or Moiangia, (3) Oyan or Oyangia, (4) Dambuk or Dambukial, (5) Delu or Lachorgaya, (6) Tayu-Taye, (7) Chamuguria,' (8) Tamargaya, etc. These clans are again subdivided into various subclans such as Pamegam or Gam, Padi, Medak, Keman, Panging, Ngate, Mipen, polong etc.

Inter-group marriage and inter-dining are prevalent amongst both the groups. Their houses are built on bamboo platforms raised about five feet or sometimes seven feet above the ground according to the flood level and are sometimes as much as 40 yards in length. A single house will often contain a family of sixty to eighty persons living in one great room without any partition though with separate fire places with a *verandah* in front, where guests are entertained. Pigs and fowls scratch about beneath the houses which are usually built in two long rows without fruit trees or gardens around them. The fire place known as **'Meram'** or **Gulung** in Miri dialect is looked upon with much reverence and besides cooking, certain offerings are also performed in the corners of the '*Meram*' and the Miris also swear in the name of place.

Cultivation is the chief means of livlihood of the Miris. They grow paddy, mustard, millet, pulses and potatoes. The Miris live on

42. Dr. S. K. Bhuyan ; *Anglo-Assamese Relations*, p. 15.

rice, leafy vegetables, edible roots and fish which constitute their staple diet. Their great delicacies are fowl and pork to which *Ngo-san* (dried fish) may be added. They do not take beaf. Instead of applying spices in the curries, they apply pepper much more than an Assamese does in preparing their curries. Like any other hill tribes of Assam the Miris drink '*Apong*' (rice bear) which is a favourite drink for them and which they take like tea.

Theft and murder cases are very rare amongst the Miris. The Miris are very hospitable and they invite their guests from house to house till the whole village is completed and receive them with '*Apong*' the rice bear. Most of the Miris possess herds of cattle ; every house rears fowls and pigs. They rarely use mustard oil in preparing curries.

In most of the Miri villages the unmarried youngmen do not sleep in their own houses. Free mixing is prevalent in the Miri society. Miri marriage is a costly affair, entailing considerable expenditure in food, rice beer, betelnuts, which are borne by the families of both the contracting parties. They are strictly exogamous with regard to sub-clans. The Miris as a rule are monogamous ; but having more than one wife is not treated as a breach of social law provided one can afford to maintain a big family. Marriage with maternal uncle's son or daughter is prevalent among certain sections of the Miri community. The widows may have a husband, provided their relationship remains informal. Polyandry is quite unknown amongst the Miri community. Bride price is generally paid to the parents of the bride especially when the girl elopes away with a person to whom the parents do not like to give their daughter in marriage.

The Miris of Assam in general and the Miris of the undivided Lakhimpur district in particular have, due to the influence of the teachings of Shri Shri Sankaradeva embraced Hinduism. But though Hinduised and they claim themselves as Hindus, they have been still retaining their old forms of worship, culture, manners and social customs. Their old religion conforms to the animistic type quite akin to that of the Abors. Its principal feature is the propitiation of malignant spirits likely to do harm. The Miris believe in re-birth although they donot dogmatise on this point. Ancestor worship is a common feature of their annual functions. They never burn their dead but bury them and the funeral ceremonies include a sumptuous feast. In the matter of inheritence the Miris appear to have followed principles enunciated in the Dayabhaga system of Hindu Law.

The Miris have their own *Kebang*, which is a village assembly that functions as a judicial institution. Miri women hold a position subordinate to men. They are, in general, more industrious than their men. Rowing and swimming are their favourite pastimes. They husk paddy,

work in the field, and gather firewood and also clear jungles, besides feeding their husbands and children by cooking themselves. The Miri women are expert weavers who excel in designing ; they are fond of ornaments of gold and silver. Young girls are expert in dancing and singing.

The festivals of the Miris are many, most important of them being *Ali-ai-ligang*, *Porag* and *Dabur*, which are connected with the sowing and harvesting of crops celebrated with dance and music.

Boro-Kachari : The Boros or the Boro-Kacharis belonged to a distinct racial group of people living in the north-eastern India. According to Dr. S. K. Chatterjee[43] and Fr. Matthias Harmannas they belong to Indo-Mongoloid (*Kiratas*) Group which include the Boros and their allied tribes. "As is the case with the Meche (Mech)", says Fr. M. Harmannas "so also with the Kacharis (Boros), the Mongoloid features are very prominent, the strong cheek bones, slit eyes, a slight growth of hair in the body and scant beard. They are shorter and more stocky than the Indians of the North-east."[44] The Boros in Assam are easily distinguishable from other Assamese people in respect of their physical characteristics.

The Boro kingdom extended along the south bank of the Brahmaputra from the Dikhu to the Kallong in the thirteenth century. It has already been mentioned in Chapter II that the Kacharis retreated further south when their old capital Dimapur was sacked by the Ahoms in 1536 and they established a new capital at Maibong, in the North-Cachar Hills. These people are known as the Dimasa which means "sons of the great river." The ruins of Dimapur which are in existence till now exhibit the degree of perfection which the Kacharis attained.

The social structure of the Boros is primarily patriarchal in character. Nevertheless the matriarchal element is also not totally absent among the Boros. They maintain certain definite rules in respect of their houses and maintenance of their homestead. They generally construct their main house on the northern side of their homestead and this house stretches from the west to the east. There are also three divisions of the main house with provision of a door, facing to the south. The eastern-most portion of the main house is meant for cooking and worship. The courtyard also accommodates the alter of the *Bathow*, the supreme god of whom a *Sizu* tree is the emblem. The Boros are worhippers mainly of *Bathow*, the supreme God ; but they worship certain other gods and goddesses as well. The Boros believe in ghosts and spirits and their malignant influence upon human society.

43. S. K. Chatterjee ; *KIRATA-JANA-KRTI. The Indo-Mongoloids ; their contributions to the History and Culture of India*, Calcutta, 1951. p. 13.
44. Fr. M. Harmannas ; *The Indo-Tibetans*, Bombay, 1954, p. 38.

The Boro-Kacharis are agriculturists and they live in villages. They observe certain ceremonies and festivals on the occasion of birth, wedding, and death. The most important festival of the Boros is the *Baisagu* or the spring time festival in which singing, dancing, drinking and holding feasts mark the day. They dispose of the dead bodies either by cremation or by burial. Drinking occupies a vital place in the social life of these people. The rice bear is prepared almost in every family and they rejoice in drinking collectively during their festivals. Of course, drinking is common among other tribal people of the district.

The Kachari women command respect in their community ; their position is never regarded inferior to that of a man. Birth of a daughter is not favoured as much as that of a son. In cases of marital separation the woman is denied of her rights to have a share of the property of her husband, although she is allowed to take her ornaments. During their maidenhood they enjoy the liberty to participate in singing, dancing, and merry-making on the occasions of marriages and festivals, but married women generally refrain from outdoor exhilarations. The Boro women are exceedingly industrious and they spend much of their time in the fields working side by side with their sun-burnt husbands. The Boro women are expert weavers and weave all their wearing apparels.

Chutiyas : The Chutiyas like the Koch and the Ahoms, are one of the race castes (plain tribes) of Assam. Their physical appearance suggests a Mongolian origin, their language, which is still preserved amongst the Deoris or priestly clan, belongs to the Boro family and it seems probable, that they are a section of the great Bodo race which includes the Garo, the Kachari, and the Tippera. It is supposed that their original home was in the hills through which the Subansiri makes its way, and that they entered the Assam Valley about a thousand years ago. The story of the decline and the fall of the Chutiya power has already been narrated in the preceding chapter. Their conqueror deported the leading families to different parts of the Assam valley, but large number of the Chutiyas are still to be found in Sibsagar and Lakhimpur. The caste is divided into five sub-divisiions : Hindu, Ahom, Deori, Miri and Borahi. The last group as their name implies, is still unconverted but the number of Borahi Chutiyas is very small.

Deori Chutiyas : The Deori Chutiyas are the old priestly class of the Chutiyas who migrated from their original home east of Sadiya to North Lakhimpur at the beginning of the nineteenth century and from there moved to Majuli, the Disang river, Sisimukh and the Baligaon Mauza in Jorhat. They have distinctly Mongolian features like the Miris. Their houses are built on bamboo platforms and often take the form of long barracks accommodating as many as sixty or even more members who are agnates. The Deori Chutiyas of the Majuli

profess Hinduism ; but they keep pigs and fowls. Their temples, built generally of wood and thatch are imitations of the famous Copper Temple of Sadiya which has long been in ruins. The Deoris possibly attach more importance to their own religion, but a knowledge of its mysteries is confined to the priests. Each clan (*Khel*) is said to have four priests attached to it, the *Bar* and *Saru Deory* and the *Bar* and *Saru Bharali*, the former two alone are entitled to enter the temple. The chief gods worshipped are three, *Gerasi Geri* (*Bura-Buri*) worshipped by the Dibongiya Khel; *Pishadema* (*Boliya devata*) the elder son worshipped by the Tengapaniya Khel ; and *peshasi* (the daughter) who is also known as *Tamreswari Mai* and *Kechaikhati* (eater of raw flesh). In former times human sacrifices were offered to the goddess *Kechaikhati* at Sadiya.

The temple near Sadiya, known as the *Tamar Ghar* or Copper Temple, which was already in ruins towards the close of the last century, was then described as a small stone building, nearly square, built without cement, the stones joined by iron pins not clamped. The roof was of copper but it fell in and was lying there. The interior was eight feet square. The whole area was enclosed with a brick wall, 130 feet by 200. Near the grand entrance on the western wall, was a small stone tripod where sacrifices were performed.[45] On the decline of the Ahom power the Deoris abandoned their possessions in the vicinity of the temple and with it the horrible *Tantric* rites involving sacrifice of human beings fell into disuse.

Ahom Chutiyas : The Ahom Chutiyas have for some generations been converts to Hinduism, but in the social scale they rank below the Hindu Chutiyas. The Ahom and Hindu Chutiyas can smoke but cannot eat together, and in theory cannot inter-marry. A member of the Ahom sections can, however, obtain a Hindu Chutiya girl if he is willing to pay a slightly higher price for her, but the bride sinks to the status of her husband.

Hindu Chutiyas often observe the Hindu system of marriage while the *Chaklong* rite, which is the Ahom form of marriage, is in vogue amongst the Ahom Chutiyas. Marriage is not regarded as indispensible for the couples. Most of them are agriculturists. The dead bodies are cremated and the *sraddha* ceremony is performed at the expiry of a month.

Khamtis : The Khamtis trace their origin from the great Shan tribe. They lived on the banks of the Irawati river and about five hundred years ago migrated into Assam and settled at Sunpura, a place at a distance of a few miles from Sadiya. Later on they settled in

45. B. C, Allen ; *Assam District Gazetteers, Lakhimpur*, 1905, p. 111.

other parts of the district. The Khamtis and Singphos successfully resisted the onslaughts of the Britishers for many years.

The Khamti women are exceedingly industrious and expert in weaving. Male Khamtis wear hand woven *lungi* and their womenfolk use black *mekhela* as their dress which includes a piece of white cloth used as a headgear. Production of various kinds of ivory works, wood carvings, embossed shields, ornaments made of gold, silver and iron bear testimony of the level of excellence of the Khamtis in the field of arts and crafts.

The Khamtis prefer the riverside for their homestead and houses are built on piles. While the dead bodies of the adult who die a natural death are disposed of by cremation, those of others are generally buried. They are Buddhists by religion. The Khamti temples are made of timber and are tastefully decorated and the holy see of the Khamtis is known as *Bapu-Chang*. Monogamy is the general rule. The bridegroom is to pay certain amounts for the bride varying from rupees one hundred forty and above. Agriculture is their main occupation, and rice constitutes their staple food.

Singphos : Like the Khamtis the Singphos are also Buddhists and live mainly in the foothills of the Lohit and Tirap districts. There are a few Singpho villages within the radius of a few miles of Ledo extending upto the hills. They originally came from the Hukawang valley in Upper Burma where they were known as Kachins.

They live in one-roomed houses built on piles with roof usually of *Livistonia jenkinsania* (*Tokow leaves*). The houses have open *varandahs* which are also decorated with horns and the like. Inside the house there are usually two fire places ; the first one is for the use of the guests and the second one is used as cookshed. Fish, meat etc, are kept over the fire places in bamboo sieves.

Marriage is negotiated by parents and the bride carries a price known as '*Gadhan*' which may be paid either in cash or in kind or in both. Generally girls are given in marriage between 18-22 years. Marriages between agnatic relations are prohibited. There is however, no restriction on marriage with relatives from the maternal side.

The womenfolk are expert weavers and each house has at least one loom. The loom stands in the open *varandah* at which women weave cloths and dye with different colours obtained' from roots of trees. The males wear stripped hand-made *lungi* and shirts. They also use turban with stripped cloths and invariably carry their traditional *daos*. Females use '*mekhela*, '*blouse*' and wrap a piece of cloth around the chest.

Phakials : People of this community are generally found in the Phakial villages by the Dihing river and in Margherita. This community is of Thai origin, and is divided into five clans—the Thai Khamti, Thai Khamyang, Thai Phakial, Thai Aiton and Thai Turungs.

The people of this community are said to have migrated from Mogaung to Assam about 1760 A. D. Colonel Hanny is of the opinion that prior to their migration to Assam, they inhabited in the neighbourhood of Turungs on the banks of the Turungpani river. On coming to Assam, their first abode was on the banks of Buri-Dihing and later on they moved and settled near Jorhat. During the Burmese invasion of Assam, the Phakials were asked by the Burmese to return to Mogaung and accordingly they reached their old settlement on the Buri-Dihing when the province passed under the British subjugation. The appellation Phakial is believed to have originated from the term '*Fa*' (hill or stone), '*Ke*' (big). For sometime these people stayed at a hilly place in the Hukong valley and thus came to be known as Phakials.

Their language closely resembles that of the other northern Shans. It is said that the caste system does not prevail among the people of this community. They are the followers of Buddhism. In the Phakial village by the Dihing river near Margherita there is a regular monastery.

They seldom marry outside their own community. Monogamy is the common form of marriage. Marriages are held generally by agreement although some exceptions are there. According to some people the widow marriage and divorce are prevalent among the Phakials.

The mode of habitation of the people of this community is almost similar to that of other tribes inhabiting the eastern tip of the Brahmaputra Valley. The villages are usually situated on the riverside. The residential houses are built on piles. They keep only a few pieces of furniture in their houses. The males wear stripped handmade *lungi* and shirt and womenfolk '*riha-mekhela*' and *chadar* etc. Ornaments used by the people are of gold, silver and ivory. The staple food of the people is rice. The people of the Phakial community solemnly observe various festivals such as *Bohag Bihu*, *Buddha Purnima*, *Borsabah*, *Magh-Bihu* etc. In fact, they observe all the Assamese festivals of the year. They display keen interest in *Jatra* performance and communal dances.

Duanias : Another tribe of the Tirap Transferred area is Duanias They were originally said to be Assamese. According to one account, during the Burmese invasion they were taken as captives by the Singpho chiefs who in Burmese language were called "*Du*"s. During their stay in Burma they adopted Buddhism, Burmese dress, habits and language. When they came to Assam they were called Duanias i.e. those who were taken by '*Du*'s. According to another account these people migrated to the Hukong Valley in Upper Burma during the reign of Purandar

Sinha after Burmese invasion because of the famine condition then prevailing in Assam. When they came back to Assam they were called Duanias as they spoke '*Duans*' dialect.

Their manners and customs, religious beliefs, dress etc., are very much akin to those of the Phakials, Singphos and other Shan tribes from Upper Burma.

Abors : There are a few Abor villages in the Murkong-Sellek Transferred area and also two villages in the Tirap Transferred area. As in the case of other tribes, they also live in houses built on piles. The males mostly use shirts and pants, like the people of the plains. Some of them, however, still wear their traditional embroidered Abor shirts, use cane hats and carry a *dao* wherever they go. The females wear stripped '*mekhelas*' and put on a piece of coloured cloth around the chest. Only some females keep long hairs while others prefer cropped hairs. They use silver bangles, earrings and necklace made of coloured beads and lockets of rupee or half-rupee coins.

Marriage among the Abors is negotiated by parents only at the initiative of the father of the bridegroom. Bride carries a marriage price which may be paid either in cash or in kind or in both to the bride's parents and other relatives. They offer prayer and sacrifices to spirits and deities. They bury their dead.

Sema Nagas : Sema Nagas constitute the bulk of the Naga population in the Tirap Transferred area. They have come from the Sema areas of Mukokchang in Nagaland. Most of them worked as porters under the Political Officer of the undivided Tirap Frontier Tract. The pattern of Sema villages here is similar to those of Sema villages in Tuensang area of Nagaland but the houses built are of separate type. Their houses built on piles bear close resemblance to those of the Singphos and Duanias.

All the Sema Nagas living within the Transferred areas are Christians and every Sema village has got a church of its own. They prefer pants and shirts to their traditional picturesque Sema red and black costumes. Those who do not use shirts, use a black *chadar* with red border. The females use redbordered *mekhelas* and keep long hairs.

The Sema Nagas also pay certain amounts for the bride. The amount varies according to the status of the bride. *Gadhan* which may be in the form of cash or kind or in both is generally paid before the date fixed for marriage. The marriage is however, performed in the church and the pastor of the church conducts the marriage.

All Nagas including the Semas have a strong sense of discipline and self-reliance. The villagers obey the orders of the village headman and he is held in high esteem. Disputes among the people of the village are usually settled by the headman.

Besides the Sema Nagas, there are also several other Naga groups such as Rangpong group comprising Mosang, Lungphai, Langching, Yogli, Ramrang, Morang, Lungri Nagas etc., and Hasak group comprising Yongkuk, Tikhak, Kengia clans and the customs prevalent among these Nagas differ from group to group.

(d) Social life :

Family system : Among the Hindus the property is generally held by the head of the family, who manages it as its *karta*. After the death of the father the sons and daughters inherit the property. In the matter of inheritance and succession Dayabhaga system as modified by various legislations, holds good in this district. The joint family system was common in the past. Even now, several brothers are found to live jointly and have a common kitchen. Now-a-days, families tend to break up into smaller units and the joint family system is loosing its hold. Joint family system is not prevalent among some of the tribes of the district, such as the Singpho, Phakial and Duania.

Marriage : The table below indicates the age and marital status of the people of the undivided Lakhimpur district, as revealed in 1961 Census.

Age group	Total population		Never Married		Married	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
All ages	853879	709963	525162	391820	299009	281898
10—14	94763	83393	94681	82682	71	702
15—19	67273	66475	61942	31037	5162	34973
20—24	70500	65183	47593	10308	21795	53224
25—29	80659	59609	33577	4497	44837	53343
30—34	63812	43951	13310	1934	47929	39979
35—39	51880	35287	3760	289	45607	31640

The universality of marriage is an important feature of the social life in the district. Infant marriage is practically unknown. The average age of marriage for males as well as females has been rising gradually owing largely to the spread of education and change in the social outlook. The economic hardship of many parents has also compelled them to postpone the marriage of their children. About 45% of the married males fall within the age group of 25-39 years and 64% of the married females fall within the age group of 15-34 years.

Widow remarriage : The undivided Lakhimpur district had as many as 32998 widows, in 1961. They constituted nearly 11% of the

total number of married females of the district. There were 26199 widowers who constituted approximately 9% of the total number of married males in the district in the same year. The widow remarriage is prevalent among the Muslims and some of the tribal communities. A Miri widow may have a husband if their union is informal. However, a Miri widow is allowed to marry the younger brother of the deceased. Among the Hindus, the widow marriage usually does not find favour with the Brahmins and the Kayasthas ; but the practice is prevalent to a limited extent among the Hindus of other castes.

Divorce : The cases of divorce occur mostly among the Muslims and the people belonging to some tribes such as the Singphos, the Duanias and the Phakials. According to 1961 Census there were 3255 divorced males and 3074 divorced females in the district. Even after implementation of the Hindu Marriage Act (1955) and the Special Marriage Act 1954 divorce proceedings are very rare among the Brahmins, Kayasthas, Kalitas and some other castes. Hindu marriage is not regarded as a mere contract, but a sacrament, and thus divorce is uncommon among those people who adhere to the traditional concept of the Hindu marriage.

Monogamy and Polygamy : Monogamy is common among all sections of people of the district ; but it was not compulsory among the Hindus till the enforcement of the Hindu Marriage Act (1955). The Muslims follow the practice of polygamy in the manner prescribed by the Muslim law ; but it is not usually preferred by many of them. The tribal people of the district are mostly monogamous. Polyandry is prohibited among all sections of people. Polygamy is allowed by the Kacharis, although monogamy is the general rule among them.

Marriage customs regarding gifts to the bride: Two, three or five days prior to the marriage the Assamese Hindu bridegroom sends some gifts including ornaments, bridal dress, fish, betelnuts, someother tit-bits and cosmetics of which scented oil is an essential component. This is known as *jorandiya*, The parents of the bride also present some furniture, utensils and ornaments to the bride when she leaves for the house of the bridegroom. The practice of dowery is not prevalent amongst the local Hindu people ; but those Hindus who hail from other parts of India adhere to their own system of dowery. The practice of "*Muhar*" is followed by the Muslims.

Among some of the tribes the practice of paying *gadhan* which means payment of certain amount for the bride to her parents is prevalent. Among the Sema Nagas the amount of *gadhan* varies according to the status of the parents of the brides. The *gadhan* is paid before the day fixed for marriage, but in default the amount is generally raised. The Duanias do not count the *gadhan* in terms of hundreds ; but they

count it as *Jaima* (Rs. 140/-), *Jai Ung Khong* (Rs. 280/-), *Jaimusum* (Rs. 70/-) etc. Enticing away a married woman makes the person liable to pay the *gadhan* to her former husband. If the woman comes out voluntarily from her husband's house her parents are required to return the *gadhan* received for that woman. This is the general practice among those tribes who allow '*gadhan*'. When a Singpho drives away his wife he is to pay Rs. 140/- or a she-buffalo for it. On failure to pay the '*gadhan*' the Duania bridegroom is to serve in the house of the bride. If the bride has brother or brothers the prospective bridegroom can take her as his wife after three years of service ; but if the bride has no brother, the period of service of the' bridegroom expires only after the death of the bride's parents. Among the Phakials the practice of distributing a portion of *gadhan* among the maternal and paternal uncles and brothers who live separately is also followed ; the bride's parents however retain the major share.

Marriage customs and rituals : Among the Hindus, the marriage by negotiation is common. The horoscopes of both the bride and the bridegroom are consulted before the marriage. This is known as *rahi-jorachowa*. The nuptial festivals begin at five, three or two days before the day fixed for wedding. The practice of *jorandiya* takes place on the commencing day in the manner described above. During the nuptial festivities the bride and the bridegroom take ceremonial baths known as *nowani*. The night before the day fixed for marriage is called *adhivasa*. *Gathian-khunda* is the only ceremony that takes place on this night. An aromatic root called *gathian* is ceremoniously powdered and put on the head of the bride. At the dawn of the marriage day the ceremony of *daiyana* is performed in the following manner. The bride sits in front of the door of her bedroom ; a female relative touches her cheeks arms and feet with a pair of betel leaves dipped in curd.

On the marriage day the *sraddha* ceremony is performed at about noon in the houses of the bride and bridegroom and guests are treated to light refreshment. At an auspicious moment in the evening the bridegroom goes in procession to the bride's house. The ceremony of *suag-tola* takes place in the bridegroodm's place before the departure of the bridegroom and in the bride's house when the groom arrives. The marriage ceremony is performed observing the rituals as prescribed in the *sastras*. The *homa* and *saptapadi* are two essential elements of these rituals. After solemnisation of the marriage the bride and the bridegroom are taken inside the bride's house where some more rites, are performed. In a sense it is a ceremony of invocation of the bridegroom to the house of his father-in-law and bidding farewell to the bride. The marriage is consumated when the bride and the bridegroom together make an offering to two demons known as *Khoba-Khubuni*, on the evening of the third day after marriage.

In *chaklang* system of marriage of the Ahoms, before the arrival of the bridegroom on the marriage day a big circle is drawn on the ground at the bride's place. This is called '*Moral*' and it has seven different colours depicting the solar system from which the '*Mahagni*' originates. The whole '*Moral*' consists of six circles, one inside the other, representing the (then known) six planets with the sun as the pivot divided by sixteen radii giving 96 crossings for 96 lights to stand on. Four additional lights represents Indra and one more light is placed at the centre to represent the sun. Thus there are altogether 101 lights in the '*Moral*'. Prayers and offerings are made by both the bride and the bridegroom before this '*Moral*' under the guidance of an Ahom priest. Then, both of them exchange garlands, consisting of 101 flowers, and later the bride offers a sword known as *Hengdang*, and a *Tongali* to her newly married husband beseeching him to take a vow that he will defend the country, protect the righteous and her chastity and dominate the wicked. The sword is accepted by the bridegroom pledging himself to do the duty assigned to him. The priest helps the bride and bridegroom in their offerings and chantings, recites the history of their forefathers and explains the obligations and duties, which they are to observe and perform in their newly married life. The whole function takes about two hours but varies according to the functioning capacity of the priest. After this they are ceremoniously taken inside the house, where tit-bits of other social functions are resorted to in the midst of female guests and relatives.

Duania Marriage : To negotiate a marriage, parents of the bridegroom send two leading persons of the village with a sum of three rupees being wrapped up with "*Kow*" leaves to the house of the bride. The packet containing the amount is known as "*Gah Bah Gumpha*" and the persons thus sent are known as "*Khung Mang*". When the parents of the bride keep the packet containing money, it is presumed that they are willing to consider the proposal. If the parents of the bride do not keep the packet, the "*Khung Mangs*" will come again after 4-5 days. If the relations of the bride who are consulted by her parents in the meantime do not disagree then the parents of the bride agree to settle the "*Gadhan*" with the "*Khung Mangs*". The day on which "*Gadhan*" is settled is known as "*Gumbang Jun*". The parents of the bride take some amount varying from Rs. 14/- to Rs. 40/- from the bridegroom's party for "*Gumbang Jun*" ceremony. This amount is distributed on the "*Gumbang Jun*" day amongst the persons present, after settlement of "*Gadhan*" and at the time of taking food. The *Gadhan* is paid generally before the actual date of marriage. The marriage ceremony is celebrated in the houses of the bride and the bridegroom. The bridegroom does not go to the house of the bride on the marriage day but his friends and generally relatives on father's side go to the bride's house. On the following day the bride comes to the bridegroom's house. After the

marriage the bride's parents pay a sum of fourteen rupees to the persons who originally negotiated the marriage and the bridegroom's parents pay an equal sum to the other party.

There is another ceremony known as "*Iupadh*" which is performed immediately after the marriage or within a year of the marriage. It is a custom that the relations of the bride can take food in the house of the bridegroom, only after the performance of this ceremony.

Sometimes, the young couples elope without undergoing these necessary preliminaries but in that case the amount of "*Gadhan*" is increased and the father of the bride demands and generally obtains fair compensation in hard cash. These elopments are not uncommon, among the Duanias. The lady consents to an abduction if the price asked for is unreasonably high.

Marriage under the Special Hindu Marriage Acts : Marriages by registration under the special laws relating to marriage are not common. The process involving the registration acts as a damper on many love-lorn hearts. The following statement shows the number of civil marriages performed in the district since 1960-1964.

Year	Number of cases
1960	6
1961	3
1962	16
1963	12
1964	16

In some cases, the parties who are competant, swear affidavits in the courts to the effect that they have voluntarily entered into the wedlock. These marriages often mark the climax of pre-marital relations or elopments.

Inter-caste marriages : The Miris are exogamous with regard to sub-clans. Within these sub-clans they have prejudices against endogamy and will not inter-marry. Run-away marriages are prevalent and the parties are not excommunicated. The Abors are also divided into exogamous clans. The Singphos, the Duanias and the Phakials are endogamous tribes ; but exceptions are rectified by imposing fine. Among the Hindus the caste distinction is not as rigid as it was a few decades ago ; nevertheless the inter-caste or sub-caste marriages are infrequent among them. Some of the Sema Nagas marry the Abor girls while the Abors also espouse Naga women.

Country spirits : Prohibition in respect of opium, *ganja* and *bhang* is in force in both the districts. The revenue earned from the sale of

foreign and country liquors in the districts is also increasing year by year.

Drinking liquor is very common among the tea garden, industrial and colliery labourers, besides the tribal people of Dibrugarh and Lakhimpur districts. Religious taboos scarcely deter many non-tribals from taking alcoholic drinks ; but majority of them are teetotallers. The caste Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, and Muslims, generally speaking loathe drinking. It is quite likely that the immitation of the western ways of life, as reflected in the manners and customs of the large number of Europeans who served in tea gardens and various other concerns, slowly induced a section of people, other than labourers to take to drinks. Thus, the tea industry brought in its wake, among many other things, drinkings, which kept the labour class in a state of penury for decades.

Country spirit is prepared in the following manner. The apparatus employed consists of a large brass or copper retort which is placed over the fire, to the top of which is fitted the still head, a compound vessel, part of which is made of earthenware and part of brass. The wash is placed in the retort, and as it boils, rises in the form of vapour into the still head, over the outer surface of which a stream of cold water is continually kept flowing. As the vapour cools, it is precipitated in the form of liquid, and is carried off by a bamboo tube into a vessel placed at the side. The mouth of this tube is open, and the spirit trickles from it into the vessel beneath, so that the outer air has access by this channel into the still head and retort in which the process of distillation is going on. In the closed still, the vapour passes down two tubes into receivers where it is cooled and condenses into liquid. These tubes are so fixed to the receivers that the air cannot have access to the spirit, and, though distillation does not proceed so rapidly the liquor produced is stronger than that obtained from the open still.

The material employed is generally the flower of a *mohwa* tree (*bassia latifolia*), which contains a very large proportion of sugar, but its place is sometimes taken by molasses and rice. The following are the proportions in which these ingredients are generally mixed—*mohwa* 30 seers and water 60 seers, or *mohwa* 25 seers, molasses 10 seers, and water 80 seers. *Bakhar*, a substance composed of leaves, roots and spices, whose actual ingredients are not known, is frequently added to the wash which is put to ferment in barrels. Fermentation takes three or four days in summer and a week in the cold weather, and the wash is then considered to be ready for the still.

The process of distillation takes about three hours. A retort of 40 gallons yields two gallons of spirit in an hour and three quarters, three gallons in two hours and a quarter, and four gallons in three hours. The best and strongest spirit comes off first and in the case of a brew of 30 seers of *mohwa* the first 3½ gallons will be classed as *phul*,

if they are at once drawn off from the receiver. If they are allowed to remain while two more gallons are distilled, the whole 5½ gallons will be classed as *bangla*. The exact proportions vary, however, at the different shops, some distillers taking 4½ gallons of *phul* or 5½ gallons of *bangla* from 30 seers of *mohwa*. Occasionally only two gallons of spirit are distilled from 30 seers of *mohwa*, and the liquor which is called *thul*, is very strong, and is sold for two or three rupees a bottle. *Thul* is also sometimes made by redistilling *bangla*. Only one kind of liquor is generally taken from each distillation, as, if the *thul* or *phul* were removed, the spirit subsequently distilled would be not only weak but impure. Strong liquor watered to reduce it to a lower strength is not considered palatable, and it seems to be the usual practice to distil the liquor at the actual strength at which it will be sold. One disadvantage of the cheaper kind of liquor is that it will not keep, and in four or five weeks it is said to lose all its spirituous qualities.

The following is the usual system of manufacturing rice beer (*lao pani*). The rice is boiled and spread on a mat, and *bakhar* is powdered and sprinkled over it. After about twelve hours it is transferred to an earthen jar, the mouth of which is closed, and left to ferment for three or four days. Water is then added and allowed to stand for a few hours, and the beer is at last considered to be ready. The usual proportions are 5 kilograms of rice and 200 grams of *bakhar* to half a jug of water, and liquor produced is said to be sufficiently strong. Liquor is often illicitly distilled from *laopani* or boiled rice, by the following simple method. An earthen pot with a hole in the bottom is placed on the top of the vessel containing the *laopani* or rice, and the whole is set on the fire. The mouth of the upper pot is closed by a cone shaped vessel filled with cold water, and a saucer is placed at the bottom of the pot over the hole. The vapour rises into the upper of the two jars, condenses against the cold cone, with which the mouth is closed, and falls in the form of spirit on to the saucer beneath. Care must of course be taken to see that the various cracks are cloosed against the passage of the spirituous vapour; but this can easily be done with strips of cloth.

Home life : A typical Assamese family lives in a cluster of houses, constructed on four sides of one or two courtyards. The *Choraghar* (reception house), *Barghar* (living house), *Gohali ghar* (cow-shed), *Bhoral ghar* (granary) and *Nam ghar* (prayer hall) make the unit of houses complete ; but many people construct fewer houses. Their houses in most cases have thatched roofs mud plastered *ikra* (reed) walls and bamboo or wooden posts. New a days corrugated iron sheets are found in use for roofing. Although latrines were not constructed in the villages till some time back, the Panchayats have achieved some success in popularising the use of latrines in rural areas. Formerly the posts and beams in

houses were decorated with various designs ; such designs are scarcely to be seen now a days.

Two or three storied concrete buildings and Assam-type *bunglaws* are common in urban, semi-urban and industrial areas. Separate bed rooms, drawing rooms, study rooms, spacious porch and *varandah* and hedged lawns are the common features of the dwellings of the rich living in these areas or in tea gardens. With wide electrification in the district, living in most of the houses in these areas has become very comfortable. Due to rapid growth of urbanisation, the towns appear to be usually overcrowded. In big towns like Dibrugarh and Tinsukia housing facilities appear to be inadequate. Furnishings in urban areas is, generally speaking, indicative of the prosperity and artistic taste of the householder. Costly sofa sets, woolen carpets, radiogram, refrigerators, resplendent curtains and modern paintings are possesed by the urban elites while the middle class families have only a few of these items, considered to be luxuries by the poorer sections. The radio set has become so popular in urban areas that there is hardly any family without it. In rural areas however, only a small section of people keep a radio set. Wooden, steel and cane furniture of various shapes, types and designs are used by the urbanite according to need and capacity.

Previously *chalpira* (large bedstead), *tamulipira* (low wooden stool) and mats such as *merdhari*, *dhari*, *bardhari* and *patidhari*, *murha* (cane stool) were the common furniture. Well-to-do villagers however use wooden benches, tables and chairs and other modern furniture. Utensils made of blelmetal such as *Bankahi* (dish with a foot), *Kahi* (dish), *Banbati* (bowl with a foot), *Bati* (bowl), *Lota* (drinking vessel), *Charia* (wash-bowl) are commonly used. *Sarai* (a platter mounted on a leg) is used to offer *naivedya* (offering of rice and banana etc.) to the deity or to serve betle-nuts to respectable persons. Rapid development of ceramics has popularised porcelain products. Cups and saucers, china plates, tumblers etc. are some of the very common items of each household, particularly in the urban areas. *Kakoi* (comb) made of bamboo or buffalo horn was commonly used in the past ; but these have now been replaced by plastic products.

Male dress includes *dhoti*, *chadar*, *shirts*, trousers, long pants and coats. Female dress consists of *riha*, *mekhela chadar* and *blouse*, and ornaments include *keru*, *mani*, *kharu*, *gam-kharu*, *jhangphai-keru*, *dugdugi*, *bena*, *necklace*, *chain*, *earrings*, *bangle*, *dhol-biri*, *jonbiri*, *thuria* and *lokaparo*. The hollow tube of gold covered with gold leaves, rubies and emeralds, made in the shape of a *dhol* (drum) is called *dhol-biri*. The *jon-biri* is also made of gold and resembles the half moon in shape. The necklace (*galpata*) made of gold generally contains three to four *tolas* of gold. The large locket made of gold is usually attached to *galpata*. The *thuria* is worn in the ear. It is made of gold and set with rubies and emerald.

Gold and silver ornaments are preferred ; 'although cheap gilded ornaments are also used by some tea garden damsels. In ancient times, the craftsmen of Assam excelled in enamelling gold and silver jewellery and made jewellery of solid gold and silver. They were widely known for the high degree of perfection However, with the advent of the jewellers from other parts of India, traditional designs have been virtually wiped out. Tribal women put on the home-spun *makhela* and *chadar*. They use only a few items of golden ornaments, such as *thuria*, *galpata*, and *bangles*.

For pounding paddy the Miris use *urals* : but the Assamese people use the wooden pounder, known as *dhenki*. Rice is main staple food of all people. Vegetable, dal, fish, egg, meat, milk, curd, fruit, etc. form the subsidiary items of food. Besides these Assamese people take '*Khar*', an alkaline preparation and '*tenga*' a sour preparation made out of sour fruits or vegetables.

Communal life : Feasts, dancing parties and *bhaonas* or traditional theatrical performances are the principal items of amusements of the villages. The *bhaonas* are often held in temporary sheds constructed on the roadside. The '*Dol jatra*' festival is held in honour of Lord Krisna in February or March, when the image of the God is moved out in a procession and the people merrily indulge in throwing red powder or coloured water on one another in memory of Lord Krisna's frolicking with the milkmaids of Vrindavan. This festival is locally known as *Phagua*. On this day, the villagers hold *Nam-kirtan* and arrange *bhaonas*. People of all walks of life belonging to Hindu faith observe the day with pomp and grandeur. Other Hindu festivals commonly observed in the district are *Janmastami*, *Sivaratri*, *Nag-Panchami*, the *Rash-puja* and the *Diwali* or the festival of light. The *Durga Puja*, once celebrated by the *Saktists*, is now a festival of most of the Hindus. During this festival, the image of the goddess is installed ceremoniously on the day as fixed in the almanac, and the festival continues for four days. This concludes with the immersion of the goddess in some running water. The festival is so common that in every important town and in some villages the community *pujas* are organised. Cultural shows and *bhaonas* are organised invariably in all *puja* pandels at night. Similarly *Viswakarma Puja*, and *Saraswati Puja* are also organised with great gusto and fervour, latter by the students and the former by mechanics and engineers who are Hindus.

The biggest festival of the people of the district are the three *Bihus*, the *Rangali* or *Bohag Bihu*, the *Kati Bihu* and the *Bhogali* or the *Magh Bihu*. The *Kati Bihu* is celebrated on the last day of *Aswin* (October) and is not an occasion of very much importance. Hymns

are sung out-doors in honour of God near a *Tulsi* plant and in place of their usual meal of rice and curry people take curds, molasses, plaintains and *chira*. The *Magh Bihu* or the *Bhogali Bihu* is the harvest home and begins on the last day of the month of *Pous* (January 13th or 14th). For weeks ahead of the festival tall heaps of rice straw piled round the central pole are a prominent feature in the rural landscape. At the dawn of the day the villagers bathe and warm their chilled bodies at these bonfires, a very necessary precaution, as at this season of the year mornings are always cold and generally foggy. The *Magh Bihu* is to some extent a youth and children festival and most of the merriment is confined to the youth and smaller boys who sing and dance and feast in small grass huts that have been constructed for the purpose. Buffalo fights are organised in the rice fields, but these contests are rather tame affairs, and the animals very seldom injure one another. The *Bohag Bihu*, also called the *Rongali Bihu*, begins on the last day of *Chaitra* (April 13th or 14th). The festival continues till the end of the first week of the month of *Bohag*; but at places, the festivities connected with it continue for entire first fortnight. It is a spring festival and its origin is traced to the remote past. On the first day of *Bohag Bihu*, the cattle are smeared with oil mixed with *matikalai*, turmeric, and rice and are then taken to nearest stream and bathed. The villagers go from house to house singing hymns and pastoral songs and offering greetings. The most important part of this festival is the *Bihu* dance and songs. The *Bihu*-revellers donning in the typical Assamese dress sing and dance to the accompaniment of the *dhol*, *pepa* and *gagana* The *Bihu* is now observed as a national festival by the Assamese people and it serves to promote unity among different creeds and communities. Other important festivals observed in the district are the death anniversaries of the *vaishnava* preachers, including Sri Sri Sankaradeva and Sri Sri Madhavadeva. The death anniversary of Sri Sri Sankaradeva is celebrated in August or September and that of Sri Sri Madhavadeva three days before the *Janmastami*. All work is laid aside on these two days and the people devote their time to the singing of hymn and eating '*prasada*'. The '*tithi*' of Sri Damodaradeva is also similiarly observed by his followers.

The Muslims observe the *Muhrram*, *Id-uz-Zuha*, *Id-ul-Fitre* in the traditional manner. The Christians observe the Christmas, the New Year's Day, Good Friday. Observance of Guru Nanak's birth day is confined to the members of the Sikh community.

Every Assamese village of the district has a *namghar* or community prayer hall which also serves as a stage and auditorium. Assamese dramas are performed in the *Namghar* and in the *Satras* at a regular interval twice or thrice every year. It is generally seen that on the death anniversaries of Sri Sri Sankaradeva and Sri Sri Madhavadeva, a drama

composed by either of them is invariably staged if other factors prove congenial. The *Bhaona* or the staging of drama is an innovation of Sankaradeva who employed this art for the propagation of the *Bhakti* cult. Sankaradeva selected the themes of the *Bhaonas* from the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas* relating to the life of Rama and Krisna.

The musical accompaniment to the wide variety of songs is provided by indigenous musical instruments like *Bin*, *Tokari*, *Dotara*, *Khanjari*, *Cymbal*, *Khuti-tal*, *Bhor-tal*, *gongs*, *drums*, *Chiphung flutes*, big *flutes* (used by the Kacharis), *Daba*, *Nagra* (drum), *Khol* or *Mridanga* and *Pepa* of buffalo-horn etc.

The Republic Day, Independence Day, Martyr's Day, Teachers' Day, Flag Day, the birth and death anniversaries of national leaders are observed throughout the district in a befitting manner. On the Independence Day and the Republic Day the students and the members of the teaching staff assemble in their respective educational institutions to attend the flag hoisting ceremony and thereafter converge in a procession in the field where all the people assemble to take part in the central flag hoisting ceremony of the town. Earlier, as the day breaks, a band of singers parade the main thoroughfares of the town singing national songs. The programme, known as the *Prabhat phery* heralds the auspicious day. National flag is hoisted atop or in front of buildings, both private and public. *Swahid Tarpan* is observed usually in the afternoon, in the public meetings. Other important programmes of the day include children's sports, football matches, cultural shows and illumination of buildings.

CHAPTER—IV

AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION

(a) Land reclamation and utilisation :

Agriculture is the chief occupation of the people of the present Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh districts. According to 1971 Census, 88.52 percent of the total population of the undivided Lakhimpur district live in villages. The rural population mainly depends on agriculture which is the principal source of income. In 1967—68, the total geographical area of the undivided Lakhimpur district, according to professional survey was 12,75,946 hectares, of which 2,02,062 hectares were used for non-agricultural purposes and 1,16,727 hectares were unculturable land. The average size of the holding of a family consisting of six members has been estimated to be 14.38 *bighas*, as per the *Rural Economic Survey of Lakhimpur District* conducted in 1948-50. However, this figure of the average size of holding does not properly reflect the actual state of affairs ; because the survey covered only 49 villages. Further, in view of the prevalence of subletting and the *adhi*-system, the average size of holding cultivated by a particular family may be different from what has been worked out above. The table below shows the land utilisation in the district in 1967—68.[1]

Land utilisation in the undivided Lakhimpur district
(*Area in hectares*)

(1) Other uncultivated land excluding fallow land.		
(a) Permanent pastures and other grazing land		50,842
(b) Land and miscellaneous trees crops and groves not included in net area.		51,068
(c) Cultivable waste		50,465
	Total—	152,366
2. Fallow lands—		
(a) Fallow lands other that current fallows		30,014
(b) Current fallows		18,526
	Total—	48,540
(3) Net area sown—		2,82,227
(4) Total cropped area—		3,12,460
(5) Area sown more than once—		30,233

(i) **Cultivable Waste** : At the beginning of this century the rate of reclamation of waste land for agricultural purposes, was very low in

1. *Statistical Handbook of Assam*, 1970 pp. 225-27.

the undivided Lakhimpur district. The pressure on the soil at that time, was minimal and the cultivators could exercise some amount of discrimination in their choice of land.[2] For nearly a century after the discovery of tea in Assam in 1826, it was the policy of the Government to encourage opening out of the sparsely populated tracts of the State by the offer of land on specially favourable terms. In the undivided Lakhimpur district, there were for many years large areas of waste land and uncultivated land, much of which while unsuitable for cultivation of the paddy was eminently suitable for the cultivation of tea. The Special Grant Rules were enforced with effect from the 6th March, 1838 to encourage the investor to take up lands for special cultivation, such as tea, coffee etc. These rules were amended from time to time, considering the demand and availability of large blocks of waste land. These and other rules framed for encouragement of tea industry were so attractive to the tea planters that as early as in 1895, an area of 1,87,589 acres of land in the undivided Lakhimpur district was taken up for tea and there were 141 tea gardens in the district.[3] With the growth of the tea industry more areas of cultivable waste lands were taken up for tea ; 4,16,003 acres of land were under tea in 1957 in the undivided Lakhimpur district. The figure stood at 57,140 hectares in 1970. Thus, it appears that the tea industry has been the most important factor that accelerated the pace of reclamation of large tracts of cultivable waste land during the last one hundred years. The policy of giving an impetus to the growth of tea industry by making grants of large blocks of land was pursued in the past when there was no dearth of waste lands in the district. During the third decade of the present century, the increasing scarcity of land suitable for the growth of tea, its increasing value and the entry of the indigenous small capitalists into competition with European planters led to a complete reconsideration of the position with the result that special terms were no longer offered to the applicants for grants for special cultivation. With the growth of population, the pressure on land was steadily increasing. It was found lateron that large areas of tea grants were lying unutilised while the number of landless cultivators were ever increasing. In order to make available these unutilised waste lands to the landless cultivators for growing crops, the *Assam Land (Requisition and Acquisition) Act*, 1948 has been enacted.

Large tracts of lands lying fallow have been reclaimed by manual labour for ordinary cultivation during the last few decades. The immigrants who settled in the riverine areas of the present Lakhimpur district made a significant contribution in this regard. The following statement shows the increase of the area under ordinary cultivation during the period from 1912-13 to 1950-51.[4]

2. B. C. Allen, *Assam District Gazetteers, Lakhimpur*, (1905) p. 253
3. *The Assam Land Revenue Manual*, (1931) *Introduction* ; p. *XXXVII*.
4. *Assam Land Revenue Manual* ; (1964) *Introduction*, pp. *XXXII*.

Year	Area under ordinary cultivation (*in hectares*).
1912-13	262129
1917-18	311802
1922-23	360786
1927-28	433357
1944-45	592260
1950-51	643511

The expansion of the area under cultivation was an important feature of land settlement during the decade ending in 1961. Thus, in 1961, the total settled area of the undivided Lakhimpur district was 1797366 *bighas* and the net cropped area was 1490156 *bighas*. There had been an increase by 29 per cent of the settled area and 33 per cent of the net cropped area during the period from 1931 to 1961.[5] A Technical Committee was appointed by the Government of Assam in 1963-64 to ascertain the actual extent, location and possibility of utilisation of the cultivable lands in Assam. According to this Committee the position of cultivable waste lands in the undivided Lakhimpur district was as follows[6]:—

Cultivable waste land of the undivided Lakhimpur District,
(Area in bighas)

Sl. No.	Category of land	Revenue Circles: Dibrugarh East	Dibrugarh West	Tinsukia	Naharkatiya
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Number of blocks measuring 15 *bighas* or more	123	111	554	115
2.	Total area of land	17392	10989	90433	5576
3.	Land not suitable for cultivation	1644	1475	7479	1116
4.	Land suitable for reclamation by manual labour	3000	131	31630	921
5.	Land suitable for mechanised reclamation	10379	7571	20706	2678
6.	Land suitable for immediate settlement	—	—	5090	861
7.	Land under encroachment	2369	1872	25528	—

5. *Assam Gazette*—January 8, 1964, p. 94.
6. *Land Settlement Policy*, 1968, Annexure—A.

Sl. No,	Category of land	Revenue Circles: Dhemaji	North Lakhimpur	Bihpuria puria	Subansiri	District Total
1	2	7	8	9	10	11
1.	Number of blocks measuring 15 *bighas* or more	39	111	7	12	1072
2.	Total area of land	10682	11145	1517	21511	169247
3.	Land not suitable for cultivation	—	3936	917	383	16950
4.	Land suitable for reclamation by manual labour	—	491	300	685	37158
5.	Land suitable for mechanised reclamation	10684	3173	—	19000	74131
6.	Land suitable for immediate settlement	—	102	250	963	7266
7.	Land under encroachment	—	3443	50	480	33742

Cultivable waste land is settled by the government in accordance with the Settlement Rules framed under the *Assam Land and Revenue Regulation*. The land settlement policy was reformulated by the State Government in 1968. It was decided that the cultivable waste land would be settled only with the actual tillers of the land on the basis of the family and the families having more than ten *bighas* of land would not be entitled to get settlement of more land. According to the above policy landless families will be provided with two *bighas* of land as house sites. In case of blocks of land of 100 *bighas* or more, settlement will be given on the *Gramsabha* basis. No person having lands above 10 *bighas* will get fresh allotment by virtue of membership of a co-operative society. Some other measures enunciated in this 'Policy' relate to eviction of the encroachers, settlement of waste lands through the Land Settlement Advisory Committees, preservation of the duly constituted Village Grazing Grounds, and prohibition on the transfer of land from the agriculturists to the non-agriculturists.

The Land Settlement Resolution Policy of 1968 had to be modified from time to time to suit the circumstances and conditions prevailing at a particular time. The twin objectives of making further changes in the above policy were—(1) to optimise the State income and (2) to

provide land to the landless people for their homestead as well as agricultural purposes. In accordance with the preliminary report of the Land Settlement Implementation Advisory Committee, submitted in August 1969, the Government undertook a survey through Panchayats to enumerate landless agriculturists. The survey revealed preponderance of landless people and small farm owners having five *bighas* of land or less. The Government reformulated the policy of settling Government waste land. The broad features of the 'Land Policy,' 1972 are as follows :

Settlement of Government agricultural lands for ordinary cultivation will henceforward be not given on individual basis. The *Gaon Panchayats* will prepare the list of landless cultivators who are eligible to get settlement. All available Government land suitable for cultivation will be amalgamated and allotted to Corporations formed of eligible landless cultivators of the villages concerned. Namdang Agricultural Farming Corporation in Dibrugarh district and Baginadi Agricultural Farming Corporation in the present Lakhimpur district have already started functioning. The former comprises an area of about three thousand *bighas* and the latter covers about two thousand *bighas* of land.

Agricultural Farming Corporation : Any fifty or more agriculturists approved by the State Government may form jointly with the State Government an Agricultural Farming Corporation. However, any Corporation whose main objective is to engage in dairy or poultry or fishery may be formed by minimum twenty members or more. The Corporations are required to be duly registered. The authorised ordinary share capital of the Corporation is divided into shares of rupees ten each. The State Government will hold not less than fiftyone percent of the authorised share capital. No agriculturist will be entitled to hold more than one ordinary share in a Corporation.

There will be a Board of Directors for superintendence, direction and management of the affairs of the Corporation. One half of the total number of Directors will be nominees of the State Government and the rest duly elected by the share-holders. The Corporation is authorised to use its land or other property for the purpose of raising agricultural produce, in the manner as prescribed in the Memorandaum of Association. It is significant that no agriculturist or person will acquire any right over the land or property allowed to be used by him.

For providing facilities, such as irrigation or machinery or other common services for cultivation or other agricultural use the Corporation may levy and realise from members some charges. The agriculturists are not allowed to sell any agricultural produce produced by him on Corporation's land except through the Corporation. The Assam Agricultural Farming Corporations Act, 1973 contains adequate provisions for eviction of encroachers from the Corporation's land.

Clearing of forests, swamps : The area of the unclassed state forests of undivided Lakhimpur district dwindled from 3099 sq. miles in 1902-03 to 2000 sq. miles in 1961. The denudation of the unclassed state forests is due to expansion of the area of the reserved forests and reclamation of unclassed state forests for agricultural purposes. Accurate figures of the forest lands reclaimed for agricultural purposes are not available. There are numerous swamps in the district. Some of these swamps have been reclaimed under irrigation projects. The area of land reclaimed by construction of dams and canals since 1955-56 till 1963-64 is 34,426 acres.

(b) **Irrigation** :

(i) **Irrigational facilities** : The distribution of annual rainfall being uneven, improvement of agriculture depends upon irrigational facilities, in absence of which the crop failure may, at times, assume alarming proportions. The average annual rainfall of the undivided Lakhimpur district in the decade ending in 1961 was about 2641.41 mm. About 60% of the annual rainfall is received during the months of July and September, when *Sali* paddy is transplanted. The *Sali* paddy which is the principal crop of the district requires 5—8 cms. of water in the field from transplanting upto 15—20 days before harvest. Sufficient rain water is almost evenly distributed during the rainy season all over the plains of the district and the overflowing rivers inundate vast tracts facilitating the growth of this crop. During the winter season when the small streams and rivulets dry up and rainfall becomes scarce, the countryside looses its summer greenery. No major or medium irrigation projects were however, taken up in the undivided Lakhimpur district during the first three Five Year Plans. Some minor irrigation schemes have been implemented. The position is shown below.[7]

Sources of irrigation in the undivided Lakhimpur District.

Sl.	Items	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	Canals					
	(a) Govt. Canals	—	—	—	@200	—
	(b) PrivateCanals	—	—	—	323424	247635
	(c) Total	—	—	—	323624	247635
2.	Tanks	—	—	—	—	—
3.	Wells	—	—	—	—	—
4.	Other Sources	@2856	@2910	@2872	108916	97500
5.	Total	@2856	@2910	@2872	432540	345135

7. *Census of India* 1961, *Assam District Census Handbook, Lakhimpur* p. 431.
@. Figures relate to Sadiya Frontier Tract. Data presented for 1961 is the average of two years Viz., 1956—57 and 1957—58.

In 1961, paddy covered only 41880 acres of land out of total irrigated area of 345135 acres. Only 554 acres of land where other cereals and pulses were grown, were irrigated in 1961. Total irrigated area thus comes to about half of the total area cultivated, that is to say, 672849 acres in 1961.

The Flood Control and Irrigation Department of the Government of Assam executes the irrigation schemes, while some of the minor irrigation schemes are also implemented by the Agriculture Department. During the Third Five Year Plan the former took up only one scheme, known as the Philobari Irrigation scheme which involves, an expenditure of Rs. 13.23 lakhs. The net area benefited by this scheme measures about 11000 acres.

(ii) **Protective bunds to protect crops** : Because of the topographical features and meteorological conditions obtaining in Assam, frequent and widespread floods occur in the rivers almost every year. After the great earthquake of 1950, the floods of the Bramaputra and its tributaries caused heavy loss of lives, crops and livestock. Floods in the undivided Lakhimpur district became, since then, almost a regular feature, particularly in the north bank. Various flood control measures including construction of protective dams were taken up during the plan period. The construction of the bund-cum-embankment on the eastern side of the Subansiri in 1953 has ushered in an era of prosperity in the present Lakhimpur district. Similarly, the construction of stone spurs and stone revetments since 1953-54 to protect Dibrugarh town from the erosion of the Brahmaputra has provided the district a strong bulwark against the lashing currents.

The following list of comparatively bigger schemes implemented for the purposes of embankment, drainage channel, protection works etc, indicates the extent of areas benefited from each schemes ranging from ten thousand acres and above in the undivided district of Lakhimpur upto April 1971.

Embankments, Protection bunds, Irrigation and Drainage Channels etc. (excluding smaller ones), as in April, 1971

Sl. No.	Name of Schemes	Area benefited (*in acres*).
1	2	3
(A)	Embankment	
1.	Tributary dyke from Bordirak to Waket. Phase-1.	15,000 acres.
2.	Saikhowa protection bund Phase-11.	15,000 "
3.	Tributary dyke from Bhekulajan to Tipling.	10,000 "
4.	Extension of Tengakhat bund upto Jokai R. F.	10,000 "

Sl. No.	Name of Schemes	Area benefited (*in acres*),
1	2	3
5.	Dihing bund 1st Section from Aghonibari to Sissughat.	25,000 acres
6.	Brahmaputra dyke from Dibrugarh to Dihingmukh. Phase-1.	15,000 "
7.	Brahmaputra dyke from Dibrugarh to Dihingmukh. Phase-11.	19,200 "
8.	Brahmaputra dyke from Badati to Jamuguri.	20,000 "
9.	Embankment along left bank of the Dikrong from Harmuti Tea Garden of Dahgharia.	10,000 "
10.	Embankment along right bank of the Pabho from Rajgarhali to Sunapur.	20,000 "
11.	Protection work along right bank of the Ranganadi from Kharakati to Pakaniaghat. Part 11.	10,000 "
12.	Protection of North Lakhimpur town and surrounding areas from the flood of the Ranganadi river Phase 1. from Amtola to Pahumaraghat along left bank.	10,000 "
13.	Flood embankment along right bank of the Subansiri from Bhimporaghat to Noali.	20,000 "
14.	Brahmaputra dyke from Jamuguri to Kharai outfall along north bank of the Brahmaputra.	20,000 "
15.	Construction of Majuli bund along north bank of the Brahmaputra from Haldhibari to Bessamora.	30,000 "
(B)	Irrigation Scheme.	
1.	Philobari Irrigation Scheme	11,000 "
(C)	Drainage Channel	
1.	(a) Lepetkatta Channel (b) Laruajan (c) Rajabhetajan. (d) Achijan	12,000 "

Besides these, many smaller schemes which include construction of embankment, protection works, small irrigation schemes, drainage channels etc., have been completed in the undivided Lakhimpur district A list of these scheme has been appended in Annexures 'A', 'B' and 'C' at the end of the Chapter.

(c) Agriculture including Horticulture :

(i) **Soil** : The soil of the undivided Lakhimpur district mainly in the plains portion, is alluvial and composed of a mixture of sand and clay in varying proportions. The general condition of the soil of both banks seems to be similar but is not the same. Soils of North Lakhimpur are highly acidic. The soil around the Subansiri and Ranganadi rivers are sandy, coated with silt which is good for cultivation of winter crops, such as rape and mustard, potato etc., while in the south bank, the land is flat plain. Some essential ingredients of the land locally called the '*Jalduva*' (land around Doom-Dooma circle) differ from '*Jalduva*' land found elsewhere in Assam. The greater part consists of a snuggy mass of black mud of varying consistency from 2 ft. to 4 ft. in depth which rests on a firm bottom of hard clay. The old alluvial soils are comparatively more acidic, clayey and deficient in calcium. The new alluvial soils are those parts of the land which are subject to inundation by the spill-overs of the rivers at intervals and contain more percentage of fine sand and silt and less acidic. The statement below gives an analysis of the soil of the undivided Lakhimpur district.[8]

Texture/ type of soil	Acidity/PH value	Availability of Nitrogen (N)%	Availability of Phosphatic Acid P2'05%	Availability of Potash K2 0(%)
New alluvium of medium texture and variable	Strongly acidic. pH. (Water Extract) 6.8 (KNO_3 Exract) 5.2 North Lakhimpur—highly acidic 4.8 (W Edn)	0.069	0.025	0.006

(ii) **Crops** : The chief crops produced in the present Lakhimpur district are the *Sali* and *Ahu* paddy, mustard, sugarcane and potato. The mustard crop is raised throughout the district; Dhakuakhana, Gohaingaon, Telahi and Narayanpur are the mauzas where the bulk of the crop is produced. *Sali* and *Ahu* paddy too are grown extensively. Sugarcane is also grown in some parts of the district.

With the exception of tea, the Dibrugarh district is agriculturally less prosperous than Lakhimpur. The chief crops grown in this district are the *Sali* and *Ahu* paddy, mustard and sugarcane. *Sali* paddy is grown throughout the district; *Ahu* paddy and mustard crops are chiefly grown near the banks of the Brahmaputra. Following statement indicates the decennial variation of area under different crops grown in the undivided Lakhimpur district.[9]

8. *Agricultural Guide Book*, 1967-68. p. 56.

Decadal variation in area under important crops in the undivided Lakhimpur district.

(*Area in acres*)

Crop	1901	1911	1921	1931
1. Basic food crops				
(i) Total Cereals	141,986	172,497	242,832	293 601
(a) Rice	141,976	172,497	242,110	293,601
(ii) Total Pulses	—	—	—	—
(iii) Total foodgrains	147,449	180,123	251,697	301,221
(iv) Fruits and vegetables	17,589	10,887	29,086	38,633
2. Other food crops				
(a) Sugarcane	4,283	4,556	4,758	5,277
(b) Condiments and spices	—	—	—	—
(c) Total food crops	169,321	195,566	285,541	345,131
3. Non-food crops				
(a) Total oilseeds	7,194	11.730	10,635	12,737
(b) Cotton	11	54	106	117
(c) Jute	15	156	174	1,057
(d) Total fibres	26	210	280	1,174
(e) Plantation crops (tea only)	—	—	91,390	105,750
(f) Tobacco	51	143	371	457
4. Total area sown under all crops	252,372	301,329	403,265	486,535
5. Area sown more than once	8,425	14,618	14,708	19,356
6. Net area sown	243,947	286,711	388,557	467,179

9. *District Census Handbook* 1961 ; *Lakhimpur*, p. 430.

Crop	1941	1951	1961
1. Basic food crops			
(i) Total Cereals	360,659	416,439	427,556
(a) Rice	363,591	413,886	422,746
(ji) Total Pulses	—	11 340	10 832
(iii) Total Foodgrains	372,943	427,779	438,388
(iv) Fruits and vegetables	63,815	55,212	30,562
2. Other food crops			
(a) Sugarcane	5,084	6,071	5,832
(b) Condiments and spices	—	14	7,458
(c) Total food crops	441,842	490,173	591,952
3. Non-food crops			
(a) Total oilseeds	21,255	19,824	18,738
(b) Cotton	113	218	151
(c) Jute	3,750	3,174	4,431
(d) Total fibres	3,863	6,018	4,617
(e) Plantation crops (tea only)	110,827	107,982	119,612
(f) Tobacco	822	1,165	1,417
4. Total area sown under all crops	597,914	646,688	642,626
5, Area sown more than once	25,065	34,114	38,714
6. Net area sown	572,849	612,574	603,912

In the above statement the item 'total food crops' includes rice, pulses, sugarcane, condiments and spices etc. During the last decade there has been an increse in the cropped area as shown in the table below.[10]

Area under principal crops.
(Area in hectares)

Crops	1965-66	1968-69	1969-70
Rice (all varieties)	183476	212015	226474
Rape and mustard	9310	10320	10120
Jute	2210	3640	3640
Sugarcane	3540	3480	3440
Potato	3220	3240	3280

10. (1) *Statistical Handbook of Assam*, 1970, pp. 33-43.
(2) *Statistical Handbook of Assam*, 1969, pp. 52-68.
(3) *Agricultural Guide Book*, 1967-68, 1968-69, 1971-72.

Combination and rotation of crops are becoming increasingly popular in the recent times. In 1964-65, there were in the undivided Lakhimpur district 49,879 acres of land where crop was grown more than once.[11]

Rice : It is the staple food crop grown extensively all over the plains areas of the two districts. Rice covered 56 percent of the total cropped area of undivided Lakhimpur district in 1901, 62.59 percent in 1949-50 and 65.78 percent in 1961. Rice commonly grown in the district are of three varieties : *Sali, Ahu, Bao*. Of these, three varieties, the production of *Sali* paddy is the highest in the district.

There are various types of *Sali* paddy such as *Monohar Sali, Hati Sali, Lati Sali, Lau Dumra, Prasad bhog, Badsah bhog, Joha, Bora* and *Basmati*. The crop is always transplanted. Seedbeds are prepared in relatively high lands and seeds are sown in the month of May and June. These lands are commonly called *Kathiatoli*. Transplantation is done from July to September and harvesting commences from November and continues upto the first fortnight of January.

The table below gives the type of the grain and duration of the crop of each variety of *Sali* paddy.

Name of the variety.	Quality	Colour of kernel	Duration of crop (*in days*)
1	2	3	4
Manohar Sali	Coarse	White	165
Hati Sali	,,	,,	168
Lati Sali	,,	,,	165
Lau-Dumra	,,	,,	165
Prasad-bhog	Medium	,,	157
Badsha-bhog	Fine	,,	170
Basmati	Fine	,,	120

With the onset of the monsoon the seedbeds for *Sali* paddy are prepared by ploughing and harrowing the land five or six times after which the land is reduced to puddle. The seed which is selected from the largest ears of the last year's crop, is sown broadcast over the bed in May and June. The seed beds are manured with cow-dung and compost. Use of Ammonium Sulphate, Urea in seedbeds has been widely encouraged in recent times. The proper area borne by the seed beds and the area to be transplanted varies according to fertility of soil, time of transplanting and such other factors. The seed rate is gene-

11. *Statistical Abstract of Assam*, 1967-68, pp. 118.

rally 300-350 grams of seeds per 100 sq. feet of the puddled land. Selected seeds from previous year's crops are steeped in water for two or three days, allowed to germinate and then sown over the beds in May and June. In the meantime, preparation of fields is done for transplanting the seedlings. Ploughing of land is started as soon as the soil becomes soft after the reception of the spring rain and the process is repeated till it is reduced to a rich puddle of mud. After the third ploughing, land is harrowed and small embankments (*Ali*) a few inches high, surrounding small plots of land, intended to retain water, are constructed or repaired where old bund existed. Protection of fields from stray cattle is secured by putting up split bamboo fencing near the roads or village paths. Transplantation starts from the later part of June and continues till the first week of September. To avoid damage by flood, transplantation is done lately in low-lying areas but the yield of the late variety is poor. Local method of transplanting is 4-5 seedlings per hole at varying distances of 9" to 12" or more. The number of seedlings per hole and distance from plant to plant vary with the fertility of land, water supply to the land and time of transplantation. In case of late transplantation and transplantation of comparatively aged seedlings the number of seedlings per hole is increased. Lifting of seedlings from nursery and transplanting operations are generally done by women. The work is of arduous type and involves stooping for hours in a field of mud under the rays of the burning tropical sun.

After transplantation the plants are left practically unattended. No interculture is done, except weeding when the grass grows thickly. The crop becomes ready for harvest from November and the operation continues till the middle of January. The reaper grasps a handful of the ears and cut them off about 10 inches below the hand. These handfuls (*muthi*) are each tied up with a piece of straw, and strewn over the field as the cutting process goes on. Six to eight *muthis* make *thor* or *jhap* and five or six *thors* a *dangeri*. A *dangeri* is then affixed to either end of a sharp pointed bamboo called *biria*, and the load which is called a *bhar* and carried across the shoulder, is taken to homestead by the men.

The finer variety of *Sali* is commonly called *Lahi* which ripens earlier than other varities of *Sali*. *Lahi* is grown in higher fields which dry up first at the conclusion of the rains. The *Joha* is the finest variety of rice commonly grown in the district. *Boradhan* which is a species of *Sali* paddy is good for making *chirra* and cakes called *pitha*.

Baodhan : It is grown in some low-lying areas of Dibrugarh district and in the area lying between the Subansiri and the Brahmaputra. *Baodhan* grows only in lowlying tracts liable to flood. The paddy

field is prepared ploughing the land for four or five times and *Baodhan* is sown broadcast in March and April. It ripens in the beginning of January, and harvesting is done in the same way as *Sali*. The crop is very often destroyed by flood or water hyacinth.

Area, Average yield and production of Winter rice (Sali and Bao) in the undivided Lakhimpur District [12].

Period	Area in Hectares	Average yield in Kg. per Hectare	Production in metric tonnes.
First Plan			
1955-56	1,47,140	937	1,35,310
Second Plan			
1960-61	1,63,371	1,141	1,83,316
Third Plan			
1961-62	1,65,806	1,184	1,93,210
1962-63	1,66,176	1,112	1,81,904
1963-64	1,63,366	1,232	1,97,977
1964-65	1,61,874	1,242	1,97,870
1965-66	1,61,874	1,169	1,86,252
Ad-hoc Plan			
1966-67	1,69,968	1,064	1,78,060
1967-68	1,74,015	1,154	1,97,338
1968-69	1,78,062	886	1,57,428
Fourth Plan			
1969-70	1,92,226	1,206	2,31,756

Ahudhan : Like *Sali*, there are several varieties of *Ahu* paddy, such as *Dubarichinga*, *Rangadaria*, *Kasalath* etc.

Varieties of Ahu paddy.

Name of the variety.	Grains quality	Colour of kernel	Duration of crop (in days)
Rangadaria	Coarse	Red	100
Dubarichinga	Medium	Red	112
Kasalath	Medium	Red	110
Gerem	Medium	White	110

Although *Ahudhan* can be sown broadcast or transplanted, the broadcast type is more popular. It is sown relatively on higher areas as its water requirement is the least among all the cultivated paddies. The preparation of the field starts in January when ploughing begins. The field is ploughed three times and harrowed, and the clods are broken

12. *Agricultural Guide Book*, 1967-68, 1968-69 and 1971-72 (Govt. of Assam,)

up by a mallet. Another ploughing and harrowing follows, the seed is sown, and the land again is ploughed and harrowed to ensure that the grain becomes thoroughly mixed with the soil. The seed rate is 30-35 Kg. of dry seed per acre for broadcast variety and 30 Kg. of wet seed per acre for transplanted variety. Thick growth obstructs the weeds with which these fields are found replete. When the plants are about six inches high and catch the wind (*botah boloah*), they are harrowed again and weeded, and finally harvested about July and August. The crop is, however, a precarious one, and is liable to be destroyed by a sudden rise of the rivers. The plants can live under water for as much as a week, but if, after this time, the floods do not retire, they are permanently destroyed. *Ahu* is often grown on the *chaparis* in conjunction with mustard, and no jungle cutting is of course required where the soil has been already cleared for the oil seed crop. The same field is seldom cropped for more than three years in succession. The weeds, which were unable to find a lodging under the dense growth of *ikra* (*saccharum arundinaceum*), *khagari* (*saccharum spontaneum*) and *nal* (*phragmites roxburghii*), with which the land in its natural state is covered, soon spring up when the jungle has been removed. After the third year, it is less troublesome to burn fresh jungle than to clear the old fields of weeds, and by a change of site the peasant gets the further advantage of the manure of ashes for his next year's crop.

High land *Ahu* is grown on land which is too high for transplanted rice, and is fairly common in the country near the foot of the Himalayas. It is significant that this high land *Ahu* is seldom combined with pulse and mustard, though there is no reason why one or the other of these crops should not be taken from the field in the cold weather. After the land has remained fallow for sometime, the villagers grow *Ahu* paddy on it again.

Area, Average yield and production of Autumn rice in the undivided Lakhimpnr District.

Period	Area in Hectares	Average yield in Kg. per Hectare.	Production in Metric tonnes.
First Plan 1955-56	17,011	952	15,972
Second Plan 1960-61	15,866	703	10,984
Third Plan			
1961-62	16,382	820	13,216
1962-63	15,734	721	11,169
1963-64	16,386	832	13,426

Period	Area in Hectares	Average yield in Kg, per Hectare.	Production in Metric tonnes
1964-65	20,072	822	16,260
1965-66	21,197	747	15,595
Ad-hoc Plan			
1966-67	23,472	839	20,529
1967-68	29,542	789	22,935
1968-69	33,346	1,022	34,078
Fourth Plan 1969-70	33,346	936	31,199

Boro Paddy : It grows in low-lying areas which remain under one or two feet deep water in December and January when transplantation is done. The statement below gives the figures of area, average yield and production of spring rice (*Boro*) in the district.[13]

Area, Average yield and production of Spring rice (Boro) in the undivided Lakhimpur District.

Period	Area in Hectares	Average yield in Kg. per Hectare	Production in Metric tonnes.
First Plan 1955-56	110	1,345	148
Second Plan 1960-61	202	1,065	215
Third Plan			
1961-62	3,903	953	3,719
1962-63	324	953	309
1963-64	324	953	309
1964-65	376	897	337
1965-66	405	890	360
Ad-hoc Plan			
1966-67	809	1,000	809
1967-68	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
1968-69	607	900	546
Fourth Plan 1969-70	902	900	805

13. *Agricultural Guide Book*, 1968-69, and 1971-72 (Govt. of Assam).

High yielding varieties of paddy, namely IR-8, Native Taichung—1 and CH. 63 are becoming increasingly popular throughout the district. These varieties are grown in the manner described above, as *Ahu*, *Sali* and *Boro* paddy in the corresponding seasons. There should be irrigational facilities that ensure 2″-3″ of water in the field from transplantation till 10-15 days of harvest in case of *Boro* paddy, 2-15 days after transplantation and 10-15 days preceding the harvest in case of *Ahu* and *Sali* paddy. Besides the appropriate quantum of fertilizers in the field, much depends upon timely transplantation. IR-8 and TN-1 are not transplanted beyond August and CH-63 beyond September, when grown as *Ahu* and *Sali* paddy. During the *Boro* season IR-8 and TN-1 require spacing of 4″-9″ and only two seedlings per hole. Average yield of TN-1 and IR-8 is 2000 Kg. per acre when grown as *Ahu* and *Sali* paddy, 2500 Kg. per acre when grown as *Boro* paddy. The output of the local varieties of paddy varies from 850 Kg. to 950 Kg. per acre. The following table shows the area under the high yielding variety of paddy grown in the district.[14]

Area under high yielding variety of paddy grown in the undivided Lakhimpur District.

Year—1969-70

Area in hectares.

	Ahu	*Sali*	*Boro*
Taichung Native-1	4110	4721	1435
I.R.-8	5419	3540	1134
Monahar Sali		8883	

The indigenous process of thrashing paddy : The bundles of paddy brought from the field are stocked in the courtyard. The thrashing is done particularly in the evening. The *dangeries* are spread in the courtyard in thick layers and bullocks are driven over these layers for some hours till the ears get separated from the stem. This process is known as *Morana mara*. The grain is next passed through a sieve and placed in a flat bamboo tray called *Kula*. It is then jerked into the air and allowed to fall slowly to the ground till gradually the chaff is carried off. After thrashing, the paddy is stored in huge drums called *Mer* or *Duli*. These are made of spilt bamboo and the outer surface is plastered over with clay and cowdung. The larger portion of paddy is stored by many cultivators in *Bhoral* which, unlike the houses of the villages, is raised on posts well above the level of the ground.

14. *Agricultural Guide Book*, 1971-72, p. 106.

Area, average yield and production of total rice in the undivided Lakhimpur district.[15]

Period	*Area in hectares*	*Average yield in Kg. per hectare.*	*Production in metric tonnes.*
First plan			
1955-56	1,64,261	939	1,51,430
Second plan			
1960-61	1,79,439	1,110	1,94,515
Third plan			
1961-62	1,86,091	1,147	2,10,145
1962-63	1,82,234	1,074	1,93,382
1963-64	1,80,076	1,189	2,11,712
1964-65	1,82,322	1,195	2,14,467
1965-66	1,83,476	1,120	2,02,347
Ad-hoc plan			
1966-67	1,94,249	1,026	1,99,398
1967-68	2,04,164	1,099	2,20,813
1968-68	2,12,015	1,253	2,65,730
Fourth plan			
1969-70	2,00,049	938	1,87,644

Mustard : Mustard is normally grown in conjunction with *Ahu* on riparian flats. The jungle is cut down in February and March. If the land cannot be prepared in time for summer rice it is allowed to rot upon the ground. What remains, is burnt in October, the stumps are dug out and the land is ploughed over four or five times. The seed is sown at the rate of 9.331 Kg. per acre about the end of October to the beginning of November. The crop is ready to be pulled out from the field about the middle of February. It is generally left to dry for a few days and then thrashed either in the field in a place prepared for the purpose or near the homestead, where it is thrashed out by cattle. The principal mustard growing areas are the mauzas of Dhakuakhana, Gohaingaon, Telahi and Narayanpur of the present Lakhimpur district. The total area under mustard in the undivided Lakhimpur district was 6430 hectares in 1960-61, 10120 hectares in 1969-70, with total yield of 2780 tonnes, and 4050 tonnes respectively.

Pulses : Pulse is grown mainly in alluvial flat lands near the Brahmaputra. Of the different kinds of pulses grown in the district, the most important variety is *Mati-mah* (*phaseolus mungo*). Other kinds of pulses are *Magu-mah* (*phaseolus aureus*), *Arahar* (*cajanus cajan*) *Masur-mah*

15. *Agricultural Guide Book*, 1967-68, 1971-72.

(*lens esenlenta*), *Motor-mah* (*Pisum sativum*), *Garo-mah* (*glycina hispida*), *Lesera-mah* (*vigna cutjang*), etc. Total pulses grown in the district covered the area of 11,340 acres in 1951 and 10,832 acres in 1961 of which the irrigated area was 3,514 acres in 1951 and 554 acres in 1961. In 1966-67, plulses were grown over 4,440 acres of land and total production was 1758 tonnes. The total production of pulses is much less than the total requirement of the pulses in the district.

The time of sowing different kinds of pulses are as follows :

Name of the crop	Time of sowing
1. *Masurmah* (Lentil)	October, November.
2. *Mati-mah* (Black gram)	September, October.
3. *Magu-mah* (Green gram)	September, October.
4. *Garo-mah* (Soyabean)	June, July.
5. *Lesera-mah* (cowpea)	May-July.
6. *Motor-mah* (pea)	September-November.

Occasionally, pulses are grown in conjunction with summer rice. To grow it separately, it is sufficient to plough the land for three or four times if the site is not covered with jungles. Sometimes seeds are sown on the river flats as soon as the floods subside. Pulses are sown broadcast amongst the rice stubble or between the *Sali* plants if the ground is still soft, but this method is not generally in use. When the crop is ripe, *mati-mah*, *masur-mah* *magu-mah* are pulled out by the roots and left in the field for a few days to dry. The seeds are thrashed out by the cattle ; but certain percentage of seeds do not get separated readily from the pods. The rest are thrashed out by a hand—thrashing implement. The principal pulse growing areas of the undivided Lakhimpur district are Dhemaji, Gohaingaon and Telahi mauzas on the north bank and Dibrugarh Circle on the south bank.

Jute : In recent years area under jute has increased considerably in both the districts ; but in the past the cultivation of jute was almost negligible and the small acreage under this crop was mainly confined to the villages where the migrants from East Pakistan settled. Two varieties of jute are grown in the district—*Titamora* (*corchorus capsularis*) grown in comparatively lowlying areas and *mithamora* (*C. olitorius*) grown on higher areas. Preparation of land starts from February and 6 to 7 ploughings and harrowings are given to obtain a fine tilth ; seeds are sown and plants are cut in August, September just at the time of small pod stage. The crop is cut down at ground level and left in the field for two or three days where the leaves are stripped off and then tied into bundles. The bundles are kept under water for fifteen or more days to rot. When the barks become soft and easily removable from the stem, the bundles are broken in the middle and beaten to and fro in the water till the inner part drops out and only the fibre remains. The fibres are then dried and tied in bundles and they become ready for use. Another important fibre *Rhea* (*Bochmeria nivea*) is grown in the gardens. The fibre of *Rhea* is exceptionally strong and is durable and is used in making fishing nets. Jute occupied 2210 hectares in the undivided Lakhimpur district in the year 1960-61. The outturn was 14140 bales (400 lbs. per bale). In 1969-70, 32150 bales (each bale weighing 180 Kg.) of jute were grown over an area of 3640 hectares.

Sugarcane : Sugarcane is an important crop of the district. It is grown on high lands. Tiny patches of sugarcane fields are seen almost in every revenue circle of the district. The area under sugarcane in the undivided Lakhimpur district in 1902-03 was 4,746 acres and the same has increased to 2710 hectares during the year of 1960-61. Sugarcane is grown in small plots in every part of the district ; but important growing centres are Ranganadi and Naharkatiya revenue circles. Government is advancing loan and subsidy to the sugarcane growers to extend the area under sugarcane.

Sugarcane (*saccharum officinarum*) is propagated from the tops of the best cane, which are cut off at harvest time and kept in a shady place. One of these tops yields on the average about five canes, and as they contain but little juice, the cultivator does not sacrifice much of the gross product of his fields in the cause of reproduction. Four principal varieties of the plant are grown in different parts of the district. The *bagi* or white stands about seven feet high and has yellow canes of soft juicy texture. The *teliya* is shorter, harder, and thinner, and the canes are of a deep red or even purple colour. The *Bangala* or *Bam* a foreign variety, is larger and more juicy than the indigeneous kinds, but yields a smaller proportion of sugar. The *Megala* is a hard and thin variety of the *Mugi*, and where grown, is planted round the edge of the field. C. O.-313, C.O.-421, C.O.-419, C.O.-740 and C.O.-997 are high yielding varieties of sugarcane. The land is hoed up till it is reduced to a fine tilth, and the tops planted in trenches between April and June. The patch is fenced with split bamboo, and there is usually a stout hedge of *arhar dal* (*Cajanus Cajan*) ; constant watching is required to scare away jackals and other animals, and an empty oil tin with clapper is generally to be seen suspended over each field. While the crop is growing it is continually hoed and weeded, and about August the leaves should be tied up round each cluster of canes, which is a troublesome proceeding. The earth from the ridge is heaped about the roots to strengthen their hold upon the soil, and this process is continued, until the relative positions of ridge and trench are reversed, and the canes stand upon ridges with the trenches in between.

Preparation of Gur : An indigeneous form of mill was generally used for the extraction of the juice from sugarcane in the paast. It

consisted of two wooden rollers fixed side by side in a trough hollowed out of a heavy block of wood. This machine has been replaced by crushing machines (*Kuhiar Sal*) in the recent times; but both the types are of same model. The crushing machines contain three iron rollers, one with very sharp teeth and the other two with soft teeth. At the top of the machine a stout bamboo pole is so fixed that the movement of the rollers is regulated by the pole. The motive power is supplied usually by the villagers themselves, but buffaloes are also used. Handful of sugarcanes are placed between the rollers and crushed or are forced through. The juice trickles from the trough into a vessel kept below. Twelve or fifteen gallons of juice are boiled in an iron vessel till it is reduced to proper condition. The furnace is hollowed out of ground. The refuse that accumulates at the surface when the juice is boiled is strained out by some small pots made of a hollow and dried pumpkin affixed to a long handle.

Banana : An important garden crop of the district is the banana (*Musa Sapientum*) known as *Kal* in Assam. As many as ten varieties of this crop are grown, but most important are those locally known as *Monohar, Chenichampa, Malbhog, Bhimkal, Purakal*, and *Jahaji. Purakal* is used as vegetables, *Chenichampa* is the high yielding variety and hardier; *Malbhog* is medium yielder and has very pleasant flavour; *Bhimkal* is considered cool and wholesome. *Jahaji, Malbhog* and *Ma nohar* are by far the best in quality of fruit. These varieties however, are very extracting in their soil, requiring cultural and manural practices and get degenerated unless proper care is taken. The other varieties comparatively can stand some amount of negligence in field treatments. The *Bhimkal* is in a way very outstanding, being the high yielder and having the biggest size. This fruit is commonly used as infant food.

Propagation of banana is done vegetatively by employing suckers which arise at the base of their plants from the underground rhizomes. Suckers, possessing long narrow leaves are removed with a bit of the rhizomes from the mother plant and are planted in holes prepared in the field. The size of the holes usually varies according to the varieties. Generally holes are of 18 inch wide and 18 inch deep and are manured with cowdung and ash. Young plants take from 18 months to 2 years to flower, and flowers take from three months to six months to turn to fruit.

The whole plant from leaf to root is used for different purposes, the terminating bud (*Kaldil*) is used as vegetable; the leaves and sheath are used as substitute for dishes. From the sheath tumblers (*Khol*) are made for immediate use. The plant in general is used for decorating gates etc., in different ceremonies. *Kalakhar* is an indigenous alkaline preparation and is commonly used in preparation of certain dishes among

the Assamese. The banana plant and corns are sliced down and dried in the sun; when completely dried, they are burnt and the ashes used as *Kalakhar*. *Kalakhar* is used for preparation of *Kharanipani* etc.

Arecanut (*Areca catechu*): It is grown almost as universally as the banana and with the bamboo forms the great trinity of trees among which the houses of the Assamese are usually embedded. The plantation is hoed up, and kept clear of weeds and the trees are most liberally manured with cow-dung. The *pan* (betelvine) is frequently trained up at their stem and the *pan* leaf and betel nuts, which are invariably found in conjunction, are thus grown side by side.

Tobacco : Tobacco is grown in the new alluvial soils. The seedlings are raised in carefully manured beds in August and September. At the beginning of November, they are transplanted into the field which has been reduced to fine tilth, and protected from the sun. The bed is lightly hoed 2/3 times and not more than ten or twelve leaves are allowed to grow on each plant, the remainder being picked off as they appear. The leaves are first gathered in February and March and there is a second but much inferior crop, about 3 months later. If required for chewing, they are either dried in shed or else pressed into hollow bamboo, (*Chunga*) and allowed to ferment. When the tobacco is destined for a pipe, leaves are piled in heaps till they ferment, then cut into pieces and mixed with molasses when it is ready for *hookah*. During the year of 1960-61, tobacco cultivation in the district covered an area of 1,600 acres. In 1966-67, 513 tonnes of tobacco were produced in an area of 597 hectares in the undivided Lakhimpur district.

Pineapple and Orange : Pineapple is also an important fruit grown in the undivided Lakhimpur district. The planting of pineapple is done from April to September. The fruit matures from June to September. The exact area under pineapple in the district is not known.

Other varieties of fruit bearing trees grown in the district are mango, jackfruit, litchi, Assam lemon etc. Almost in each compound of a farmer some of these trees are generally found.

Vegetables : The common vegetables grown are spinach, *Lai*, raddish, *Lafa, Suka*, cabbage, cawliflower, tomato, onion etc., different kinds of brinjal and potatoes. Sweet potatoes are mainly grown in Sadiya and in the *chars* of the Brahmaputra or on the sandy banks of the mighty river. The area occupied by potatoes and sweet potatoes in the district were 6,800 acres and 1,200 acres respectively in 1960-61. In 1969-70, 11640 tonnes of potatoes were grown in an area of 3280 hectares.

Tea : It is the most important crop of the undivided Lakhimpur district. It is the largest foreign exchange earner and covers the area

which is only next to rice. Judged by acreage there was nearly one acre of tea for every three acres of rice in 1961 in the district. The indigenous tea of Assam was first brought to the notice of the government of Assam in 1826 by Mr. C. A. Bruce. Compared to other districts of Assam, tea covers the largest area in the undivided Lakhimpur district. Following statement shows the area and production of tea in the district.[16]

Area (*in hectares*) *as on the 31st March.*				Production (*in thousand Kg.*)			
1966	1967	1968	1970	1966	1967	1968	1970
53,607	54,524	55,524	57,140	74,432	75094	79,856	85,413

In 1970 there were 232 tea estates in the undivided Lakhimpur district. Following is the statement of different sizes of tea estates, as on the 31st March, 1970.[17]

Area of estates (*as on the 31st March* 1970).	No. of estates	Area (*in hectares*)	Production (*in Kg. in* 1969.)
(1) Upto 5 hectares	6	18.23	13,234
(2) Above 5 hectares and below 50 hectares	29	750.13	914,344
(3) Above 50 hectares and below 100 hectares	25	1945.78	24,86,676
(4) Above 100 hectares and below 200 hectares	57	8338.97	11,825,926
(5) Above 200 hectares and below 400 hectares	65	18401.95	27,536,907
(6) Above 400 hectares	50	27594.74	42,660,163
TOTAL	232	57139.80	85,437,264

Methods of tea culture and marketing vary widely throughout the world. The tea plant being perennial, its culture must inevitably be different from ordinary farm practices where annual crops are raised. The tea plant, bush or tree is an ever-green of the 'Comillia' family, which flourished in warm, rainy regions of the tropics and sub-tropics.

16. *Tea Statistics*, 1968-69, p. 13.
17. Ibid, 1970-71, pp. 9-10.

Although tea is a hardy plant which grows under diverse conditions, the climate considered most favourable to tea culture, is characterised by a small daily rise in temperature, generous rain throughout the year (at least 60 to 80 inches annually) and the absence of strong dry winds and freezing temperature. Similarly, soil on which tea is grown has a strong influence on the quality of the tea. Clayey soils tend to give a strong scent but poorer flavour to tea. Black organic soils in damp areas tend to produce a leaf giving a sweet taste but a poor aroma. Loose sandy loams usually give a favourable balance of taste and aroma. Practically all tea soils must be fertilised if the tea plant is to thrive. The luxurious growth of a tea plant depends upon general care in cultivation, pruning, plucking and control of pests and diseases.

The plant yields crops for 8 months and in some cases, for the whole year round. As such, need for proper cultivation is of utmost importance and growth of all kinds of weeds and other plants are to be checked, else, it prevents rapid docomposition of organic matter in the soil. It is a well established fact that tea cannot thrive in a water logged soil, or in one which is subject to frequent and prolonged floods. The tea land must be properly drained in order to maintain the soil at its optimum water content for as long a period as possible throughout the year. Further, the harmful effect of prolonged dry spells, resulting in low water content of the soil, is equally well recognised.

In its natural state in the forest, the tea grows to a height of 15 to 30 feet or more. The extent of foliage below this height makes the plant unfit for rapid production of leaves in successive 'flushes', while its shape as well as height would render the labour of gathering the leaves both difficult and expensive. Hence, the primary object of pruning is to change the form which the plant would naturally take, and to turn it into a low bush instead of a tree. Further, pruning is necessary to encourage the bush to produce leaves rather than wood, and to spread into a ramification of twigs, giving a large plucking surface, and yet not so dense as to obstruct the free passage of light and air to the leaves everywhere, which is a condition essential to the healthy life of the tea plant.

As the plant matures, it becomes necessary to remove the dead and moribund branches and to thin out unproductive shorts where growth has become too dense.

In all questions of pruning, as well as other operations, the continued robust health of the plant must be reckoned as of primary importance, and when properly done pruning can be a distinct aid rather than a hindrance to health. There are many methods in vogue for pruning young tea plants. After the young plant has been four or five years in the ground, and has been pruned judiciously, its frame will be formed, sound and well balanced. Subsequent pruning methods will depend to

a great extent on climatic and economic conditions, compatible with maintaing a sound health and steady yielding bush. Frequency of pruning whether annual, biennial, or at longer intervals, and the amount of growth removed in pruning, are the two chief factors in pruning which chiefly influence crop and quality.

The need for replanting in a certain area arises when an area of tea has become unproductive for one of these reasons : (a) extreme age of the tea, (b) death or debility through disease, impoverishment of soil or bad cultural methods, of a large percentage of the bushes.

Having selected the area for replanting, the first operations are to be directed towards the preparation of nurseries After the old tea plant has been uprooted and the land hoed up, it is customary and a very good plan to leave it under green crop such as *Tephrosia candide, Cretolaria anagyroides, Desmodium gyroides, Indigofera Teysmanii ,etc.*

The object of manuring of tea gardens is to maintain in the soil a sufficiency of materials necessary to maintain the growth required to produce a certain level of crop, without detriment to the plant itself. Adequate manuring of young tea is of the greatest importance in the production of vigorous healthy plants with a well formed permanent frame, and in bringing them into economic bearing as soon as possible.

The use of inorganic fertilizers at the time of planting out from the nursery is not recommended. Dry well-rooted cattle manure at the rate of 101 lbs. and 1 oz. of ordinary superphosphate should be used per pit. In case cattle manure is in short supply, oil cake at the rate of 8 to 12 oz. per pit may be used as a substitute. Sterilized bone meal (without any inorganic additive) is a valuable alternative to either cattle manure or oil cake, and should be used at the rate of 6-10 oz.s per pit well mixed with the soil. Following planting, five months later in April planting and twelve months later in Autumn planting, inorganic manure mixture of NPK in the proportion of 1 : 2 : 2 is recommended, until such time as the young plants meet and cover the ground and at any rate for three years. Manures should not be applied after pruning which increases the incidence of rimblight until most of the new shoots occur. In drought affected areas manures need not be applied before the early rains have moistened the soil. Both the cowdung and the fertilizers are good for mature plants.

In order to enrich the tea soil with nirtogen and to increase its fertility, shade trees and green crops belonging to the family, *leguninoseae* are grown with great advantage. Besides, they serve to supply shade to the tea bushes, to reduce soil wash to suppress weed growth and also to act as wind brakers and protection against hailstorm etc. The shade trees like *Albizzia procers, A. lebbel, A. sinensis, A. odorotis simiam, A. moluccana, Dolbergia assamica, Derris robusta,* etc., and green

crops like *Crotolaria anagyroids, Teprosia Candide, Indigofera teysmanii, Dosmodium gyroides,* etc., are usually grown in tea garden with specific purposes. Green crops should however, be used only ih young tea, cut back tea, and tea which has not sufficient spread to cover the soll well.

The bush is grown with the sole object of producing leaves. The process of building up a new growth is quite interesting and shows that the leaves are the more important part of the plant than any other part of its structures. To a great extent the food suppy available to the bush must determine the extent to which a bush can be plucked without deterioration. The most efficient method of plucking the crop from the tea bush will be that which obtains the crop of the highest quality of an indefinite period of years. The growth of the tea plant, liike other plants is not maintained at a continous rate, but periods of rapid growth alternate with periods of formancy. The new shoot which a bush produces in the spring makes a certain amount of growth and then becomes dormant, the terminal bud at this stage being small and thin which is commonly termed as '*Banjhi.*

The plucking of tea leaf for manufacture is usually begun after the bushes are about 3 years old, though a certain amount of light plucking is also carried on even before they attain this stage. In the first flush of leaf after prunning the extreme tip of the growing branch consisting of the unopened leaf bud together with 1 or 3 leaves is plucked, and 2 or 3 leaves lower down which are older are left standing. Following this operation, eventually another branch springs from the axile of the leaf lower down and grows out. Two or even three, may spring from the same axile and simultaneously a branch may spring from the leaf axile immediately below. All these constitute the second flush. The extreme tip of this flush is now picked, leaving at least one fully developed leaf to remain on each branch. After the second flush is over, a third flush breaks out in its turn in the same manner. The flushes continue to come and there may be 10 or even 15 flushes in the year. Not all the branches flush at the same time, and the shoots are therefore, not ready to pluck all at one time ; this necessitates a large number of plucking and the bushes are gone over 30 or more times in the year.

The number of grades in quality are recognised and all of these depend upon type of leaf of which each is largely made up. Plucking is broadly classed as fine, medium and coarse ; the plucking of the tip with 1 or 2 leaves is called fine, that with the tip and three leaves is called medium, and that with the tip and four leaves is called coarse. when high quality is the object, fine plucking is resorted to and when quantity is the object, medium and coarse pluckings are adopted.

The manufacture of the green tea leaves into tea of commerce is conducted in large tea factories. The processes are mainly four in number : (i) Withering, (ii) Rolling, (iii) Fermentation and (iv) Drying.

The withering merely consists in allowing the freshly picked leaves to dry somewhat until they lose part of their moisture during which process they become trump and somewhat tough and assume a twist in shape. If the leaves are spread in a thin layer in a well ventilated room overnight or approximately for 18 hours the withering is generally completed to the degree required. The withering really prepares the leaf for the next process of rolling.

The rolling process consists in brushing the leaves withered in the above manner, by subjecting them to the grinding or pressing action of two hard surfaces, one moving over the other. The leaves are crushed and bruised, the leaf cells are broken and cell contents, including the much prized oil, flow over and wet outer surface of leaves ; and thereafter begins the process of fermentation or olivation of the next stage.

The rolled leaves are now subjected to fermentation. A yellowish copper colour is taken as a good indication of correct fermentation while a black colour indicates overfermentation. All the 'Cup' qualities of tea, colour body, pungency, strength and flavour depend a great deal upon the correctness of this stage.

The next process is the stopping of any further fermentation, the killing of the ferment and precaution of all further organic change, and then the slow desiccation or drying of the leaf. The tea leaf at this stage is crisp, dry and brittle and can be rubbed between the hands into a coarse powder.

The subsequent processes consist merely in shifting the tea and sorting it into the different grades already mentioned by appropriate sieves, and packing them in the air-tight containers, usually wooden chests, lined with alluminium sheet.

The tea bushes are quite often attacked by diffferent kinds of pests and diseases. Some of the major pests are Looper caterpiller, Red slug caterpiller, Bunch caterpiller, Red borers, Tea Mosquitos, Tea Leaf hopper, Red spiders, Crickets, Termites, Root rot, nematodes, etc. The diseases which occur in tea bushes are primarily fungus although bacteria, virus and nonparisitic diseases other than fungus are also prevalent. A few major diseases are Charcoal Stump Rot, Brown root, Rot, Violet root Rot, Branch Canker, Thorny blight, Thread blight Blister blight etc.

Changes in area and production of important crops : The following statement [18] shows the area under and production of principal agricultural crops (excluding rice) in the undivided Lakhimpur district during the Plan-period. Improved methods of cultivation, reclamation of more areas of waste land, and the rise in prices of agricultural goods are some of the factors that have caused manifold increase of production of crops during the last few years.

18. *Quarterly Bulletins of Statistics, of Assam*, Vol. II, December 1955, No. II and Vol. VII, June 1961, No. IV, *the Statistical Abstract of Assam*. 1967-68 of the Department of Economics and Statistics and some Departmental reports.

Area and production of principal crops (except rice) in the undivided Lakhimpur district

P—Production in tonnes.
A—Area in acres except for 1966-67 and 1969-70 and in hectares for 1966-67 and 1969-70.

Crop		Year				
	A & P	1950-51	1954-55	1960-61	1966-67	1969-70
Sugarcane	A	5673	5096	6150	3519	3440
	P	8200 (*gur*)	4778 (*gur*)	37648	14814 (*gur*)	21560 (*gur*)
Jute	A	3225	3457	3400	2360	3640
	P	10000 (bales)	9308 (bales)	1866 (bales)	17176 (bales)	32150 (bales)
Rabi Pulses	A	10067	8436	7050	4440	N.A.
	P	1400	1318	1101	1758	N.A.
Potato	A	6483	5599	6800	3208	3280
	P	13150	9501	18181	12845	11640
Rape and Mustard	A	18962	12722	16000	2870	10120
	P	3300	1988	2750	610	40 50
Cotton	A	267	23636	140	86	N.A.
	P	50 (bales)	57 (bales)	23 (bales)	34 (bales)	N.A.
Tobacco	A	1220	1255	1245	597	N.A.
	P	500	392	456	513	N.A.

Land holdings : The Survey conducted by the Department of Economics and Statistics in 1948-49 reveals wides pread fragmentation of land holdings as is indicated in the statements A and B :-

Statement—A.

Distribution of Land-holdings

Holding group (*in bighas*)	Size of holding (*in bighas*)	Number of families	
		Number	Percentage to total number of families.
1	2	3	4
Small (0 to less than 10)	0	371	15.27
	Less than 1	10	0.41
	1 to less than 3	152	6.25
	3 to less than 6	283	11.65
	6 to less than 10	328	13.50
Total—	0 to less than 10	1,144	47.08
Medium (10 to less than 30)	10 to less than 15	393	16.17
	15 to less than 20	272	11.19
	20 to less than 25	200	8.23
	25 to less than 30	117	4.82
Total—	10 to less than 30	982	40.41
Large (30 and above)	30 to less than 40	145	5.97
	40 to less than 60	72	2.96
	50 to less than 100	83	3.42
	100 and above	4	0.16
Total—	30 and above	304	12.51
Grand Total—	—	2,430	100.00

Statement—B.

Distribution of Land-holdings :

Holding group (*in bighas*)	Size of holding (*in bighas*)	Total area		Average size of holding per family (*in bighas*)
		Area in bighas	Percentage to total area.	
1	2	3	4	5
Small (0 to less than 10)	0	—	—	
	Less than 1	6.82	0.02	
	1 to less than 3	258.82	0.72	
	3 to less than 6	1,228.57	3.52	
	6 to less than 10	2,492.67	7.13	
Total—	0 to less than 10	3,986.88	11.41	3.48
Medium (10 to less than 30)	10 to less than 15	4,763.08	13.63	
	15 to less than 20	4,639.03	13.28	
	20 to less than 25	4,376.55	12.53	
	25 to less than 30	3,197.09	9.15	
Total—	10 to less than 30	16,975.75	48.59	17.29
Large (30 and above)	30 to less than 40	4,912.77	14.06	
	40 to less than 60	3,175.32	9.09	
	50 to less than 100	5,320.53	15.23	
	100 and above	566.20	1.62	
Total—	30 and above	13,974.82	40.00	45.97
Grand Total—		34,937.45	100.00	14.38

(IV) Progress of Scientific Agriculture :

(i) Agricultural implements : The plough made of jack fruit or some other hard wood is the age-old implement still very common in the district. It consists of three parts—the handle and the body which are usually all in one piece, the pole which joins the plough at the junction of the handle and the body, and the yoke which is merely a piece of wood, fastened by rope at right angles to the pole, with pegs affixed to it to keep it from sliding from the necks of the bullocks. The *phal* (spear) affixed to the sharp end of the front portion of the body pierces the ground. This piece of iron is the only portion of the plough which the farmer has to purchase. The rest he makes for himself, sometimes, in collaboration with his cultivator friends. The tilth attained by wooden plough is generally three inches to four inches. Not more than the area of two fifths of an acre can be ploughed in one day with the wooden plough and a good pair of bullocks.

The harrow (*moi*), which is generally used to crush the clods after ploughing the land is about eight feet in length and on which a man stands as it is drawn across the field by a pair of bullocks. The harrow is attached with the yoke with the help of a rope. It is prepared by the cultivator himself, from the bamboos growing in his garden. The harrow is mainly used as a secondary tillage implement. It supplements the work of a plough for preparing the seed bed for crops and for covering the seeds after sowing. The object of harrowing is to obtain a proper tilth of soil. The hoe (*kor*) occupies a very important place among the indigenous agricultural implements. Hoes (*kors*) are used to trim the embankments (*alis*) which help to retain the water. It is also used in upturning the soil of such fields which are difficult to plough, and to culture that part of the field where plough cannot go. It is a multipurpose implement used for many agricultural operations, such as forming ridges, bunds, water courses and channels, preparing small seed beds and removing weeds, harvesting root crops etc. Sickles (*kaci*), with which paddy is reaped have also to be purchased. In *Ahu* cultivation a large wooden rake (*bindha*) with teeth nearly one foot in length is dragged over the crop by a bullock when the plants are about six inches high. The *nirani*, a kind of trowel with a long handle, is used for weeding *Ahu* rice.

Bullock carts are used to carry harvested paddy or pulses from the field and at times to carry manure to the field, although its chief use is to carry merchandise to and from the market.

Except in tea gardens, the use of improved agricultural implements, as in other districts of Assam, is rather infrequent. In some areas tractors have been used to reclaim waste lands. However, this does not find favour with the ordinary cultivators for several reasons, such as heavy capital investment, paucity of large blocks of land etc. Among

the improved agricultural implements used in the district following are important ones : (1)) iron plough, (2) improved harrows and cultivators, (3) improved seed drills, (4) improved thrashers, (5) rotary chaff cutters, (6) sprayers and dusters, (7) sugarcane crushers worked by power, (8) oil engines with pumps for irrigation purposes and (9) electric pumps for irrigation purposes. In 1966-67 there were only 14 tractors, 20 power pumps and 4 power tillers in the undivided Lakhimpur district, under the disposal of the Agriculture Department. Following is the statement of agricultural implements censused in the district.[19]

Agricultural machineries and implements censused in the undivided Lakhimpur district in 1956.

Items	Number of each items.
Plough-Wooden	183,101
Iron	16
Carts	3,668
Sugarcane Crushers worked by power ..	38
Sugarcane Crushers worked by bullocks ..	817
Oil engines with pumps for irrigation purpose.	1
Electric engins with pumps for irrigation purpose. ..	288
Tractors-Government	5
Private ..	11
Ghanies-Five seers and more	230
Less than five seers	109.

The Agricultural Engineering Department maintains a fleet of tractors and other agricultural implements in many centres of the State. This branch had in 1970-71, 16 tractors and 5 power pumps at North Lakhimpur and 13 tractors and 6 power pumps at Dibrugarh. The facilities of repair of agricultural implements have been provided by opening a few service stations and workshops. There are two service stations at Dhemaji and North Lakhimpur and a workshop at Dibrugarh. The Agriculture Department lends tractors and power pumps on hire to the agriculturists. These machineries are also available for non-agricultural purposes ; but the hire-charges are usually higher when used for the latter.

The Assam Agro-Industries Development Corporation Ltd. : This private company, limited by shares has been floated by the Government of Assam during the year 1967-68. The authorised capital of the company is Rupees two crores divided into two lakh equity shares of

19. *Statistical Abstract of Assam*, 1960-61, p. 86.

Rupees one hundred each. The main object of the Corporation is to purchase or otherwise acquire all agricultural produce and pre-requisites such as fibres, fertilizers, pesticides, plant protection equipments, lime, tractors, power pumps, harvester, combers etc., and to collect, store, transport, distribute, supply, sell or otherwise dispose of all the agricultural pre-requisites to the agriculturists of the State for bonafide agricultural purposes. The Corporation has extended its activities over all the districts of Assam.

The Corporation is now distributing fertilizers to the agriculturists and also helping some teagardens in procuring their requirements from the existing stock of the Corporation. The Corporation is engaged in distributing all the agricultural inputs like fertilizers, pesticides, small equipments etc., through a network of retail depots throughout the State. For this purpose the Corporation has appointed some retail agents. About one hundred such retail agents were functioning in the State in 1971. The Corporation has been issuing tractors, power pumps, Power Tillers etc., under the hire-purchase scheme. The Corporation may eventually take over the fruit production factories and operate the same, manufacture the poultry feeds and cattle feeds, open an engineering workshop and operate repair service of the machineries etc.. Marketing of fertilizers, pesticides and agro-machineries will also form a part of their activities. Service stations and workshops have been constructed, two of which are located at Dhemaji and North Lakhimpur, of the undivided Lakhimpur district.

(2) **Agricultural diseases and pests** : The insects particularly *Gandhi* (*Leptorisa acuta*), and *Charaha* (*hispa acuesceus*) cause extensive damage of the paddy. The traditional method of controlling the insects are very simple. Bonfires prove very useful as the inescts are either attracted to the fire or driven away by the smoke. Sometimes some of the winnowing fans are smeared or brushed with glutinous substance and the insects are found adhering to these ears. Use of light traps to protect the crops from insects of bigger size is not uncommon. Occasionally the barks of some trees and herbs are scattered in the field. The repugnant smell of these barks are considered to be good repelent of insects. The outer skin of various fruits such as *citrus grandis* are thrown all over the field and allowed to rot. It is believed that the insects are repelled by the pungent smell of the rotten skin. Some times, the carnivorous birds are allowed to nestle on the cultivated fields. These birds feast on these insects found in the crops. To prevent insects from winter crops sometimes ashes are scattered over the plants. It was also believed in some areas that the ominous glances of some persons hampers the luxuriant growth of the crops. Odd images mostly made of straw decorated with torn cloths and painted by lime are installed in

the fields as an antidote to the ominous looks. Other pest control methods include removing of affected plants and their destruction with a view to destroy the caterpillars inside the rice stem.

Storage diseases, insects and pests are equally menacing to paddy, potatoes and pulses and rough estimates show that they destroy 10 to 25 percent of these products in storage. The diseases, insects and pests which cause damage in the storage are either carried from the fields with the harvested product or remain in the crevices in the godowns and storage houses. This is prevented by better method of storage, disinfecting the store houses and godowns, and treating the grains and seeds to be stored with chemicals, like Carbon Tetrachloride, Ethylene Dichloride, Hydrocyanic acid gas etc., done under airtight conditions to kill insects, pests and rodents. This method has been applied in many government godowns.

Following statement shows the agricultural diseases prevalent in the State and control measures recommended by the Agriculture Department for some of the selected crops.[20]

Important pests and diseases of Assam and their control.

Crops	Pests and Diseases	Control Measures.
1	2	3
Rice	Brown Spot	Treat the seeds with Agrosan G. No @3 gm. per 1 Kg. of seed, or immerse the seeds in solution of 1 gm. of Ceresan in 1 litre of water for 12 hours and dry them in shade.
	Blast	Spray 5 : 5 : 50 Bordeaux Mixture or spray 0.4% solution of Perenox, Shell Copper, Cupravit.
	Foot Rot and Elongation	Treat the seeds as in the case of Brown Spot ; uproot and destroy the affected plants.
	Stem Rot	Destroy stubble, allow water to drain out from the field to cake the soil and treat with any copper oxychloride fungicide, viz. Fytolan, Blitox, copessan etc.
	Bunt and False Smut,	Uproot and destroy the affected plants.

20, *Agricultural Guide Book*, 1968-69 ; p. 101-10.

	Ufra.	Burn affected plants. Treat the seeds in hot water for 10 minutes in 140°F.
	Case Worm and Gally Fly.	(1) Dust 10% B. H. C. or (2) Spray Endrin or Diazinon @10 c.c. in 4.5 litres of water 3 times @40-50 gallons per acre if there is incidence.
	Grasshoppers and Jassids.	Dust 10% B. H. C. or 2% Aldrin.
	Leaf Roller, Army Worms.	Dust 5% B. H. C.
	Mealy Bug	Dust 10% B. H. C. or spray Parathion 0.05%.
	Swarming Caterpillar, Rice-Bug Rice-Hispa.	(1) Spray Endrin 20 E.C. or Diazinon @ 10 c. c. in 4.5 litres of water @ 40-50 gallons 3 times. (2) Dust 10% B. H. C. at 7 Kgs. per acre.
	Stem Borer	(1) Diptreat the seedling blades on 50% (W. P) D. D. T. @ 1 lb. in 25-28 gallons of water before transplanting. (2) Spray the crop with Endrin or Diazinon 3 times.
Sugarcane	Termites and Red Ants	Dust 5% Aldrin and incorporate it into the soil @ 25 Kg. per hectare or 10 Kg. per acre.
	Stem Borer, Early Shoot Borer and Top Shoot Borer.	Spray Phosphamidon 3 times @20 c. c. in 100 litres of water for the 1st spray and 30 c. c. in 100 litres of water for the 2nd and the 3rd sprays. or Spray Endrin 20 E. C. thrice @ 2.50 Kg. in 675 litres of water for the 1st spray, 3.75 Kgs. in 870 litres of water for the 2nd spray and the 3rd sprays per hectare. or Spray guesarol 550 or Hexidole 950-3.50 Kg. in 570 litres of water per hectare. Repeat twice at 15 days interval upto 3 months of the crop.

Crops	Pests and Diseases	Control Measures
1	2	3
	Mealy Bug and White Fly.	Spray Basudin 20 @ 1 Kg. in 660 litres of water per hectre.
	Leaf Hopper	Spray 0.25% B. H. C. or dust 10% B. H. C.
	White Borer	Spray 0.4—0.5% B. H. C.
	Red-rot	Plant disease-free setts, avoid water stagnation, uproot and destroy the affected plants. For leaf infection spray 0.5% Copper Oxychloride or 0.4% Dithane Z-78.
	Leaf Spot	Manure the crop, adopt improved cultural practices and irrigate when necessary and spray 0.5% copper fungicide when infection is observed.
	Mosaic, Smut and Top-Rot	Rogue out the affected canes and destroy them by burning, plant disease free setts.
	Wilt and Collar-Rot	Plant healthy setts, adopt crop rotation and avoid ratooning.
Maize	Leaf spot and Blight	Use disease-resistant varieties, Practise crop rotation.
	Aphis	Spray Nicotine Sulphate.
	Borer	Spray Endrin or Diazinon or D. D. T. (50%).
Potato	Early and Late Blight	Spray B. M. or any copper fungicide, viz., Captan 406. Dithane Z-78, Shell Copper or Fytolan or Blitox @ 2-4 lbs. in 100 gallons of water at an interval of 15 days. Use disease-free seeds.
	Brown-Rot	Plant disease-free tubers.
	Scab	Dip tubers in hot Formalin, 1 part in 100 parts of water for 4 minutes in 122°F. or Hydro-chloric Acid before planting.
	Leaf Roll and Mosaic	Plant disease-free tubers.
	Tuber Moth	Dust 5% B. H. C.

Crops	Pest and Diseases	Control Measures
1	2	3
	Greasy Surface	Dust 5% B. H. C. at 7 Kgs. per acre.
	Caterpiller Cut Worm	Spray Aldrex 30 E. C.
Tobacco	Wilt	Disinfect the seed-bed.
	Caterpillar and Thrips	Dust 5% B. H. C.
Cruciferous :		
Cabbage, Cauliflower, Knol-Khol, Turnips etc.	Black-Rot	Treat the seed with Mercuric Chloride (1 in 1000) for 30 minutes in 122°F.
	Damping off	Spray 2 : 2 : 50 B. M. or drench seed-bed with Streptocycline or Ceresan.
	Club Root	Sterilize seed-bed with Formalin (1:50) or Mercuric Chloride (1:2000)@ 2 gallons per sq, yard. Lime the field @ 1500-2000 lbs. per acre. Treat the plants with 1 : 2000 Mercuric Chloride @ ¾ lb. per acre.
	White Rust	Practise crop rotation.
	Leaf Spot	Treat the seed with hot water for 30 minutes (122°F) and spray 4 : 4 : 50 B. M.
	Brown Rot	Apply 20 lbs. of Borax per acre or spray 0.3% solution of Borax.
	Aphids	Spray 40% Nicotine Sulphate (5 to 8 oz. in 50 gallons of water).
	Caterpillar, Thrips, Jassids, Semi Looper and Butterfly	Spray Malathion-1.5 c. c. in 1 litre of water. Dust 5% B. H. C.
	Painted Bug	Spray soap solution (1 lb. of soft soap in 6 gallons of water).
	Cricket	Use Malathion dust or Aldrin 5% dust.
Jute	Stem-Rot, Root-Rot and Seedling Blight,	Treat the seeds with Agrosan G. N. or Ceresan or Flit 406, apply Lime @ 20-30 quintals per hectare, apply usual dose of Potash and follow crop rotation. Spray 0.4% Copper Oxychloride.

Crops	Pests and Diseases	Control Measures
1	2	3
	Black Band	Use disease-free seeds, spray 5 : 5 : 50 B. M. or Blue Copper or Cuman or Blitox.
	Hairy Caterpillar	Dust 5% B. H. C. or spray endrin 20 E. C. twice @ 0.8-1.1 Kg. in 445-667 litres of water.
	Mites	Dust Lime Sulphur (3.1).
	Cricket	Apply Endrin 5% at soil preparation @ 45 Kg. per hectare or spray Endrin 20 E. C. and bait.
	Semi Looper	Spray 50% B. H. C. (W. P.) or Endrin (20 E. C.) or Thiodin.
Mustard	Downy Mildew	Spray 4 : 4 : 50 B. M. or any copper fungicide.
	Leaf-Spot	Treat the seeds with hot water for 30 minutes (122°F), and spray 4 : 4 : 50 B. M.
	White Rust	Practise crop rotation.
	Aphis	Spray 40% Nicotine Sulphate (5-8 oz. in 25 gallons of water) or spray Basudin 20 E. C. or Malathion (50% W. P.) @1 litre in 450 litres of water.
	Caterpiller and Sawfly.	Dust 5% B. H. C.@ 6 Kg. per acre.
Pulses :		
Matimah and *Mugmah*	Anthracnose and Leaf-spot	Spray 4 : 4 : 50 B. M. or Perenox or Cuprocide.
	Mosaic	Sow disease-free seeds. Control insect vectors by spraying Nicotine Sulphate or Basudin or Dimecron.

(3) **Activities of Agriculture Department and other agencies to secure the use of scientific methods of cultivation**. The unprecedented Food crisis that the province of Assam experienced during World War II necessitated the launcing of the "Grow More Food Campaign" in order to augment the depleting stock of foodstuff. The implementation

of the schemes introduced with the "Grow More Food Campaign" continued even after the War till 1951, covering the pre-plan period. During this period emphasis was laid on introduction and popularisation of double cropping. Previously the growers cultivated only *Sali* paddy and the fields remained fallow for the rest of the year. Growing of *Ahu* paddy as a crop preceding the *Sali* crop on the same plot of land was popularised for double cropping of *Sali* land. Rapid expansion of the area under *Ahu-Sali* double cropping was achieved by-(1) providing subsidised seeds, (2) subsidising manures like oil cake, Bonemeal etc, (3) implementing Rural Compost Schemes, and (4) constructing irrigation channels under Minor Irrigation Projects. The undivided district of Lakhimpur had due share of these developmental activities. With the launching of the First Five Year Plan the State Government took up a seven point programme in order to increase the food production. The process of diversification of efforts to increase food production was continued during other Five Year Plans.

Following statement is illustrative of the efforts of the Agriculture Department in this direction. The statement relates to the activities of Agriculture Department in the Dibrugarh subdivision during the Third Five Year Plan till the third quarter of April 1966.[21]

Name of Schemes	Items of work	Unit	Achievement during the quarter	Total Achievement
1	2	3	4	5
Agricultural Production :				
(a) Seed distribution	(1) Quantity distributed	Kg.	19,643	68,753
	(2) Area covered	Acre	1,797	4,713
	(3) Addl. production	Tonnes	97	293
(b) Seed Farm	(1) No of Farm	Nos.	—	5
Green manuring	(2) Quantity distributed	Kg.	89	2,960
	(3) Area covered	Acre	65	5,152
	(4) Addl. production	Tonnes	11	603
Scheme for Fertilizer.	(1) Fertilizer distributed.	Kg.	83,377	167,64
	(2) Area covered	Acre	2,778	4,465
	(3) Addl. production	Tonnes	125	241
Ammonium Sulphate	(1) Quantity distributed	Kg.	57,731	125,419
	(2) Area covered	Acre	1,558	3,384

21. *Quarterly Progress Review* of the Third Five Year Plan schemes, April 1966, compiled by the District Statistical Officer, Dibrugarh.

Name of Schemes	Items of Work	Unit	Achievement during the quarter	Total Achievemet
1	2	3	4	5
Agricultural Production :				
	(3) Addl. production	Tonnes	115	251
Double cropping	(1) Area covered	Acre	402	2,683
	(2) Addl. production	Tonnes	80	536
Rural compost	(1) Quantity prepared	Tonnes	1,753	6,973
	(2) Quantity distributed	Tonnes	220	220
Plant protection	(1) Pesticide distributed	Kg.	2,086	5,297
	(2) Quantity treated	Kg.	65,980	86,330
	(3) Area covered	Acre	1,066	3,254
	(4) Saving of crops	Tonnes	11	32
Development Scheme (Horticulture)	(1) No. of rafts distributed.	Nos.	6,246	49,107
	(2) Area covered	Acre	53	271
Minor irrigation	(1) No. of projects surveyed	Nos.	52	68
	(2) No. of projects completed	Nos.	—	52
Field Management Committee	(1) Committee organised	Nos.	5	5
Jute Development scheme	(1) Seed distributed	Kg.	—	1,168
	(2) Area covered	Acre	—	292
Sugarcane Development.	(1) No. of setts distributed.	Setts.	—	59,945
	(2) Area covered	Acre	—	6
Disposal of improved	(1) M. B. Plough	Nos.	51	462
Agril. implements	(2) Power Pump	Nos.	4	8
Vegetable Development Scheme	(1) Seed distribution	Pkts.	8,920	30,008
	(2) Area covered	Acre	552	3,383
Crop competition	(1) No. of competition	Nos.	10	18
	(2) Area covered	Acre	83	150
Demonstration	(1) Manuring trial	Nos.	42	187
	(2) Cultural trial	Nos.	—	24
	(3) Vertical trial	Nos.	—	12
Boro paddy	(1) Qnty. distributed	Kg.	2,960	2,960

Name of Schemes	Items of Work	Unit	Achievement during the quarter	Total Achievement
1	2	3	4	5
Agricultural Production :				
	(2) Area covered	Acre	400	400
	(3) Addl. production	Tonnes	20	20
Potato cultivation	(1) Qnty. distributed	Kg.	2,228	136,976
	(2) Area covered	Acre	6	370
Mustard cultivation	(1) Qnty. distributed	Kg.	982	1,093
	(2) Area covered	Acre	240	267

Manures and fertilizers : Supply of suitable manures and fertilizers is an important part of the agricultural development programme. The nitrogen deficiency of the soil is made good by supply of plant nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphorus and potash in balanced proportions. Previously the peasants used cattle—dung as manure, though the use of organic manures like compost and farmyard manure was not quite unknown to them. Introduction of chemical fertilizers has added a new dimension to agricultural production. The following statement shows the consumption of fertilizers in the undivided district of Lakhimpur.[22]

Period	Undivided Lakhimpur District	Dibrugarh Subdivision	N. Lakhimpur Subdivision
1	2	3	4
1962-63 (in tonnes)	92-25	—	—
1963-64 " "	133.41	—	—
1964-65 " "			
A/Sulphate	708	—	—
S/Phosphate	205	—	—
Bonemeal	—	—	—
Mu. of Potash	—	—	—
1966-67 (in tonnes)			
S/. Phosphate	—	346	—
Mu. of Potash	—	—	20
Bonemeal	—	15	—
A/Sulphate	—	176	—

22. *Agricultural Guide Book*, 1966-67, p. 50 ;

1000 tonnes of ammonium sulphate, 50 tonnes of Urea and 980 tonnes of Super phosphate were used in the undivided Lakhimpur district in 1967-68 as against 1487 tonnes of ammonium sulphate, 94 tonnes of Urea and 1297 tonnes of Super phoshpate used in 1968-69. This shows a steady increase in the use of fertilizers in the district.

The Assam Seed Corporation : It was set up with an authorised capital of Rs. 50 lakhs. There were 80 Block Farms, (about 30 acres each), 5 District Farms (about 100 acres each) and two State Farms in Assam before the constitution of the Corporation. All these farms were brought under the Corporation. The main task of the Corporation is to produce improved seeds in the Seed Farms and to process and distribute seeds among the cultivators after procuring the same from various sources. The following is the list of the Seed Farms now under the Assam Seed Corporation in the two districts.

Seed Farms in Dibrugarh District,

	Area (*in acre*)	Year of starting.
1. Moran Seed Farm	29.50	1958-59
2. Nemutangani Farm	26.00	N.A.
3. Chabua Farm	26 acres	1958-59
4. Pabhajan Farm	50 acres	1956-57
5. Naharani Seed Farm	N.A.	N.A.
6. Philobari " "	32 acres	1958-59
7. Na-Sadiya " "	N.A.	N.A.
8. Tinsukia " "	N.A.	N.A.
9. Margherita " "	30 acres	1958-59

Seed Farms in Lakhimpur district

1. Karunabari Seed Farm	33 acres	1957-58
2. Rangoti " "	37 acres	1956-57
3. Sukuli-baria. " "	33 acres	1956-57

Horticultural Nurseries in Dibrugarh District

Name of Nurseries	Area	Year of starting
1. Bakel	2 acres	1958-59
2. Tinsukia	3 acres	1956-57

Of the seeds distributed by the Government through various agencies '*Prosad Bhog*', a *Sali* paddy variety has gained much popularity for the quantity, flavour, yields and suitability to early as well as late transplantation in almost all types of soil

Field Management Committees : In order to increase production through the active co-operation of the tillers of the soil, the Field Management Committees were organised in 1959-60. The unit area of operation

is the field, locally known as *pathar* and the agency of implementation is the Field Management Committee which is constituted by actual cultivators. The objective of the organisation has been to enthuse each and every cultivator to develop along progressive and scientific lines. The organisation also lays emphasis on self-help, voluntary co-operation and enterprise from peasants. As it is not possible for the scattered Agricultural staff to contact and enthuse the large number of agricultural families, it was thought desirable to organise a programme where every cultivating family realises that the initiative to bring about the developement of the country remained with them and it needed to be sustained by the spirit of dedication to and love for the land. About 667 Field Management Committees were constituted in undivided Lakhimpur district and 620 of these were registered.

Of the various measures adopted by the Agriculture and other Departments, reference has already been made to distribution of improved seeds, construction of irrigation channels and protection bunds, distribution of pesticides and introduction of mechanisation in agriculture. Through the Community Development Blocks the peasants are given guidance on various methods of production. The Japanese method of cultivation was popularised by the Agriculture Department to secure better yield.

(d) **Animal Husbandry and Fisheries :**

In the rural economy of the district the cattle wealth occupies an unique place. Every peasant has at least a pair of bullocks, or a buffalo and a number of milch cows. Livestock is a very valuable asset of the farmer. The following table shows the number of tamed animals and birds as censused in the undivided Lakhimpur district.23

	Cattle	Buffaloes
Male	2,98,701	23,865
Female	5,31,850	42,552
In milk	1,43,870	11,622
Young stock	2,91,007	19,588
Breeding & work both	3,111	3,078

Poultry	13,58,267
Goats	2,29,161
Sheep	1,859
Horses & ponies	3,657
Other live stock.	73,740

23. Agriculture Guide Book, 1971-72 ; pp. 108-112.

Area under fodder crops . There is one Fodder Demonstration Farm at Khanikor (Dibrugarh) where different kinds of grasses viz., Napier, Gunea, Penni, Setum, Daus, Kuchi, Brachariya, Brizastha, Reaua Luzuriana, Sudan Nalini, Pennisetum Pedicaliatum, Macuna Decringina, Cowpea and Oat are cultivated for demonstrations as well as distribution of roots and seeds of the improved grasses free of cost. Demonstration in the method of hay and silo making are also held in the Farm.

The Farm has a total area of 15 *bighas* of land of which 11 *bighas* of land are under grass cultivation. Every veterinary dispensary in the district has one demonstration fodder farm attached to it. Moreover, the above varieties of grasses are also cultivated in the seven Community Development Blocks of the district under the supervision of the respective Extension Officers (A. H. & Vety). The livestock section of the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department also propagates the idea of grass cultivation among the farmers.

The cattle, buffaloes, sheep and goats of the district rarely get anything but grass, gruel and green leaves of some trees. Livestock are generally grazed on the rice fields after the crop has been carried and in swamps and marshes till the water rises. In the flood affected areas the villagers experience some difficulty in obtaining fodder for their cattle during the rainy season. Stall-feeding usually does not find favour with the villagers. However, the herds are carefully watched and grazed on fallow land when the cultivable fields are covered with paddy. The stray cattle which cause damage to the standing crops are lodged in the public cattle-pounds by the aggrieved owners and the owners of stray Cattle are obliged to pay certain amount to secure the release of the confined cattle.

We find in Lakhimpur District Gazetteer, 1905, a very interesting account of buffalo grazing. "In the *chaporis*, the herd is driven out to graze in the jungle, and follows the lead of the older cows whose whereabouts is indicated by the metal or wooden bells that are dangling from their necks. They are often trusted to return in the evening of their own accord, and a long line of animals is sometimes to be seen swimming across a channel of the Brahmaputtra, which separates them from the huts in which the graziers live. Often too as the sun is setting, a herdsman is to be seen climbing a *simul* tree which raises its head above the surrounding wastes of grass, to call his buffaloes home At night each animal is fastened by a nose rope to a post, and sleeps on the bare ground"[24] This account holds good even in case of buffalo grazing of today.

Dairy farming : Government Dairy-cum-Poultry Farm Khonikor (Dibrugarh) and Shri Gopal Goshala. Dibrugarh, supply about 12

24. B. C. Allen. *Assam District Gazetteers, Lakhimpur*, pp 163-164.

maunds of milk daily to Dibrugarh town. The supply of milk being insufficient, Shri Gopal Goshala is given a substantive grant to improve and increase the milk supply. At present there are three private Dairy Farms one each at Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, and Digboi which supply milk to their respective towns. The graziers, particularly Nepalies, supply the large quantity of milk to the towns.

The Dairy-cum-Poultry Farm at Khonikor maintains about 441 birds and a good number of dairy animals. The Farm was established during the month of March 1949 and comprises an area of 143 acres.

Poultry : Besides the above Dairy-cum-Poultry Farm at Khonikor (Dibrugarh), every Development Block in the district has one Demonstration Poultry Farm. With a view to popularise the poultry enterprise and upgrade the local breeds the Government launched the Poultry Development Scheme under which one Poultry Extension Centre was established at Chabua. There is one Government Demonstration Pig Farm at Tengakhat where improved Yorkshire breeds of pigs are reared.

Fisheries : Fish is important for a balanced nutritional diet. It contains protein for growth and health promoting agents viz., Vitamins 'A' and 'D', Calcium and Phosphorus. The supply of fish in the market is inadequate. The bulk of the fish sold in the market comes from big fisheries. Fishing is however, not confined only to these fisheries. Large number of people irrespective of caste and creed collect fish from rivulets and other water logged areas. At the beginning of this century, only Nadiyals monopolised in fishing on a commercial scale. At present, fishery-*mahals* are put on auction sale by the Government. Actual fishing in deep waters is done by experts. The public fisheries are settled periodically by auction sale which is often marked by keen competition among the *mahaldars*. The contenders usually offer huge amounts in a bid to secure the lease for profitable fisheries. Only fresh fish is sold in the market. No industry of canned fish has yet sprung up in the district.

In order to promote pisciculture, the Department of Fisheries open d its office at Dibrugarh in 1950. The primary objective is to increase the fish production and to demonstrate scientific methods of pisciculture so as to make the trade popular among the interested pisciculturists. Initially, its activities were confined to the development of fish breeding centres for collection of fish seeds and stocking them in tanks. Gradually, the activities of this department increased manifold. Among the schemes implemented by the Department during the 1st and 2nd Five Year Plans mention may be made of renovation of old and ancient tanks, reclamation of forest and natural fisheries, seed collection and distribution, induced breeding operation, conservation, etc.

By the end of the Second Five Year Plan, two departmental Commercial-cum-Demonstration Fish Farms, one at Sukanpukhuri at Dibrugarh and the other at Napukhuri at Tinsukia, were established. The fish farm at Sukanpukhuri which was completed during the year of 1955-56, has 9 *bighas* of water area, consisting of 3 stocking 1 rearing and 6 nursery tanks. Only labeo *rohita* (*Rohu*), *catlo* (*Bahu*), and *cirrhina mrigula* (*Mirika*) fishes are reared in this farm.

The Na-Pukhuri Fish Farm has a total water area of 15 *bighas* and holds 5 stocking, 4 rearing and 16 nursery tanks. This Farm was completed during the year 1960, and the first stocking was made during the year 1959. There are six Fishery Nurseries in the undivided Lakhimpur district, the total water area is 2.39 acres.

To collect seeds from natural sources, there is one departmental seed collection centre at Katuha, at a distance of 16 miles from Dibrugarh town, near the Dihing river. The fingerlings of major carps are generally collected from the adjoining areas, inundated by the Dihing river during the rainy season. About 6000 to 8000 seeds are collected annually in this area and reared upto the stocking size in the three nurseries of the centre. Great emphasis is laid on the production of fish seeds by induced breeding operations and about 337000 of fish seed spawn were produced during the year 1962 by this operation.

The Department of Fisheries, received by the end of Second Plan 654928 major carp fish seeds from Calcutta, 57400 from Jaysagar, 2600 from Gauhati and 433072 were collected locally. Of these 237831 were distributed to private pisciculturists, 66550 to Community Development Blocks and 170045 were stocked in departmental fish Farms. The sale proceeds realised from the fish seeds amounted to Rs. 10055.43. A subsidy of Rs. 6,560/- was also given to three Fishery-Co-Operative Societies in cash and terelyne twine, cotton yarn and coal tar were supplied in kind.

Old tanks, if properly renovated, can be a good source for fish supply. An area of 24 bighas of land situated at Na-Pukhuri was renovated and brought under pisciculture at a total cost of Rs. Rs. 40,000/-. Seven forest fisheries comprising an area of 90 bighas were also reclaimed besides surveying an area of 11,173 acres. North Lakhimpur and Dhemaji subdivisions with numerous old tanks. *bils*, swamps etc., offer an unlimited scope for the development of pisciculture. Small fish farms have also been established in Community Development Blocks at Tengakhat, Joypur, Bihpuria from where fish seeds and fishes are sold to the public. The Community Development Blocks in the districts have undertaken schemes for the development of fisheries in their respective areas.

There are 15 fishing centres in the Sadiya Transferred Area and 7 fishing centres in Dhemaji Circle, the latter covering an area of 9306.87

acres. Important fish landing grounds in the undivided Lakhimpur districts are (1) Guijan, (2) Tinsukia, (3) Saikhowa, (4) Margherita, (5) Bhoola, (6) Naharkatiya, (7) Tipling, (8) Khowang, (9) Sadiya, (10) Balijan, (11) Bordoloni, (12) Machkhowa and (13) Dholpur.

Forest fisheries in the district play a very significant part in meeting the local requirements of fish. There were twenty two forest fisheries in the undivided Lakhimpur district and notable among these were (1) Digboi Reserve Fisheries (Part 1 to V), (2) Dihingmukh Fisheries (Part 1 and II) (3) Jokai Reserve, (4) Namdang Reserve, (5) Tengapani, (6) Dikrong, (7) Saikhowa etc. These fisheries are settled periodically by auction sale conducted by the department concerned. The estimated annual production of fish from these forest fisheries is about 1200 mds. and fetches bid-money to the tune of Rs. 1.5 lakhs *per annum*.

The nets that are most commonly in use include (1) *Ghakota*, a net in the shape of a shovel which is pushed through the water and is generally used to catch *pona* fish ; (2) *Khewali* a piece of netting to the centre of which a rope is attached, while all round the edges there are weights. The net is thrown flat on the surface of tne water, when the weights sink and drag the sides of net together. It is then drawn by the rope to a boat or bank. The names, applied to this net as the mesh decreases in size are : *Sayani*, *Pachani*, *Afalia*, *Angtha* and *Ghanjal* ; (3) *Langi*, a large net which is stretched right across a river, the bottom being weighted and the top buoyed. The fish are then driven towards the net and become entangled in its meshes. The *tenga langi* is a smaller variety, the two ends are brought round to form a circle as the net is not long enough to reach across the river ; (4) *Parangi*, a square net, the opposite corners of which are fastened to flexible bamboos. The net thus hangs like a sack from a stout pole to which the bamboos are attached and is lowered into water and raised at intervals. Various wicker-work traps are also used. The *pola* resembles a gigantic wine glass with a short stem made of wicker-work. It is generally used by men, who walk through shallow water and keep pressing, the rim on the mud at the bottom. Any fish that are caught are removed through an opening at the top. The *juluki* is a smaller kind of *pola*. The *jakoi* is a species of wicker work shovel which is generally used by women. They place the broad end of the shovel on the ground before them, and trample up the mud so as to drive the small fry into it. Conical bamboo traps which are called *Dingaru*, *thupa*, *sepa* and *gui*, are worked on the principle of the lobster pot, which are placed in small streams of running water near the rice fields.

The list of fish found in the district is given below :-

Scientific names	Carps	Local names.
Labeo rohita	—	*Rohu*
Labeo calbasu	—	*Mali (Mahlu)*
Labeo nandina	—	*Nadani*
Labeo genus	—	*Kurhi*
Labeo bata	—	*Bhangan*
Labeo panpanguisia	—	*Nara*
Labeo angra	—	*Anka-nara*
Catla catla	—	*Bahu*
Cirrhina reba	—	*Iachim*
Cirrhina mrigula	—	*Mirika*
Barbus sarana	—	*Senee*
Barbus tor	—	*Pithia*
	Murrels	
Ophiocephalus marulius	—	*Sal*
,, *Straitus*	—	*Sol*
,, *Punctutus*	—	*Gorai*
,, *Cachual*	—	*Sengeli*
,, *Stewarti*	—	*Senga*
,, *amphibious*	—	*Barsenga*
	Cat-fish	
Wallago attu	—	*Barali*
Mystus seenghala	—	*Anari*
Mystus Oar	—	*Bheu*
,, *Cavius*	—	*Gagal*
,, *Tengra*	—	*Singra*
,, *Bleedery*	—	*Hingara*
Clarious magur	—	*Magur*
Heteropneustes fossilis	—	*Singee*
Callichrous bimacoulatus	—	*Pabha*
,, *Padba*	—	*Pabha*
Entropichathys vacha	—	*Bosa*
Pangasius pangasius	—	*Punga*
Pseudotropious gorua	—	*Neria*
Silonoa Silonlia	—	*Kas*
Rita rita	—	*Ritha*
Bagarious bagraius	—	*Gorua*
	Misc.	
Narbus stigma	—	*Puthi*
,, *Ticto*	—	*Puthi*
Natopterus natopterus	—	*Kandhuli*
,, *Chitala*	—	*Chital*

Hilsa ilisha	—	*Ilisa*
Anabsas testudeneus	—	*Kaoi*
Tricogaster faciatus	—	*Khalihana*
Tricogaster chuna	—	*Bheseli*
Nandus nandus	—	*Gedgedi*
Glassogohious giurius	—	*Patimutra*
Gudusia chapra	—	*Karati*
Rashra elenga	—	*Eleng*
Mastacembalus armatus	—	*Bami*
Mastacembalus pancalius	—	*Tura*
Rhynabdella aculeata	—	*Tura*
Ambssis nama	—	*Chanda*
Amblypharayngodon mola	—	*Moa*
Rashora donricus	—	*Dorikana*
Ambssis ranga	—	*Chanda*
Esmus donricus	—	*Dorikana*
Yenonotodon cancila	—	*Kakila*
Chela bacila	—	*Chelkana*
Laubucca laubuca	—	*Laupatia*
Rohtee cotio	—	*Hapha*
Batia dario	—	*Batia*
Amphipneus cuchia	—	*Kuchi*
Barilius bola	—	*Bariala*

Measures taken for improving quality of breeds etc : The cattle of the district in most cases, is described, as half starved, ill fed, under—sized and diseased. The bullocks are used to drag the light wooden plough and cows yield but a minimum of milk. The causes of the degeneracy are not clear but are probably found in the total indifference for scientific breeding and want of suitable and nutritive fodder particularly during the rainy season. The good grazing lands are located in areas which are submerged under flood water and with the onset of the moosoon, the villagers experience considerable difficulty in obtaining fodder for their cattle.

The condition of the buffaloes in the district, however, is quite different from other animals. There are three varieties of buffaloes, namely the Assamese, Bangala and the Nepalese. Of these, Assamese buffalo is the longest and is a fine-upstanding animal with widely spreading horns. The Bangala buffalo is smaller and less imposing and does not command a high price as compared to the Assamese buffalo. Napalese buffaloes are also common. They are larger animals but have smaller horns and tails than the Assamese variety.

In order to improve the brand of the local cattle, the Veterinery Department has brought some Haryana bulls to this district. The facilities of artificial insemination have been made available in the rural

areas currently in the Key Village Centres where some of these improved bulls are kept. Castration of the weedy bulls to prevent degenerated breeding has also been carried out. Some bulls are placed in villages and tea estates. Cattle fairs and calf rallies are organised on the occasion of the *Gausambardhana* week and exhibitions are held. The district staff visits the interior villages to train up the villagers on various aspects of cattle rearing.

Statement showing activities of the Animal Husbandary and Veterinary Department in undivided Lakhimpur district.

Year	Cases treated	Animals castrated	Animals & Birds Vaccinated	Animals inoculated
1	2	3	4	5
1951-52	2,745	648	20,253	853
1952-53	16,437	3,176	7,138	443
1953-54	25,446	3,475	32,722	440
1954-55	48,422	4,185	37,123	912
1955-56	37,653	5,005	37,128	48
1956-57	44,940	5,343	35,519	910
1957-58	36,501	5,668	1,03,306	1,120
1958-59	45,538	8,644	2,56,826	691
1959-60	52,859	11,323	6,31,148	2,330
1960-61	46,373	13,903	4,95,012	13,098

Animal diseases and veterinary hospitals : The parasitic diseases such as liver fluke caused by flat worms and other intestinal parasites that devitalise the animals are quite common in the district. It is generally caused from the ponds, rivers etc., having stagnant water and from common grazing reserves. It is a tremendous task to treat the water and land with parasiticide. Some contagious and infectious diseases like haemorrahagic Septicaemia, anthrax, black-quarter, occur sporadically in all seasons in the district and sometimes specially in the rainy season in epidemic form.

Rinderpest is a fell disease of the cattle. Though the disease is a preventable one, yet it takes a heavy toll of animal lives. Most of the cultivators are prejudiced against vaccination of animals. The freeze-dried goat-tissue vaccine is a good antidote to the disease. Outbreak of the foot and mouth disease is also reported occasionally in the district.

There is only one Veterinary Hospital at Chabua in the Dibrugarh district. In 1971, besides one mobile dispensary there were twenty dispensaries in the undivided Lakhimpur district; seventeen of these were established during the Plan period. Of these Veterinary Dispensaries, five are Animal Inoculation-cum-Verterinary Dispensaries. The following are the places where Veterinary Dispensaries and Animal Inoculation-cum-Dispensaries are located.

	Dispensaries	Animal Inoculation-cum-Veterinary Dispensaries.
Dibrugarh district :	1. Dibrugarh	1. Joypur
	2. Khowang	2. Tengakhat
	3. Naharkatiya	
	4. Tinsukia	
	5. Sadiya	
	6. Dangari	
	7. Tingkhong	
	8. Doom-Dooma	
	9. Tirap	
Lakhimpur district.	1. North Lakhimpur	1. Bihpuria.
	2. Dhalpur	2. Dhemaji.
	3. Akajan	3. Murkongsellek.
	4. Dhakuakhana	
	5. Nowboicha	
	6. Sissiborgaon	
	7. Bordoloni	
	8. Bengagora	
	9. Ghilamara	
	10. Laluk	
	11. Narayanpur	
	12. One Mobile Dispensary at North Lakhimpur.	

Sub-centres :

1. Daurighat
2. Naragaon
3. Ghunasuti
4. Panigaon
5. Pathalipahar
6. Bholabari
2. Simaluguri
8. Jamuguri.

Relief Centres :

1. Bhebeli
2. Bebejia
3. Boginadi

There is one Rural Animal Husbandry Centre at Jakoi and two Key Village Centres at Khanikor, and Kathalguri in the Dibrugarh district. Under the jurisdiction of the Khanikar Key Village Centre, four more sub-centres were opened at Dibrugarh Veterinary Dispensary, Gopal Goshala, Dibrugarh, Jakoi village and Bogapara village. Two Veterinary sub-centres are also functioning in Panitola C. D. Block. One Key Village Centre is attached to the C. D. Block at Tengakhat. The following table shows the increase of the livestock population in the district since 1945.[25]

Table of livestock population of the undivided Lakhimpur district.

	Cattle	Buffaloes	Sheep	Goats	Horses & Ponies	Poultry
Population in 1945	4,67,707	51,959	708	1,06,402	1,750	—
Population in 1951	5,68,269	55,539	1,292	10,6582	2,449	7,42,257
% Variation in 1951 over 1945	+21.50	+6.89	+82.48	+0.17	+39.94	—
Population in 1956	5,99,926	64,153	1,072	1,15,981	2,532	9,95,032
%Variation in 1956 over 1951	+5.57	+15.51	—17.03	+8.81	+3.39	+34.05
Population in 1961	8,30,551	66,417	1,854	2,29,161	3,657	13,58,267
%Variation in 1961 over 1956	+38.44	+3.53	+72.95	+97.58	+44.43	+36.50
%Variation in 1961 over 1951	+46.15	+19.59	+43.50	+115.00	+49.33	+83.00
Population in 1966	7,45,357	72,398	2,429	1,46,622	6,046	—

(e) **Forestry :**

Forest produce : Total area under forests in the undivided Lakhimpur district was 455999 hectares in 1967-68. The forest resources include various types of valuable trees viz., *Hallong* (*Dipterocarpus macrocarpus*),

25. *Statistical Handbook of Assam*, 1969, p. 27.
District Census Handbook, Lakhimpur, 1961 p, 486.

*Poultry Census was taken for the first time in 1951. As such, figures for 1945 are not available.

Hollock (*Terminalia myriocarpa*), *Makai* (*Shorea Assamica*), *Nahar* (*Mesua Ferrea*), *Ajhar* (*Largerstroemia flos Reginae*), *Uraim* (*Biscofia Javanica*), and *Simul* (*Bombax malabaricum*). The Techno Economic Survey of Assam revealed that 34,000 tons of bamboo and 1,80,000 tons of reeds are produced in this district. The *char* areas of the Brahmaputra are covered with thatches used for roofing houses. In Dibrugarh Forest Division 24824 cft. of timber and 6465 cft. of fuel were produced in 1967-68. Prior to the bifurcation of the Lakhimpur district forest areas of the North Lakhimpur sub-division were attached with the Darrang Forest Division. But since the 2nd October 1971, they have been brought under the administrative control of the Divisional Forest Officer, posted at North Lakhimpur. This forest division is also equally rich in timber and fuel. In 1970-71, forest revenue of this area amounted to Rs. 5,06,228.00. The undivided Lakhimpur district is rich in stone quarries, sand and other valuable forest materials.

Importance of forestry in the economy of the district : There are many important forest based industries in the district. Timber industries of the district are mainly of the following type.

Sawn timber: *Hollock* and *Ajhar* are two species commonly used in the district for construction of houses, wooden bridges and various types of furniture. A portion of the timber produced in the district isexported to other States. *Simul* trees are found in abundance in the Lakhimpur Forest Division. These are worked and supplied to the Assam Match Factory at Dhubri. The main marketable species of the Dibru Forest Range are *Hallong*, *Hollock*, *Makai* and *Nahar*.

Railway sleepers are produced in large quantities at Naharkatiya Sleeper Treating Plant. The plywood industry has made rapid development in recent times and many plywood factories have been established at various parts of Dibrugarh district.

Almost in every part of the district people use logs as fuel. Unlike in other States of India, cakes made of cow-dung are not used as fuel. The thatch houses which are so common in the districts are constructed with raw materials abundantly available locally. The articles of daily use such as furniture, implements of agriculture are made of timber produced in the districts. Cane is used for making baskets which are in high demand in the tea gardens.

The jungle products of the undivided Lakhimpur district consist of honey and wax. India rubber in also grown in small patches in plains. "*Mishmi Tita*", a famous febrifuge is brought down from the hill areas for sale. *Patidoi* with which mats are made occur all over the

forests. The yearly forest revenue of the Dibrugarh Forest Division during the period from 1959-60 to 1962-63 was Rs. 33,75,715.00, Rs. 48,571.00 Rs. 38,40,516.00 and Rs. 47,79,547.00 respectively. In the Dibrugarh Forest Division 95 acres were brought under matchwood plantation by the end of the first quarter of 1966 in addition to the already existing plantation of 970 acres. The undivided Lakhimpur district led other districts of Assam in respect of plywood mills and saw-mills.

State Assistance to Agriculture : Production oriented schemes implemented through various agencies of the state government have brought the undivided Lakhimpur district to the threshold of the green revolution. Besides the measures discussed above the State Government also issue loans to the agriculturists in the shape of seed loan and cattle loan. Such loans are needed by the cultivators specially after devastating floods that ravage the district almost at regular intervals.

Distribution of improved seeds and manures, execution of minor irrigation schemes, reclamation of waste lands, construction of dams and bunds to control floods, imparting of necessary training to farmers by way of demonstration, supply of improved agricultural implements, provision of marketing facilities and other measures have yielded rich dividends in recent times. The All India Radio has played an important role in disseminating information on various aspects of agriculture among the farmers. Much emphasis is given on training up the cultivators and providing proper incentive to switch on from the age-old unproductive methods of cultivation to the modern ones.

(g) Floods, Famines and Drought :

Famine is unknown in the history of Lakhimpur district. Droughts affect the district from time to time ; but extent of damage caused by droughts is not considerable compared to those caused by flood and erosion. Thus in 1960-61, only 40 acres of land were affected by drought whereas 2,500 acres were affected by floods during that year.[26]

This district has several rivers that originate in the hills. The snow-fed Brahmaputra which meanders through the green valleys of Dibrugarh and Lakhimpur districts crosses the danger level in every summer season. The floods are annual features of this district.

The flood of 1950 is one of the worst calamities that ever occurred in the district. After the great earthquake of 1950 there was high flood in every river of the district. The devastation caused by floods of the Subansiri after the great earthquake in 1950 were the most disastrous in the living memory of the people of the North Lakhimpur sub-

26. *District Statistical Abstract, Lakhimpur*, 1963, p 73.

division. There had been extensive landslides after the great earthquake and courses of many rivers were blocked. These natural dams so formed in the upper reaches of the Subansiri burst after a few days as these could not stand the pressure of the swelling water. The huge mass of water rolled down enguling the villages and turned the entire region into a vast sheet of water. The level of the Subansiri was 10 to 12 feet above the danger mark at some places. 532 persons lost their lives. The other rivers of the district became monstrous agents of destruction during that year.

The Brahmaputra eroded a part of Dibrugarh threatening at one time to swallow the whole town. Protective measures proved successful in halting the erosion. In the year 1963-64, an area of 34.27 sq. miles and population of 27,171 persons were affected by floods in Dibrugarh subdivision. More details of the damages caused by the floods during the last few years have been given below.

The floods occur twice or thrice every year during the summer season from June to September. Due to heavy rainfall all the rivers which originate from the hills overtop their banks. Another important reason of high floods in the district is that the river beds have become shallow after the great earthquake of 1950. Embankments have been constructed to control the flood in many rivers, but those have again caused silting up of the river beds necessitating further increase in the level of the embankment.

STATEMENT—I

Statement showing damages by floods and erosions in the Dibrugarh subdivision.

Particulars	1963-64	1964-65*	1965-66	1966-67	1967-68
1	2	3	4	5	6
Floods					
1. Area affected (in sq. miles)	34.27	616.00	577.00	75.00	101760 (in acres)
2. No. of villages affected	154	369	479	94	154
3. No. of people affected	27,171	54,300	69,064	34,200	44,000
4. No. of families affected	4,134	—	—	—	—

*The figures shown in column 3 are of the undivided Lakhimpur district.

Particulars	1963-64	1964-65	1965-66	1966-67	1967-68
1	2	3	4	5	6
5. No. of houses damaged and their approximate value. (in Rs.)	21 63,000/-	1,589 96,600/-	176 1,76,000/-	30 45,000/-	441 1,50,000/-
6. No. of human lives lost	Nil	—	—	—	5
7. Cattle lost and their value (in Rs,)	12 3,000/-	6 400/-	915 114,710/-	— —	157 29·250/-
8. **Damages to crops :**					
Paddy (in acres)	5762.21	2403580	16829	5017	10393 acres (to all important crops)
Paddy (in maunds)	58198	299039.6	245866	120144	
Paddy value (in Rs.)	5,82,881/-	23,93,231/-	2,44,110/-	19,94,898/-	16,32,000/-,
Jute (in acre)	—	113.98	20	39	Total damages to crops, houses etc. came to about. Rs. 18,21,250/.
" (in maunds)	—	3390	100	1030	
" (value in Rs.)	—	67,840/-	3,000/-	41,200/-	
Sugarcane (in acre)	—	64	5	—	
" (in maunds)	—	2945	1,500	—	
" (value in Rs.)	—	1,76,700/-	3,000/-	—	
Cotton (in acres)	—	33,71	—	—	
" (in maunds)	—	510	—	—	
" (value in Rs.)	—	20,400/-	—	—	
Rabi crops (in acres)	—	10	615	—	
" (in maunds)	—	290	—	4420	
" (in rupees)	—	54,000/-	4,405/-	4,200/-	
9. Loss of property (in Rs.)	2,000/-	15,000/-	50,000/-	—	
EROSION					
10. Area eroded (in acres)	5,923	303,3	—	—	
11. No. of villages affected	5	11	—	—	
12. No. of families affected.	80	228	—	—	
13. Loss of property (in Rs.)	1,70,000/-	1,57,00/-	—	—	

STATEMENT—II

Statement showing the damages by floods and erosions in the North Lakhimpur Sub-division.

Particulars	1963-64	1964-65*	1965-66	1966-67	1967-68
1	2	3	4	5	6
Floods					
1. Area affected (in Sq. miles)	684		463	483	Damage in the North Lakhimpur Sub-division in the year was negligible—only the reverine areas of Brahmaputra were affected.
2. No. of Villages affected	356		318	—	
3. No. of people affected	65,910		5,737	—	
4. No. of houses damaged and	147		—	—	
their approximate	—		—	—	
value. (in Rs.)	38,000/-		—	—	
5. No. of families affected	—		—	—	
6. No. of human life lost	—		—	—	
7. No. of cattle lost and their value (in Rs.)	—		—	—	
8. **Damages to crops.**					
Paddy (in acres)	4160		1773	17724	5234
Paddy (in maund)	60000		86610	86910	45340
Paddy value (in Rs.)	3,52,400/-		61,66,250/-	61,65,200/-	90,680/-
9. Jute (in acres)	107		5474	2774	13
Jute (in maund)	2001		5462	548	20
Jute value (in Rs.)	40,940/-		1,57,660/-	1,57,300/-	520/-
10. Sugarcane (in acre)	—		2120	2120	21
" (in maund)	—		2150	2190	42
" value (in Rs.)	—		27,200/-	27,300/-	168/-
EROSION					
11. Area eroded (in acres)	479		213	212	Total area affected by by flood and erosion was 18.98 square miles.
12. No. of villages affected	22		13	—	
13. No. of families affected	116		90	—	
14. Loss of property (in Rs.)	46,800/-		2,17,200/-	—	

* Figures for 1964-65 for the North Lakhimpur Sub-division are included in col. 3 of Statement I.

Flood Warning System : In order to enable the district authorities to take timely steps a system has been evolved to transmit flood warning messages. So far as the heavy floods of the Brahmaputra are concerned, the flood warning messages were relayed previously through the office of the Flood Control Department from Shigatre, Chusuri, and Tsela Dzang stations *via* Darjeeling to the Deputy Commissioner, Lakhimpur. At present flood warning signals are transmitted to the Deputy Commissioner, Lakhimpur from some stations at the upper reaches of the Brahmaputra. The Deputy Commissioner, Lakhimpur in his turn informs other Deputy Commissioners and Subdivisional Officers of the Brahmaputra valley. The time lag in flood in the Brahmaputra between various stations from Dibrugarh are as follows :

	Distance from Dibrugarh	Time of flood travel Minimum	Maximum
North Lakhimpur	60 miles	9 hours	1 day
Sibsagar	60 "	9 "	1 "
Jorhat	94 "	15 "	2 "
Tezpur	206 "	34 "	3 "
Silghat	240 "	39 "	3 "
Gauhati	304 "	51 "	4 "
Goalpara	388 "	64 "	6 "
Barpeta	370 "	61 "	6 "
Dhubri	444 "	74 "	7 "

On receipt of this flood warning message, the Deputy Commissioners and the Subdivisional Officers take precautionary measures to meet the situation arising out of the flood.

Relief operations : As soon as water from rivers in spate starts to submerge the low-lying areas the relief operations are started with full vigour. These measures include evacuation of people and cattle whenever necessary to safer places and providing them with food and shelter till the flood recedes, and distribution of gratuitous relief in those flood affected areas where evacuation is not necessary. At times the flood level rises very rapidly and the swirling currents make it extremely risky to move from one place to another. Very often the villages appear to be isolated islands accessible only by boats. In some *char* areas the roofs of houses are swept by the water. Unless evacuation is done in a planned manner, the incidence of loss of human life under such circumstances may be very high. The evacuation and distribution of gratuitous relief are supplemented by other measures such as rehabilitation of the erosion-affected people, execution of test relief schemes so that the people of the flood affected areas secure some

amount of purchasing power, inoculation of human beings as well as cattle to prevent outbreak of epidemic, disinfecting the flood affected areas, distribution of seeds or seedlings by the Agriculture Department to the farmers of the flood affected areas, where crops have been damaged, issue of agricultural loans and rehabilitation loans to the flood affected people, issue of grants for repairing school buildings or other public buildings, roads and bridges damaged by the flood, remission of land revenue in the worst affected areas, and issue of educational loans or grants to help the students of the flood affected areas. These are short term measures. Long term measures comprise of construction of dykes, dams, culverts, sluice gates etc., for regulating courses of the rivers. Thus a concerted effort is made by several departments to mitigate the miseries of the flood affected people. In steering the relief operations the district and the sub-divisional authorities secure complete co-operation from other departments of the Government as well as from the local public. At times Subdivisional or District Flood Relief Committees comprising both of official and non-official members are formed to devise means for providing adequate relief to the flood affected people.

Apart from evacuation of people and cattle, whenever necessary, the immediate relief made available to the flood affected people is the gratuitous relief. Relief parties visit the villages and distribute food-grains, pulses, salt and mustard oil at a given scale. Other commodities distributed include medicine, clothing and fodder for the cattle. The relief parties move mostly by country boats and carry with them the stock of foodgrains etc., meant for distribution. Fair price shops are opened at various places to sell rice or paddy to the flood affected people at a reduced rate; the difference with the normal rate is subsidised by the Government.

Following is a statement showing relief measures taken up in the district during the last few years.

STATEMENT—III

Statement showing the relief measures taken in the flood and erosion affected areas of Dibrugarh Sub-division

Particulars	1963-64	1964-65*	1965-66	1966-67	1967-68
1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Gratuitous Relief (in Rs.)	11,000/-	2,66,837.57	65,00/-	10.000/-	10,000/-
2. Rehabilitation Loan (in Rs.)	10,000/-	23,750.00	—	—	—

* The figures shown in Colm. 3 are for the undivided dtstrict of Lakhimpur.

Particulars	1963-64	1964-65*	1965 66	1966-67	1967-68
1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Seed Loan etc. (in Rs.)	31,000/-	29,500.00	—	—	—
4. Test Relief (in Rs.)	—	1,36,306.00	—	—	—
8. Cattle loan (in Rs.)	—	—	—	—	—
6. Gratuitous Relief (food-stuffs)					
Rice	—	139.83 (quintol)	—	—	—
Salt	—	11.07 "	—	—	—
Dal	—	12.84 "	—	—	—
Bhusi	—	55.95 "	—	—	—
7. Stores, medicines and other relief supplies provided by the State Govt. (in Rs.)	—	—	19,430/-	—	—
8. No. of fair price shops opened.	—	—	83	—	—

STATEMENT—IV

Statement showing relief measures taken in the flood and erosion affected areas of North Lakhimpur subdivision.

Particulars	1963-64	1964-65*	1965-66	1966-67	1967-68
1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Gratuitous relief (in Rs.)	20,000/-	—	45,500/-	45,500/-	3,500/-
2. Rehabilitation loan (in Rs.)	—	—	15,000/-	15,000/-	—
3. Test relief scheme (in Rs.)	—	—	25,000/-	25,000/-	—
4. Seed loan issued (in Rs.)	—	—	43,000/-	43,000/-	7,000/-
5. No. of fair price shops opened	11 shops	—	—	—	—

Flood control measures : Reference has been made earlier in this chapter regarding embankments constructed in this district. The Dibrugarh Town Protection works is a major scheme undertaken with the object of protecing Dibrugarh from the fury of the Brahmaputra

*The figures for 1964-65 for the North Lakhimpur Sub-division are included in Col. 3 of Statement III.

in spate. This scheme was taken up during the year 1953-54 in order to save the town by constructing Permeable and Impermeable spurs. During the year 1957-58 the following works were completed at a total cost of nearly Rs. 2.45 crores :—

Stone spur No.	I	—	400' ft.
-do-	II	—	212'
-do-	III	—	218'
-do-	IV	—	212'
-do-	V	—	210'
-do-	VI	—	200'
-do-	VI	—	200'
-do-	VII	—	100' (Maukan)

(ii) Permeable spurs—29 Nos.

(iii) Construction of Dibrugarh dyke from Maijan to Steamerghat 6 miles.

(iv) Construction of Drainage Channel—14 miles

(v) Construction of Culverts and Sluices-

(1) Culvert—24 Nos.

(2) Sluices— 2 Nos.

Erosion has however been going on towards the east of Dibrugarh town, during the last few years. Apart from the great erosion of 1954, some erosins of smaller magnitude have taken place at Dibrugarh in the subsequent years. In this connection, mention must be made about the great erosion of Nagakhelia and Mohanaghat area that occurred in the year 1962.

ANNEXURE—A

Sl. No.	Name of Scheme	Total Mileage.	Area Benefited in acres.
1	2	3	4
1.	(A) **Embankment**		
1.	Ring bund at Dirak	2.45	700 Acres.
2.	Saikhowa protection bund Phase. 1	7.00	5,000 "
3.	Saikhowa protection bund Phase III.	3.20	4,000 "
4.	Construction of tributary dyke on the right bank of the Dholla river under M. P. C. D. Block.	2.42	1,500 "
5.	Construction of embankment along the left bank of the Dirak river from Kailashpur to Mohong.	4.53	—

Sl. No.	Name of Scheme	Total Mileage	Area Benefited in acres.
1	2	3	4
6.	Closing of spill channel along the right bank of the Buridihing river from Tiplingghat to Deochali Hill Ph-1 (From Deochali Hill to Fakial Grazing).	5.23	4,500 acres.
7.	Construction of embankment along the right bank of the Buridihing river from Deochali Hill to Tipling ghat Ph. II (From Fakial Grazing to Tipling-ghat).	7.00	—
8.	Reclamation of low lying areas near Tingraimukh in Kheremia Mouza under Tengakhat C. D. Block. (Right bank bund from Tengakhat bund to Amuguri Tea Estate).	3.40	2,000 "
9.	Flood protection of Tengakhat Mouza (Tengakhat bund)	8.40	7,000 "
10.	Extension of Tengakhat bund from Jokai Reserve Forest to Assam Trunk Road.	8.40	3,000 "
11.	Dihing marginal bund from Kotoha to Bhogamur	5.20	3,000 "
12.	Extension of Tengakhat bund from Bhogamur to Sessamukh.	11.40	5,000 "
13.	Extension of Sassoni Tingkhong bund Phase II	9.60	5,000 "
14.	Extension of Sassoni Tingkhong bund Phase-I	8.00	5,000 "
15.	Improvement of drainage of paddy fields in Sassoni Tingkhong Mouza under Joypur C. D. Block (Desam bund left bank).	3.43	2,000 "
16.	Flood protection of Sassoni Tingkhong Mouza (old Sassoni Tingkhong bund).	5.00	4,000 "
17.	Dihing bund (old A.T. Road) from Sissaghat to Joan Gaon.	3.00	2,000 "

Sl. No.	Name of Scheme	Total Mileage	Area Benefited in Acre
1	2	3	4
	(B) Drainage Channel.		
	Drainage of Larua and Jamirah Mouzas:		
1.	Improvement of drainage of Larua and Jamirah Mouzas.	14.00	—
2.	Flood protection & drainage of Tingrai Basin.	22.00	—
3.	Flood protection & drainage of Barbil area near Digboi :		
	(a) Drainage Channel	2.90	4,500 "
	(b) Marginal bund	2.80	
4.	Tributary dyke along the left bank of the Buridihing river from Chippibasti to Molong Gaon.	2.30	3,200 "

ANNEXURE—B

Sl. No.	Name of Scheme	Total Mileage	Area Benefited in acre
1	2	3	4
	(A) **Embankment.**		
1.	Training of the river Singra (Embankment along both banks of the Singra river)	3.2 K.M.	8,000 Acres.
	Right bank from Doolaghat to Kal khowa and left bank from Silonibari to Borsola.	12.8 ,,	
2.	Protection of Nowboicha and Telahi Mouzas from floods of the Ranganadi river,		
	(a) Embankment along right bank of the Ranganadi river from old Dijooghat to Pahumaraghat Part. I.	8.0 "	—

Sl. No.	Name of Scheme	Total Mileage	Area Benefited in acres
1	2	3	4
	(b) Embankment along left bank of the Ranganadi from Amtola to Khabulighat.	7.0 K. M.	—
3.	Improvement of Gariajan bund in North Lakhimpur.	3.2 "	1,000 Acres
4.	Training of the river Kakoi (Marginal embankment along right bank of the Kakoi river) from Lilabari tea Garden to Kadam.	12.0 "	5,000 "
5.	Flood protection and drainage of Kadam Mouza (Training of the river Dirgha Road-cum-Embankment) along right bank of the Dirgha from Seajuli to Boginadimukh.	12.0 "	5,000 ,,
6.	Town protection and river training of the river Pichala.	6.4 "	5,000 "
7.	Revival of Sundiri channel in North Lakhimpur town (Marginal Embankment along right bank of Sundiri from Sakuliburia Road to Majgaon)	9.0 "	1,000 "
8.	Tributary dyke along left bank of the Boginadi from Rajarhati to North Trunk Road.	7.5 "	1,000 "
9.	Extension of Kharoi bund including old Kharoi bund.	21.0 "	10.000 "
10.	Marginal Embankment along both banks of the Solengi river from "O" to extension of Kharai bund.	18.5 "	5,000 "
11.	Construction of dyke along left bank of Kherkati in Majuli area from Tekeliphuta to Pahumara P.W.D. Road.	12.8 "	4,000 "
12.	Construcion of Majuli bund from Tekaliphuta to Haldhibari along North bank of Brahmaputra.	7.6 "	1,600 "
13.	Extension of Majuli bund from Bessamora to Dakhinpat.	9.6 "	6,500 "

Sl. No.	Name of Scheme	Total Mileage	Area Benefited in acres
1	2	3	4
14.	Hotilury stream	11.0 K. M.	
15.	Kharkhauijan in Kharkhauia pathaly.	7.5 "	
16.	Godijan	11.00 "	
17.	Singomiojan and Manganiajan	9.00 "	
18.	Drainage of low lying area between Balijan and Brahmajan	12.64 "	
19.	Training of the river Kokurijan in Gohpur Mouza Ph-I & II	7.7 "	

ANNEXURE—C

Sl. No.	Name of Scheme	Total Mileage.
1	2	3
1.	Brahmaputra dyke from Dijmore to Sonarigaon	16.0 Mile.
2.	Brahmaputra dyke from Deorighat to Sissikalghor	17.0 "
3.	Brahmaputra dyke from Sissikalghor to Tekaliphuta.	—
4.	Brahmaputra dyke from Tekaliphuta to Selamukh	—
5.	Moridhol dyke from Sarukacharigaon to Sissikalghor.	18.0 "
6.	Subansiri dyke from Rajgorali to Champarghat.	6.6 "
7.	Subansiri dyke from Champarghat to Zangraimukh Phase-II.	6.0 "
8.	Subansiri dyke from Zengraimukh to Silamukh Phase-III.	2.0 "
9.	Subansiri dyke from Gogamukh to Champaraghat Phase-I.	17.7 K.M.
10.	Korha bund in Dhakuakhana Mouza	11.8 Mile
11.	Tenga-an-bil in Ghilamara bund.	8.0 "
12.	Kumatya bund (right bank) from Borbil to Morilsuk.	10.0 "

Sl. No.	Name of Scheme	Total Mileage
13.	Extension of Kumatiya bund Phase-I.	4.0 Mile
14.	Extension of Kumatiya bund Phase-II	5.0 "
15.	Flood protection & drainage of Bordoloni area and extension of Jiadhol dyke Ph-I.	4.38 "
16.	Flood protection and drainage of Bordoloni area and extension of Jiadhol dyke Ph-II.	1.75 "
17.	Flood protection and drainage of Dhemaji area Jiadhol dyke.	15.2 "
18.	Revival of Kharjan Channel	4.5 "
19.	Hingijan embankment.	2.0 "
20.	Boginadi Gogamukh embankment.	2.0 "

CHAPTER—V

INDUSTRIES

(a) Old time industries :-

The undivided Lakhimpur district which since early times formed a part of Assam has the legacy of many traditional cottage industries. Numerous references have been made to these industries of ancient Assam in many literary works. In the *Sabha-parva* of the *Mahabharata* it has been mentioned that Bhagadatta, the king of ancient Assam presented to Yudhisthira among other articles, vessels made of semi-precious stone *asmasara*, swords with handles made of pure ivory, horns of rhinoceros, buffaloes and elephant tusks. The ivory industry could flourish because "the kingdom was the home of elephants in ancient times"[1]. Assamese people had shown high artistic skill in weaving and sericulture. The inclusion of beautiful textiles in the presents of Bhaskaravarman to Harsha-vardhana indicates that these products were already famous in the 7th century A.D. The *Harsa-carita* of Banabhatta gives a long list of articles presented by Bhaskaravarman to Harsha-vardhana. These were as follows : "Ornaments which crimsoned the heavenly spaces with the light of the finest gems : the prime of sheeny crest-jewels : pearl necklaces which seemed the source of the Milk Ocean's whiteness : silken towels pure as the autumn moon's light, rolled up in baskets of variously coloured reeds : quantities of pearl, shell, sapphire, and other drinking vessels, embossed by skilful artists : loads of *Kardaranga* leather bucklers with charming borders, bright gold-leaf work winding about them, and cases to preserve their colour : soft loin-cloths smooth as birch-bark : pillows of *Samuruka* (a kind of deer) leather, and other kinds of smooth figured textures ; cane stools with the bark yellow as the ear of the millet : volumes of fine writing with leaves made from aloe bark and of the hue of ripe pink cucumber ; luscious milky betelnut fruit, hanging from its sprays and green as young *harita* doves : thick bamboo tubes containing mango sap and black aloes oil, and fenced round with sheaths of *kapotika* leaves, tawny as an angry ape's cheeks : bundles contained in sacks of woven silk and consisting of black aloe bark as pounded collyrium ; *Gosirsa* sandal stealing the fiercest inflammation away ; camphor cool, pure, and white as bits of ice ; scent bags of musk oxen, *kakkola* sprays, clove flower bunches, and and nutmeg clusters, all bristling with masses of ripe fruit; cups of *ullaka* (a fruit-juice? a kind of decoction?), diffusing a fragrance of the

1. S. K. Chatterjee :—*The Place of Assam in the History and Civilisation of India*, (1970), p. 15.

of the sweetest wine; heaps of black and white cowries : carved boxes of panels for painting, with brushes and gourds attached : curious pairs of *kinnaras*, orang-outangs (*vana-manusa*), *jivanjivaka* birds, and mermen (*jalamanusa*) with necks bound in golden fetters : musk deer scenting the space all round them with their perfume : female *camara* deer (yak cows), used to running about the house : parrots, *sarikas*, and other birds enclosed in gold-painted bamboo cages and chattering copious wit : partridges in cages of coral: and ring of hippopotamus (*jala-hastin*) ivory, encrusted with rows of huge pearls from the brows of elephants."[2]

Besides the exquisite artistic products, cane and bamboo works, books of aloe-barks and ivory ornaments were some of the fine specimens of craftsmanship of early Assam. The *Kalika Purana* also refers to fine cotton and woollen garments produced in Assam in the tenth century A. D.

Of particular interest to the undivided Lakhimpur district is the brass and bell-metal industry. Bell-metal plates fitted with stands which were in use in this region in the past are found in Burma, Indo-China, and Malaya. The existing remains of the copper temple at Sadiya indicate that the metal industry of this area was well developed.

During the Ahom period also cottage industry a high degree of perfection. Muhammadan chroniclers paid eloquent tributes to the skilful weavers, spinners, goldsmiths, potters, artisans who worked on metals, ivory and wood. The *Kathagurucharita* refers to the consummate skill exhibited in weaving and designing by the weavers of mediaeval Assam. According to the Ahom *Buranjis*, the brickmaking and extraction of iron from ores were some of the important industries of Assam during the Ahom period. An account of some of the old industries that flourished in the district is given below.

(i) **Gold Washing** : The industry of gold-washing in the beds of rivers like the Subansiri, the Brahmaputra and the Buri-Dihing yielded considerable quantities of gold at one time. The industry suffered a gradual decay in course of time, because the amount of labour and strain involved in gold-washing could hardly be compensated by selling the little quantity of gold dust collected from the river beds. The following account of gold washing and jewellery industries that flourished in some of the districts of Assam including the undivided Lakhimpur district in the past, makes an interesting reading. An "important industry of the Ahom period was gold-washing and manufacture of jewellery. Gold was washed from the sands of the Brahmaputra. Many people were engaged in gold-washing. They had to pay to the royal exchequer one *tola* of gold per head per year. Gold could be procured from the

2. Ibid, pp. 27-28.

sand at all places on the banks of the Brahmaputra. According to the reports on the Administration of Assam 1892-93, and 1901-1902, the rivers of Assam which yielded gold were those of the Darrang and Lakhimpur districts north of the Brahmaputra, the Brahmaputra itself in its upper course, the Noa-Dihing and Buri-Dihing, and a small stream called Jagle, which rises in the Tipam Hills and falls into the Buri-Dihing. In the Sibsagar district, the Dhansiri, the Desoi and the Jhanzi were said to be auriferous. Out of these streams, the Bharali, the Dikrang and the Subansiri in Darrang and Lakhimpur seem to have formerly given the largest quantities".[3]

Gold washing operation was carried out by a guild known as the *Sonowal Khel*, who paid the Government a tax at four annas weight or five rupees worth of gold per annum. The State derived considerable income from the yearly tax levied on gold-washing. "The amount derived is said to have been considerable and Rajeswar Sinha (1751-1769). A.D. is reported to have taken as much as 2,500 oz. of gold every year from the people of Upper Assam."[4] In the early part of the British rule, gold-washing industry thrived for some time but was given up ultimately as it was expensive and unprofitable.

(ii) **Weaving** : It is the most important cottage industry that flourished in Assam from ancient times. Apart from coloured and beautifully designed cotton garments, the local weavers could produce fine silk cloths some of which were ornamented. The threads were dyed before being used in the loom to weave coloured cloths. During the mediaeval period the silk was used by almost everybody in Upper Assam which includes the present Dibrugarh and Lakhimpur districts. In the past there was hardly an Assamese family without a loom. Momai Tamuli Bar Barua, a minister of king Pratap Sinha ordered that before sunset every woman must spin a certain number of hanks of yarn. This rule was scrupulously followed throughout the Ahom kingdom, to avoid punishment In his book *An Account of Assam*, Dr. J. P. Wade, has stated that it was customary on the part of the warriors to wear in the morning that piece of cloth which was manufactured by the female weaver of the family on the preceding night, after ginning the cotton at midnight. The spinning of the thread and weaving of the cloth were to be completed before the day-break. It is an age-old custom that the mother gives a three-piece silk garment to her daughter at the time of the latter's marriage and a complete silk dress to her son-in-law when welcoming him. From early times *Eri* cloth has been serving the purpose of woollens particularly amongst the less affluent section of the

3. E. A. Gait,—*History of Assam*, (1967) ; p. 272

4. B. C. Allen,—*Assam District Gazetteers, Lakhimpur*, (1905) ; p 198.

Assamese people. Muhammadan historians observed that Assam silk was excellent and resembled those of China. Tavernier refers to Assam silk as one produced on trees and confirms that the stuff made of them was very brilliant. Like the nobilities in Japan, the Ahom Kings in Assam took personal care and interest in the silk industry and royal patronage contributed to its rapid development. The fabrics prepared out of *Muga*, *Eri* and *Pat* (mulberry silk) became the national dress of the Assamese and formed a common costume of the women of the Assam valley. Till today weaving is the biggest of all cottage industries of the Dibrugarh and Lakhimpur districts.

The implements of weaving which were and still are common in almost all Assamese families are quite few in number. These are as follows : loom, *Ugha*, *Chereki*, Spinning wheel, *Neothani*, etc. In the past every family produced the cloths which were required for day-to-day use. These included *Mekhela*, *Chadar*, *Riha*, *Churia*, *Cheleng*, *Bar-Kapor*, all generally made of yarns of coarse quality. The *Bihuan*, the most loving present to the youngers and respectful gift to the elders is usually produced in the house-hold loom. This traditional gift from the women weaver of each family still forms an important part of the social life of the Assamese people. The proficiency of a bride was judged in the past by her skill in weaving. Normally, the handloom cloths were not produced on a commercial scale and as such every family had to attain self-sufficiency in respect of cloths.

A particular class of people known as "Jugi" or "Katoni" took to *Pat* rearing exclusively as their main occupation. Gradually other sections of people gave up *Pat* rearing in favour of more lucrative and easy occupations ; but they pursued the culture of *Eri* and *Muga*. Certain caste prejudice against this trade prevailed till the fourth decade of the twentieth century but this began to wane when many well to do families took to manufacture of silk fabrics.

After the advent of the British, the weaving industry faced a keen competition from the mill-made goods which dominated the markets situated even in the remote areas. Even then the weaving industry did not lose much of its popularity among the rural womenfolk. The unrivalled skill of the Assamese weavers earned praise from Manatma Gandhi who once remarked that the Assamese women could weave fairy tales in their cloths. The *Mirijan* which is kind of cotton blanket, produced by the Miris of North Lakhimpur is a fine specimen of blanket weaving in Assam.

As per the 1961 census there are 36,936 weavers in the undivided Lakhimpur district. They are all female and part-time weavers. There are 188 registered weaving societies, which employ 4,427 artisans. Two

weaving training centres, one located at North-Lakhimpur and the other at Kacharipathar are functiong. Apart from providing training facilities, various other types of Government assistance in the shape of grants-in-aid, subsidy, industrial loan have been provided to enable the artisans to take up the industry on commercial lines. The looms and accessories are also supplied by the Weaving Department of the Government of Assam, at subsidised rates. The All India Handloom Board also has implemented various schemes for the development of handloom industry. These measures include (1) establishment of emporia, (2) sale by mobile vans, (3) extension of dye-houses and (4) research, in designing and dyeing. The Assam Khadi and Village Industries Board has been providing financial, technical, managerial and marketing facilities to the members of Khadi Co-operative Societies, besides supplying implements.

(iii) **Sericulture** : Silk industry in Assam has flourished since time immemorial and has withstood the competition from the silk cloths produced outside Assam. The undivided district of Lakhimpur occupies a unique place in Assam in the production of *Pat*, *Eri* and *Muga*. "The art of sericulture and rearing of cocoons for manufacture of various silk cloths were known to the Assamese as early as the *Ramayana* and the *Arthasastra*. The classical writers, beginning at least with the 1st Century A. D., make important mention of the production of silk and silk trade in and through Assam. The *Periplus* refers to both raw and manufactured silk which were from China or Assam".[5] During the eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth century, Assam silk especially *Muga* was much in demand in Europe and formed the staple of trade of the East India Company during that period.

Three principal varieties of silk, called *Pat*, *Eri*, and *Muga* were and still are produced in the district. The first variety is the finest and costliest. *Eri* is of coarser quality and is generally used by the common people. The third variety is *Muga* which is stouter and more durable than *Pat* but coarser and less glossy.

Pat is produced from the cocoons of two species of worms called univoltine or *bor polu* (*bombyx textor*) and the multivoltine or *saru polu* (*bombyx croesi*). Both the species are reared indoors on the leaves of the mulbery tree (*morus indica*). The *bar polu* or univoltine is mainly reared in the district and its eggs take about ten months to hatch, the worms usually making their appearance about the beginning of January. The life span of the worms is about thirty to forty days and the cocoons which are of a bright yellow colour take about 6 days to spin. The silk after it is boiled in potash water looks perfectly white. About twelve to fifteen thousand cocoons are needed to produce one pound of thread.

5. P. C. Choudhury ; *The History of Civilisation of the People of Assam, to the Twelfth Century A.D.*, p. 364

The *Muga* worm (*antheroea assamoea*) which is generally fed on the *sum* tree (machilus *odoratissima*) is of five different breeds of which only two are commonly reared, the *Jarua* in December-February and the *Jethua* in the spring. With the hatching of the moths, the females are tied to straws inside the house and the males are left free to visit them for three or four days. Each female generally produces about 250 eggs. These eggs are kept in a dark place and as soon as the worms appear, they are shifted to *Sum* tree. A band of straw on plantain leaves is fastened around the trunk to prevent them from descending and to provide them night shelter. Proper watch, however, is required to protect them from becoming prey to crows, kites, owls etc. A full grown worm is about 5 inches long and its thickness varies from 1 to 1½ inches. Its colour is green with a brown and yellow stripe extending down each side, while red moles with bright gold bases are dotted about the surface of the body. Worms descend from the tree as soon as they become ready to spin and are immediately placed inside the house. The silk is produced by reeling the cocoons and about 250 cocoons are required to produce one ounce of thread. Most of the Assamese women possess one or more garments of Muga silk and well-to-do men ceremonially wear waist cloths of this material.

The rearing of *Eri* worm is most commonly practised throughout the district. The worm (*attacus ricini*) derives its name from the *Eri* or castor plant (*ricinus communis*) on which it is usually fed. In a year five or six broods are generally reared and those which spin their cocoons in November, February and May yield much silk. Like *Muga* moth, females are tied to pieces of reed while males are left free to visit them. When the worms appear they are put in a tray or a basket suspended in a place of safety and fed on the leaves of the castor plant. The worms when fully grown look dirty white or green and vary in length from 3 to 3½ inches. After the final moulting, the worms are transferred from the tray to forked twigs suspended across a piece of wood and as soon as they become ready to spin, they are placed on dried plantain leaves or withered branches hanging from the roofs of huts. Before spinning, cocoons are softened by boiling in water with a solution of alkali. Each empty cocoon yields about three quarters of its weight in thread. The most useful garment made of *Eri* silk is the *bar-kapor*, a large sheet 20 feet long 5 feet wide, which is folded and used as a warp in cold weather by all sections of the people. *Eri* silk is also made into coats and shirts.

The State Government and the Central Silk Board have taken various steps for the development of sericulture in Assam. One Basic *Muga* Seed Farm and one Eri Seed Grainage have been opened by the Government of Assam at Narayanpur and North-Lakhimpur respectively. Vari-

ous other measures have been taken up by the Government of Assam for the development of the sericulture industry so as to increase the production of seed cocoons, to bring about improvement in the quality of yarn and to provide for better facilities for training, research and marketing. Under the impact of the four Five Year Plans, the output of seed cocoons has been steadily increasing and steady progress has also been made in other fields. The aim of the Fourth Five Year Plan was to consolidate these gains and to increase production to keep pace with the increasing demand for Assam Silk.

(iii) **Bamboo and Caneworks :** In the past cane mats were used by almost all sections of the Assamese people and offered as seats even to the distinguished guests. In fact, it was their custom to use such cane mats in any congregation, religious or social. '*Dhari*' (bamboo or cane mats), '*Pachi*' (big bamboo basket), '*Chalani*' (bamboo sieve), '*Dala*' (bamboo tray) are some of the articles made of bamboo and cane which were and still are used by the Assamese people. Fishing implements made of bamboo, commonly used in the district from the days of old are *Jakai, Khalai, Chepa*, etc.

(iv) **Brass and bell metal industries :** The brass and bell metal industry of the undivided Lakhimpur district was highly developed in the past. The skill of the artisans who worked on metals in the past is "well proved by the existing remains of copper temple at Sadiya and the copper plates issued by rulers".[6] The industry has suffered decay and is confined in the district only to a few places like Japargaon, Telekisinga, Bokalmajgaon, Japi Hajia, Ghorbund and Jarwa. The number of artisans engaged in the industry is also very small. Bell metal utensils are cast in moulds but brass vessels are made of thin sheets which are beaten out and pieced together. The articles manufactured by artisans mainly consist of utensils, and vessels of day to day domestic use, such as '*Lota*' (flattish bowl with narrow neck), '*Kalah*' (jars for holding water), '*Sarai*' (high tray), *Temi* (small container to carry lime), '*Thali*' (large vessel for boiling rice), bellmetal spoons, tumbler, dishes etc. Mirrors made of shinning metals were also in use in the past.

Reasons for the decay of old industries : Although cottage industries still play a vital role in the economy of the district, some of the old time industries have suffered protracted stagnation, while some others are now buried under oblivion. The reasons are not far to seek. Dumping of local markets with cheaper machine-made goods imported from outside by the British, universal weakness for more luxurious goods abundantly available in the market as well as

6. P. C. Choudhury : *The History of Civilisation of the People of Assam to the Twelfth Century A,D.* p. 371.

establishment of various new industries for production of new things to replace the old ones are some of the factors that retarded the steady growth of cottage industries. As regards the gold-washing industry, it has been mentioned above that gold was actually extracted from the sands of the river Subansiri by a professional tribal community who were called the *Sonowal* khel. The licenses for extracting gold were issued by the Government till 1918 ; but the quantity of gold extracted was very small. From 23 cwt. of sand only 28 grains of gold could be extracted in 1903-04. The operation was commercially uneconomical and was therefore abandoned. The rapid industrialisation of the district brought in its wake, inter alia, factors which limited the scope of cottage industries both at the district and village level.

(b) **Power :**

Undivided Lakhimpur district has high power potential based on water, natural gas, coal and oil. The hydro-power resources of the Brahmaputra itself is 30 million kw. at 60% load factor on the basis of minimum discharge.[7]. This together with the hydro-power resources of the tributaries of the Brahmaputra represents a large concentration of hydro-power potential in the State.

Till Independence, the pace of industrialization of the country being very slow, power supply also hardly made any noticeable progress. Not to speak of the rural areas, the urban people in most of the towns of the undivided Lakhimpur district were used to kerosene lights for want of power. The operation of kerosene lights in the streets of small towns is still fresh in the public memory.

Prior to the enactment of the Electricity (Supply) Act, 1948, control over the supply and use of electrical energy in India was governed by the provisions of the Indian Electricity Act, 1910. That Act provided for the grant of licences for supplying electrical energy, construction of electric supply lines and other works with a view to ensure safety of life and property and generally for regulating relations between the licence holders and the consumers in respect of rates and other conditions of supply. There was however no provision in the Act relating to the rationalisation of production and supply of electricity and to coordinate its activities in the private sector. As its development was not properly planned electricity was made available only to prosperous urban areas, the rural areas remaining completely herself of its benefits. To remove all these defects, and to create conditions necessary for urgent and rapid development of electric power supply all over the country and to ensure its expansion in a planned manner the Electric Supply Act was passed in 1948. Since then high priorities were given during the Five Year Plans to step up the generation of power in the country to a considerable extent.

7. *Assam After Independence*, (1966), p. 35.

Two private electric supply companies were operating at Dibrugarh and Tinsukia. The table below shows the installed capacity and electricity generated by the Dibrugarh Electricity Supply Co., Ltd., and Tinsukia Electric Supply Company Ltd.

Installed capacity on	Dibrugarh Electric Supply Co., Ltd.	Tinsukia Electric Supply Co., Ltd.
31.3.56	775 K.W.	Nil
31.3.61	1077.50 K.W.	650 K.W.
31.3.66	1277.50-100 K.W. Purchased from A.S.E.B.	650 K.W.
Electricity generated		
31.3.56	146363 KWH	Nil
31.3.61	2219075 KWH	1328835 KWH
31.3.66	3275159 KWH	1998563 KWH

These two companies were taken over by the State Electricity Board in 1972. Over and above these, the Assam Oil Company, Digboi, Oil India Ltd., Duliajan and Assam Railway and Trading Company Ltd., Margherita have their own electric supply units. These Companies are generating current mainly for their own use but sometimes they supply small amounts of current for public use.

The Department of Electricity came into being in Assam in 1951 and with the constitution of the State Electricity Board in 1958 several projects, including the Namrup Thermal Project were taken up.

During the first phase of electrification of towns, small diesel stations were installed by the State Electricity Department with a view to meet the requirements of the population of small towns. Two diesel stations one at North-Lakhimpur and the other at Doom Dooma were started in 1957-58 with an installed capacity of 200 kw. and 150 kw. respectively.

The State Electricity Board embarked upon a scheme of electrification of the towns and villages of the district. Among places which have been electrified mention may be made of Chabua (1958), Makum, Barbari (1954), Namrup, Tipling T. E. (1968-69), Tingkhong T. E. (1968-69), Saikhowaghat (1968-69), Namrup Railway Station (1968), Margherita (1969), Panitola, Jaypur, Kathiatali, Ledo, Duliajan, Digboi, Dinjoy (1971), Mankata (1970), Dirak (1970), Nawholia (1969), Khowang (1968), Talap Bazar (1969), Bardubi (1969), Rajabheta (1970), Parbatpur (1968-69), Lekhapani (1969), Lahowal (1968-69), Dillighat (1969), Nirmaligaon (1969), Chaulkhowa (1970), Bairagimath (1969), Niz Kadamani (1969), Niz Mankata (1969), Niz Khanikar (1969), Kanjikhowa T. E. (1969), Barbama (1968), Niz Tengakhat T. E. (1971), Dighaltarang T. E. (1971-72), Tengapani T. E. (1971-72), Pawai T. E. (1971-72), Kumaranisiga (1971-72), Tipamia (1969), Doania village (1970), Patragaon (1970), Kakapathar (1970), and Tipam (1966).[8]

Under the Rural Electrification Scheme, the Rural Electrification Corporation sanctioned in 1971, a sum of Rs. 86.3 lakhs for undivided Lakhimpur district. The scheme envisaged electrification of 116 villages, setting up of 68 irrigation pumps, supply of power to 132 agro-industrial consumers, 38 tea estates, and installation of about 6000 domestic connections. The total consumption of power was estimated at 10 M. W. A special feature of rural electrification scheme is to induce the villagers to go for power irrigation for which the State Electricity Board of Assam has offered to draw lines free of cost within a reasonable distance from the high voltage lines, subject to a minimum consumption of power.

Namrup Thermal Power Plant : Oil struck in the Naharkatiya area abounds in natural gas, but the associated natural gas is dependent on the extraction of crude oil and when the off-take of crude oil by the refineries goes up to 2¾ million tons per year, the production of associated gas that will be available for utilisation after meeting the requirements of oil fields, is very conservatively estimated at about 50 million cubic feet per day.

An expert Committee constituted by the Government of India to report on the utilisation of Naharkatiya natural gas, recommended a thermal power station with gas turbines, along with other gas based industrial installations for timely and proper utilization of natural gas. In May 1962, the Assam State Electricity Board started installation of a thermal power station at Namrup, initially containing three gas turbine generating units of 23000 K. W. each, to be later augmented by one 23000 K.W. gas turbine and two 23000 K.W. steam turbine units, totalling a station installed capacity of about 1,40,000 K. W. and consuming about 18 million cft. of natural gas per day at 57 percent load factor.[9] The total outlay of this project is Rs. 14.75 crores of which Rs. 12.5 crores was to be expended in the first phase. The plant was commissioned in April 1965.

The plant site at Namrup is only 10 miles from the oil field and five miles from Namrup Railway station. Availability of suitable and abundant gas supply without excessive pipeline requirements, nearness to railhead, existing road facilities, central location in respect of existing and anticipated road network and proximity to some coal mines were some of the factors considered in selecting the site.

8. Figures in brackets indicate the year of installation.
9. *Namrup Thermal Project Supplement* : The Assam Tribune dated 16th April, 1965.

Sufficient high lands above the flood level were available to accommodate both the Thermal and Fertilizer Projects and other industries which it was expected, would come up in future. It was also envisaged to set up several petro-chemical industries utilizing natural gas around Naharkatiya. As these will be within easy reach of oil and gas producing wells an industrial complex is likely to grow up ultimately in the area. The power project is the key project for this integrated industrial development scheme, which includes the fertilizer plant, furnace black and acrylic fibre factories all based on natural gas. The gas line of the power Project takes off from the proximity of Naharkatiya well No. 35 about 1¼ miles from Naharkatiya Station. The gas seperation Plant of Oil India is only 11 miles from the Power Station.

The power from this plant is available to different industries based on natural gas of which the Namrup Fertilizer Plant is the most important. Other beneficiaries are the tea estate factories, Assam Railways and Trading Company of Margherita and Ledo, Plywood factories and Assam Oil Company at Digboi. Other industries and consumers of the whole of Upper Assam will also be able to utilize the power from this plant. For this purpose, a vast network of 66 K. V., 38 K. V. and 11 K. V. transmission and subtransmission lines which will transmit and distribute power from Ledo on the east to Bokajan on the west, has also been installed. The main transmission and subtransmission lines are (1) 66 K. V. Double circuit line from Namrup to Golaghat via, Nazira and Mariani 103 miles, (2) 66 K. V. Double circuit line from Namrup to Tinsukia 30 miles, (3) 66 K. V. Single circuit line from Tinsukia to Dibrugarh 34 miles, (4) 66 K. V. Single circuit line from Golaghat to Bokajan 40 miles, (5) 33 K. V. and 11 K. V. sub-transmission lines 117 and 118 miles resprectively.

In order to distribute power, several grid substations and other distributing sub-stations have also been installed. The associated 66 K.V. grid sub-stations are at Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Nazira, Mariani, Golaghat and Bokajan, and 33 K. V. sub-stations are provided at Moran, Nazira, Jorhat, Doom-Dooma, Digboi, Margherita and other places. Special care has been taken in the alignment of transmission and distribution lines so that major industrial areas, tea estates and other consuming centres fall within easy reach of the system.

(c) Industries and manufactures of the district :

(i) **Mining Industries** :—Petroleum Industry : Upper Assam is well known as an oil area. The oil found in this area has led to the installation of four oil refineries in India-the first at Digboi, the second at Gauhati, the third at Bongaigaon (All in Assam), and the fourth at Barauni in Bihar. The existence of petroleum in this area was first discovered in the year 1828 by Lieutenant Wilcox and Mr. C. A. Bruce and in

1837 Major White also reported to have located several oil springs on the Namrup river. The lease of oil bearing strata was first given to Mr. Wagentriber, a tea planter of the Lakhimpur district, who in 1854, was granted certain rights over the oil springs at Makum and at Bapupung in the neighbourhood. But no steps were taken by him to develop the area. On the expiry of the above lease, a concession for exploration of oil was granted to Mr. Goodenough, of the firm of Mc. Killop, Stewart, and Company to bore for oil over an area of about 700 sq. miles, between the Buri and Noa-Dihings. Borings were commenced at Naharpung and Makum, and a plant valued at about half a lakh of rupee was erected near the wells ; but the death of Mr. Goodenough shortly thereafter, led to the discontinuance of the work.[10]

In 1865 a Government geologist was deputed to visit the coal areas of Assam. He reported that experimental borings should be made to test the value of an oil show at Makum, south of the Dihing river. Thus began the first boring for oil in Assam near an oil "seepage" at Naharpung three miles east of Jaipur in November, 1866. The hole bored by hand power, reached a depth of 102 feet but failed to strike oil. The first successful strike at oil took place at Makum near Margherita on 26th March 1867 at a depth of 118 feet, and about 300 gallons of oil were collected. This well was the first successful mechanically drilled oil well in Asia, though it had only a brief life. Following this as many as eight holes seem to have been bored in the Makum area, some of them being successful producers of oil. In 1869, 100 to 125 gallons a day were collected from the No-4 well and 550 to 650 gallons a day from well No.5.

Subsequently Messrs Balmer Laurie and Company, a syndicate of private gentlemen and the Assam Railways and Trading Company were granted certain rights. In 1882 while constructing the railway line from Dibrugarh to Ledo, petroleum was discovered at Digboi and the exploitation of fields was started by the Assam Railway and Trading Company in 1889. The first well at Digboi drilled in 1889-90 marked the birth of the oil industry in India. The total depth of this well was 662 feet. The company also established small refineries of an experimental character first at Digboi in 1893 and later at Margherita in 1896. In 1899 by which time 14 wells had been drilled, the Assam Oil Company was formed and in the following year the new Company with a capital of £310000 came into existence with the object of taking over the Oil concessions and the plant of the syndicate and of the Assam Railway and Trading Company. As the oil wells near Digboi gave more favourable results, a large refinery was erected by the Assam Oil Company near the oil bearing strata and gradually the jungle was reclaimed to make room

10, B. C. Allen ; *Assam District Gazetters, Lakhimpur*. pp, 193-194.

for the beautiful oil town of Digboi. Oil Refinery at Digboi started functioning in December 1901 and supplemented the refinery built earlier at Margherita. But lack of adequate finance stood in the way of further expansion of the Company's (A.O.C.) activities and as a result the production of oil declined to 14000 gallons per day in 1920 from 18000 gallons per day in 1919.

By 1920, after years of urgent drilling for more oil, the Company completed only 80 wells and the time came when it could not carry on without strong financial backing. The Burma Oil Company, in 1921, took over the management of the Assam Oil Company and with it came the much needed financial backing, technical skill and organisational experience. Production gradually rose to 30000 gallons per day in 1925 and to 180000 gallons per day in 1931.[11] It is pertinent to record that during 1931 the Digboi Oil field met about 11.5% of the crude requirements of the then undivided Indian Empire which included Burma[12] During the period from 1934 to 1952, the production of the Assam Oil Company remained more or less static varying from 184 to 187 thousand gallons per day, owing to the difficulty of increasing the output from the depleting oil fields.

More than 1000 wells have been drilled in the area. The Digboi Refinery produces an unusually wide variety of petroleum products. Till 1966 more than a million tonnes of crude oil had been supplied by the Digboi Oil fields and the current production stands between 170000 to 180000 tonnes a year. The oil reserves which have been exploited continuously for a period of 70 years are expected to be exhausted within the eighties of this century. The crude is refined in the Company's oil refinery at Digboi which till recently was the only source of supply of petroleum in India. The Refinery has an annual capacity of 0.46 millions of crude and the balance of its crude requirement is met from the supplies of Naharkatiya and Moran fields. In fact the Refinery has been using the Naharkatiya crude oil since 1954.[13]

Naharkatiya and Moran Oil Fields : The next and the most important oil field in the district has been discovered at Naharkatiya. Others Oil Fields have also been discovered at Hoogrijan and Moran. The discovery of oil at Naharkatiya was a momentous event in the history of the Indian petroleum industry ; for it opened up a new vista of oil exploration in the alluvial areas within the country.

11. P. C. Goswami: *The Economic Development of Assam*, pp, 159-90.
12. Y. B. Metre and Y. Nagappa : *Oil Prospects In India*, p. 7.
13. *Industrial Programmes For the Fourth Plan For Assam* by National Council of Applied Economic Research, p. 26.

"The new discovery is of such importance that more than 50 percent of India's present requirements of petroleum, may eventually come from the new oil fields in place of the present supply of about 8 percent from the Digboi fields".[14]. Naharkatiya is situated on the bank of the Buri-Dihing river about 25 miles north-east of Digboi. In contrast to Digboi, the region is very flat and less densely forested. The road from Digboi to Naharkatiya winds through picturesque country dotted with village huts and paddy fields. The Buri-Dihing zigzags its way in a south-east to north-west direction through the oil fields.

Geophysical work in the Naharkatiya area was undertaken as early as 1923, when the method of exploration was still in its infancy. When it became feasible to drill wells below 10,000 feet, some seismic work was carried out in the area to locate the most favourable site for drilling the first well. But World War II, intervened and the Government imposed a moratorium and prohibited exploratory drilling except for providing the extension of the Digboi field. However, after the war a prospecting licence was granted to the Assam Oil Company to resume exploration works.

Preparation for exploration of oil at Naharkatiya was made in the year 1951 and drilling of well No. 1 at Naharkatiya commenced on May, 26, 1952. In February 1953 the well was 9740 feet deep—600 feet deeper than any well previously drilled in India. Drilling continued and the first major event of interest occurred when rock cutting from 9700 feet showed slight signs of oil. Soon afterwards the well gave promise of being a satisfactory producer from around 10000 feet and the drilling in the well was continued to a depth of 11715 feet. This success of well No. 1 at Naharkatiya generated new hopes for an extensive programme of geophysical survey over the entire alluvial areas of Upper Assam. Later on, to accelerate the drilling, roads and bridges were constructed and a new temporary colony was created on both banks of the Buri-Dihing and a pipe line to Digboi was laid.

Seventy five wells were drilled up to December 1960. The deepest well in the area is 13060 feet and the record of the fastest drilling was achieved at well No. Naharkatiya 38, where drilling to the depth of 2393 ft. was completed in eight hours in 1958. The number of wells drilled in the Naharkatiya area rose to 144 in August 1964.

The Moran Oil field lies about 25 miles southwest of Naharkatiya and 30 wells were drilled in the area till August 1964. The region is flat and dotted with several tea gardens. The National Highway connecting Dibrugarh and Sibsagar runs through Moranhat about 23 miles from Dibrugarh. The discovery of Oil at Naharkatiya accelerated the

14. P. C. Goswami—*The Economic Development of Assam*, 1963, pp. 160-61.

rate of oil exploration and led in 1956 to the drilling of a test well on a seismic 'high' about 5 miles from Moranhat. This well, drilled to a depth of 13739 feet and completed in about 6 months struck oil and heralded the opening of the Moran oil field. But owing to the greater depth of oil bearing strata in the area drilling takes much longer time at Moran than at Naharkatiya.

Drilling speed attained in the Naharkatiya and Moran Oil Fields (on an average it takes 10-15 days to drill a 10000 feet well) compares favourably with the best speed attained elsewhere in the world. A few wells have been successfully 'deviated' to tap oil resources beneath the Dihing river. The oil well No. 140 at Naharkatiya was drilled 10500 feet in an inclined manner several thousand feet away from the main hole. This method was adopted by Mr. Lyle Perry, an American expert, in drilling three such wells at Naharkatiya.

The estimated gross reserves of oil in the Naharkatiya and Moran Fields are 48.87 million tonnes.[15] The oil fields are being developed by the Oil India (Private) Ltd., to produce 3.01 million tonnes of crude annually to be processed in the refineries at Digboi and Gauhati in Assam and at Barauni in Bihar.

Oil field	Annual crude supply (Million tonnes)	Refinery
Naharkatiya	0.26	Digboi
Naharkatiya	0.75	Gauhati
Naharkatiya	1.40	Barauni
Moran	0.60	Barauni
Total—	3.01	

All the wells drilled by the Assam Oil Company so far in Naharkatiya and Moran area are under Oil India (Private) Ltd. This new company, Oil India (Private) Ltd., which is the outcome of a partnership between the Govt. of India and the Burmah Oil Company Ltd. of which the Assam Oil Company Ltd. is a subsidiary, was registered as a company at Shillong on 18th February, 1959 to exploit the crude oil from the new fields of Naharkatiya and Moran and to sell the crude oil to the new public sector refineries established at Noonmati (Gauhati) and Barauni. The Burmah Oil Company which held two thirds of the shares in the new company (one third being had by the Government of India) agreed to provide the necessary foreign exchange for constructing the pipe lines and making other facilities available. Subsequently, the partnership of the company was revised. The share participation of the Government of India has now gone upto 50 per cent while the rest is held by the

15. *Industrial Programmes For the Fourth Plan For Assam* by National Council of Applied Economic Research p. 26-27.

Burmah Oil Company. The Oil India Private Limited Company which typifies the co-operation between Private and Public Sectors has given a new dimension to the national industrial policy. In 1963 the total area of operation of the Company in Naharkatiya, Naharkatiya—Extension, Hoogrijan and Moran covered by the Mining lease was about 510.35 square miles. The Doom-Dooma prospecting exploration licence area under the company consisted of about 1291 square miles.

Oil India Pipe Line Project:—To transport crude oil, the Oil India has constructed a 1152 Kms. (720 miles) long pipeline from Naharkatiya to Barauni. This pipe line crosses the difficult terrain in Assam, linking the oil fields in Upper Assam with refineries at Gauhati and Barauni. The pipe line which crosses 78 rivers including the mighty river Brahmaputra was completed in two stages. In the first stage a 16 inch pipe line was laid over a distance of 400 Km. extending from Naharkatiya to Gauhati. It was completed in April 1962. In the second stage a 14 inch pipe line was laid from Gauhati to Barauni. This covered a distance of 752 Km. and was made ready in February 1963. In all there are one pumping and 17 repeater stations. The pipe line is capable of carrying 2.75 million tonnes of crude a year upto Gauhati and 2.00 million tonnes a year there after to Barauni. But with greater number of pumping stations the pipe line can carry upto 4.00 million tonnes of crude oil per year to Gauhati and 3.25 million tonnes per year in its second leg.

Crude Conditioning Plant:—A crude oil conditioning plant has been established at Duliajan in 1962 by the Oil India (Private) Ltd. at a cost of Rs. 1.60 crores. The plant will facilitate pumping of Naharkatiya crude oil. This started operating at its 25% capacity before the Barauni Refinery went on steam. In this conditioning plant crude oil is processed and pumped into the pipeline for onward transmission to the refineries.

The waxy nature of the crude oil from the Naharkatiya and Moran fields, with a pour point varying between 270 and 380 posed a serious problem of its transportation. But in collaboration with Burmah Oil Company Ltd., and British Petroleum in London, a process was evolved of making this crude flow even at very low underground temperatures. The crude was heated to about 90°c to 100°c to dissolve all wax nuclei and then cooled to bring it to the size and shape of wax crystals The jellying tendency was modified to the extent necessary to keep it in a liquid state even at very low temperature. A pilot plant was rigged up to determine the optimum rate of cooling to produce minimum viscosity. The crude is first heated and then cooled down to 65°c by incoming raw crude in exchangers in the plants. The crude at 65°c is then pumped into vertical vassels, when it

is cooled, at a predetermined rate. Thus 'conditioned' it is pumped into the crude storage tanks for subsequent pumping into the pipeline for despatches to refineries. During the cooling period, the desired cooling curve is obtained by a time schedule controller working in conjunction with a temperature recorder. A high degree of automation has been introduced in the design of the plant which can be fully operated from a control room. The main purpose of this plant is to keep the crude 'thin' enough for pumping. A similar plant involving expenditure of Rs. 60 lakhs has been set up at Moran in Dibrugarh district.

Industries based on Natural Gas : Natural gas reserve discovered so far in the Naharkatiya and Moran Oil fields are stated to be of the order of 79,0000 million cubic feet. A large proportion of this gas reserve is made up of associated gas and only 8 wells, 7 in Naharkatiya and 1 in Moran, are described as gas producers. The daily out-put is expected to be of the order of 100 million cubic feet, of which about 20 million cubic feet would be consumed by the oil fields themselves. As the oil and gas will be required to be separated in stages, the composition and the quantum of gas will also vary from stage to stage. However, the average analysis of the gas can be taken as follows[16] :-

Gas	Percent
Methane	90.40
Ethane	5.08
Propane	2.84
Isobutane	0.47
N-Butane	0.66
Isopentane, N-Pentanes, Hexenes-X	0.55
CO_2	Nil
H_2S	Nil

The Assam Gas Company which is a State Government undertaking has been formed to undertake the distribution of the gas to various users as well as to set up a Gas Fractionating Plant to provide a base for possible petro-chemical industries. To utilize this gas, a thermal power station with 63 MW capacity has been established at Namrup. At Namrup the Fertilizer Corporation of India has constructed a Fertilizer factory to produce 100,000 tonnes of ammonium sulphate and 55,000 tonnes of urea per year.

A Tindari Gas Grid has been formed to supply gas to a number of tea gardens of Tingrai circle for running factories and other allied

16. *Industrial Programmes For the Fourth Plan For Assam* by National Council of Applied Economic Research, p. 28-29.

works. The daily requirement of gas in the above undertakings will be of the order of 32 million cubic feet ; Namrup Thermal Power Station 18 million, Namrup Fertilizer 8 million and Tindari Gas Grid 6 million cubic feet. The expansion programme of Namrup Thermal Power Station by another 23 MW and the production of 10000 tonnes of carbon black, for which the licence has already been issued, will require another 11 million cubic feet of gas per day.

The Assam Petro-Chemical Limited : The foundation stone of this concern was laid at Namrup on the 15th June, 1971. The Government of India issued a Letter of Intent to Assam Industrial Development Corporation on May 29, 1963 for establishing a petro-chemical complex for manufacture of the following items :

1. Methanol—7,000 tonnes per *annum*
2. Formalin—12,000 tonnes per *annum*
3. Urea formaldehyde glue
(a) 50% Conc.—12,000 tonnes per *annum*
(b) 75% Conc.—1,000 tonnes per *annum*
4. Urea-formaldehyde moulding powder—1,000 tonnes per *annum*
(5) PVC processed goods—6,000 tonnes per *annnm*.

Initially, the Assam Industrial Development Corporation carried out all the promotional activities needed for the successful and expeditious implementation of the project. On April 22, 1971, a new company under the name and style, "The Assam Petro-Chemicals Limited" was registered at Shillong for execution of the project and for taking up the management of this new undertaking. Possibilities are also being explored for the manufacture of melamine, hydrocyanic acid, methylmethacrylate etc., in the second phase by the "Assam Petro-Chemical Limited."

The main raw materials required for this project are natural gas, urea and Carbon Dioxide. Natural gas will be utilized for the production of methanol as well as fuel. The annual requirement of natural gas, urea and carbon dioxide is about 15 million standard cubic metres, 5,000 tonnes and 2,500 tonnes respectively. The Assam Gas Company will supply the natural gas. Urea and carbon dioxide are available from the Fertilizer Factory of Namrup. The power requirement is about 3 MW and will be made available from Assam State Electricity Board. The requirement of water for the factory and the township is of the order of 0.5 million gallons per day and it will be available from the Fertilizer Corporation of India and the Assam State Electricity Board.

The Project envisages the manufacture of methanol from natural gas and conversion of methanol to formaldehyde. This formaldehyde by reacting with urea which will be available from the Namrup Fertilizer

Plant, will produce Urea-formaldehyde glue and moulding powder. Although the products menthanol and formalin will be for captive consumption, these two products can also be sold to other consumers if it gives better profit than converting to synthetic glue and moulding powder. Thus the project has got great flexibility in marketing the products.

The site of the complex was selected at Namrup mainly in consideration of the availability of raw material and the proximity of the plywood industries which will be the main consumer of synthetic glue. The project, excluding the manufacture of PVC processed goods, has been estimated to cost about Rs. 5 crores. The machinery, equipment, and materials (including import duty and other charges) will cost about Rs. 280 lakhs. Of this, the total foreign exchange cost is estimated at Rs. 130 lakhs.

The project is being implemented in collaboration with a Japanese Consortium. M/S. Japan Gas-chemical Company Inc., Tokyo, Japan, will provide technical assistance and supervision during erection and commissioning and project engineering. The detailed engineering of imported machinery, inspection, procurement of machinery and materials from Japan will be accomplished through two other Japanese firms. The plants have been designed on the basis of the processes of M/S. Japan Gas-Chemical Company, Inc., Tokyo. M/S. Industrial Consulting Bureau (P) Ltd., Bombay, has been entrusted with the task of working out detailed design and engineering of the indigenous equipment including supervision during erection and commissioning of the plants.

There is a good demand of urea-formaldehyde glue in Assam as it is used by plywood industries. Moulding powder is used by the plastic industries for manufacture of various utility articles. At present, glue is supplied to various plywood industries in Assam from Calcutta, Faridabad and Bombay. The present price of glue in Assam (powder from solid content being 96 per cent and 5 per cent moisture) varies from Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 5,700 per ton. This price is inclusive of excise duty, sales tax and freight charges. The excise duty is about 36 per cent and sales tax is 3 per cent. The price of glue is very high in Assam. Once the glue is locally available and at reasonable price, the demand of glue will increase considerably.

There are many plywood industries in Assam and almost all of them are situated in Upper Assam. There are immense possibilities in the State for factories to manufacture chip board, particle board, etc. With the availability of glue locally it would be possible for the existing plywood industries to expand their production and this would give a great impetus to exploit the forest resources of the State and also lead to the development of a number of other industries based on forest

produce. Even chipped off wastes of timbers can be converted into water proof building materials with synthetic glue.

The availability of Urea formaldehyde moulding powder will encourage establishment of a number of plastic processing industries in the State.

Methanol : Methanol and formaldehyde are closely related products. A larger percentage of methanol used as a raw material for the production of formaldehyde. At present, methanol is only manufactured in India by the Fertilizer Corporation of India at Trombay. A Fertilizer plant having an annual capacity of 33,000 tonnes was started in 1967 using naphtha as raw material. Its production in 1970 was 21,280 tonnes methanol. This production is inadequate compared to demand. The requirement of methanol for formaldehyde units, therefore, has been continuously met by imports.

The demand for methanol in India is estimated by the Petro-chemical Committee at about 60,000 tonnes in 1973-74. Of this quantity, about 38,000 tonnes would be used for the manufacture of formaldehyde.

Besides as a raw-material for formaldehyde, methanol is also required for a wide range of products such as paints, synthetic resins, polyster fibres, etc. It also finds application in aircrafts, medicines and as a solvent.

It will be possible to supply about 2,000 tonnes methanol per *annum*. to the proposed polyster fibre plant to be established at Bongaigaon.

Methanol can be supplied to consumers in tank wagons, special vessels and drums.

Formalin : Formaldehyde solution which is usually sold in the market contains 37 percent formaldehyde, 55 per cent water and 8 per cent methanol and it is technically known as 'Formalin'.

Over 95 percent of formalin is consumed as a raw material for the manufacture of synthetic glue, moulding powder and synthetic melamine-formaldehyde glue, phenol formaldehyde glue, cresol-formaldehyde glue, xylene-formaldehyde glue, various types of moulding powder and polyvinyl alcohol (PVA) fibre.

Formalin is also used for the manufacture of hexamine, pent-aerythritol for textile, etc.

Hexamine which is the trade name of "Hexamethylene tetramine" is a white crystalline powder manufactured with formali and ammonia as the main raw-material. It is extensively used as a hardener for urea formaldehyde glue and phenol-formaldehyde glue, foaming agent and vulcanizing accelerator for rubber, and explosives.

Pent-aerythritol is manufactured from formalin and acetaldehyde and is used mainly in synthetic glue, paint and as a plasticiser in the manufacture of vinyl chloride.

Formalin is usually sold to the consumers in tank wagons, special vessel, and drums. For long distance transportation, formalin is conveniently transported as paraformaldehyde in paper bags which is 80 percent formaldehyde and is a white solid substance manufactured by means of condensing formalin. Paraformaldehyde which has a large demand for the same as formalin, also finds use as insecticides, disinfectant and antiseptic.

At present, the production of formalin in India is too small compared to demand and this is mainly due to the shortage of methanol. Therefore, a considerable quantity of paraformaldehyde is now imported.

The demand of formalin in India is estimated at about 76,000 tonnes in 1973-74 by the Petro-Chemical Committee.

Melamine : Melamine is a very important plastic material and also has wide use in the manufacture of melamine resins which are used for moulding powder, textile industry, laminated board etc. Melamine can be used for the manufacture of plastic utility articles such as in cups, plates, tumblers, etc.

Currently, over 5,000 tonnes of melamine are being imported every year into India there being no indigenous manufacture. This demand will, however, gradually increase when melamine is manufactured and made available within the country.

The main raw-materials for the manufacture of melamine are ammonia and urea and these will be easily available from the Namrup Fertilizer Plant.

Methyl Methacrylate : Methyl methacrylate (MMA) is a very important plastic and has very wide uses including those of defence requirements. The raw materials required for the manufacture of methyl methacrylate are hydrocyanic acid, methanol, ammonia, natural gas sulphuric acid and acetone. Except for acetone which has to be brought from Bombay other raw materials will be available at Namrup. The Assam Petro-Chemical Limited is also planning to set up an acetone plant in Assam using refinery off-gas or other suitable substance. Acetone has to be carried from Bombay for a few years in the initital stage.

Hydrocyanic acid will be manufactured by catalytic synthesis between ammonia, natural gas and air. Hydroacetone forms acetone cynohydrin. This intermediate product when reacted with acetone in presence of sulphuric acid forms methyl methacrylate monomer. This being a monomer, needs refining to obtain a pure product.

When the monomer is polymerised, it produces methyl-methacrylate polymer,a pure substance which can be utilized for manufacturing sheets, pellets, rods, etc. Methyl-methacrylate which is a thermo-plastic product is "artificial glass" and generally known as wind-resisting glass or organic glass, and is called the "Queen of Plastics" because of its weather-resisting, chemical resisting properties, its transparency and its beautiful lustre. It is widely used in advertising boards, buildings, lighting appliances and industrial equipments.

The manufacture of methyl methacrylate in Assam will meet the demand of India for quite some years and save foreign exchange to a considerable extent.[17]

The establishment of this Project will lay the foundation and form the nucleus for various industries to come up in the near future in the small-scale sector in the form of ancillary and processing industries.

With the planned development of various industries, based on petroleum resources of the district there will be a profound change in the economy of North-eastern India and the sluggish economy of Assam will vibrate with a new life and vitality.

Namrup Fertilizer Project : Fertilizer is an important input which is essential for increased agricultural production. Any programme for increased agricultural production in Assam will have to be based upon fertilizer consumption, irrigational facilities and supply of high yielding varieties of seeds. In Assam, where the scope of expansion of area under cultivation is very limited, emphasis is given on these three factors. The installation of the fertilizer factory at Namrup is a momentous venture in the agro-industrial sector of Assam.

The discovery of a reserve of 790,000 million cubic feet of natural gas in the Naharkatiya and Moran oil fields during the late fifties of this century led to various enquiries about the use of the gas. The government of India appointed M/S Snodgrass Associate of the United States to study the prospects of the proper utilisation of the gas. Their report disclosed that the natural gas can be used to manufacture nitrogenous fertilizer and for generation of electricity. The Kane Committee made the final scrutiny of the plan and selected Namrup as the site of the fertiliser factory. The site was finalised in 1962 and an import licence was issued in the same year. The government of India assigned the work to M/S Hindusthan Chemical and Fertilisers. When the Fertiliser Corporation of India came into being it was entrusted with the implementation of the scheme.

Namrup is situated at the foot-hills of the Naga Hills in the eastern part of Dibrugarh district. This industrial town is surrounded by tea

17. R. N. Das : *Assam Petro-Chemical Ltd.* An article published in the *Assam Tribune* dated 15th June, 1971.

gardens beyond which the green field stretches for miles. The Dilli river, a tributary of the Brahmaputra flows nearby.

The Namrup Fertiliser factory is owned by the Fertiliser Corporation of India Ltd. and is its fifth producing unit. It is the only plant of the Fertiliser Corporation of India where natural gas is used as raw material. The gas is made available by M/S Oil India Ltd, at a pressure of 10-15 Kg Cm^2_3 to the Assam Gas Company which is a State government undertaking. In the Assam Gas Company the pressure is further boosted to 25 Kg. and is supplied to battery unit of the Fertiliser Plant at a distance of 30 Km. by pipeline at a pressure of 15-16 Kg/Cm^2_3. The same pipeline supplies gas to the nearby Thermal Power Station and to some tea gardens. Sulphur is the other raw material which is imported through the State Trading Corporation.

The factory is designed to produce annually 55,000 metric tonnes of Urea, and 100,000 metric tonnes of Ammonium Sulphate. The total capital outlay is of the order of Rs. 24.26 crores including foreign exchange components of Rs. 6.36 crores. It went into commercial production from Jannuary 1, 1969. At the end of 1971, the factory produced 310 metric tonnes of Ammonium Sulphate, 168 metric tonnes of Urea and 268 metric tonnes of sulphuric Acid, per working day. The plant has completed its third year on the 1st January 1972. The production performance is given below.

	Production in tonnes		
	1969-70	1970-71	1971-72
Ammonium Sulphate	68,000	63,000	57,000
Urea	18,700	31,000	39,000

With the rapid rise in the demand for fertilizers the need for setting up another fertilizer factory in Assam was almost imperative. Techno-economic surveys conducted to find out suitability of various locations revealed that the expansion of the existing factory at Namrup had an edge over the erection of a new factory in any other location. The expansion project was approved in 1967 and construction work commenced in 1968. This plant has the distinction of being the first plant in which the Fertiliser Corporation of India handled major erection works covering a wide range of machinery and equipments.

Though this project has been termed as "Expansion" virtually it is a factory by iteself having an installed capacity of 1,52,000 tonnes of nitrogen and 3,30,000 tonnes of Urea per year. The capital outlay of the project is Rs. 51 crores including a foreign exchange component of over Rs. 17 crores. Some of the important features of the existing plant and the expansion plant are given below :-

	Existing Plant	Expansion Plant
Ammonium Plant-	Capacity-200 tonnes per day ; laid in two equal and independent streams.	Capacity-600 tonnes per day ; laid in single streams.
Urea Plant-	Capacity-167 tonnes per day ; laid in two equal and independent streams.	Capacity-100 tonnes per day ; laid in two equal and independent streams.
Nitrogen -	45000 tonnes per annum	152,000 tonnes per annum
Power requirement :	14 MW	19 MW
Capital Cost	Rs. 24.6 crores	Rs. 51 crores approximately. 10,500
Total tonnage-	8000	

Namrup Fertilizer factory is the first Indian fertilizer factory to use indigenous Catalysts developed by the Planning and Development Division of the Fertilizer Corporation of India.

About 60 to 80 percent of Ammonium Sulphate and 20 percent of Urea produced in Namrup Fertilizer Factory are used in Assam. The surplus is sold in West Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. The Namrup Fertilizer Project has a wide network of marketing organisation. One Area office of the marketing organisation has been opened at Namrup to cater to the needs of Dibrugarh, Lakhimpur and Sibsagar districts. The Fertilizer Corporation of India has appointed ten normal traders and three educated unemployed persons as dealers in Dibrugarh district. No dealer was appointed in Lakhimpur district till the end of the year, 1972. For dissemination of technical know-how, literature on various uses of fertilizers is prepared by the organisation and distributed among the farmers. Other activities of the marketing branch of the Corporation include soil testing, organising demonstrations, fertilizer festivals and *Krishi Melas*, holding film shows and group discussions and exhibitions. Total number of soil samples analysed by this organisation stood at 7908 at the end of 1971-72.[18]

Coal Industry : The coal industry in the undivided Lakhimpur district is more than one hundred years old. The existence of coal deposits in Upper Assam had been known from the early days of the British occupation of the State.[19] It is mentioned in the old Gazetteer

18. *Namrup Fertilizer Project Supplements* published in The *Assam Tribune* dated 1st January, 1972 and 1973.
19. For details of early history of coal, see *Assam District Gazetteers, Lakhimpur*, 1905 by B.C. Allen, p. 186-193.

of Lakhimpur that in 1825, Lieutenant Wilcok reported that coal was found near Borhat on the Disang river. In 1828 about 5000 manunds of coal were quarried by Mr. Bruce and dispatched to Calcutta. The coal was "pronounced to be equal to English coal and the best ever found in India".[20] But it took time to develop this industry. A geological survey of the coal fields was undertaken by Mr. Medlicott in 1864-65. In 1876, Mr. Mallet who examined the coal fields of Nagaland, divided the coal measures of Lakhimpur into two fields, Makum and Jaipur. According to him, Makum coal field contained about eighteen million tons of coals about half of which could be exploited easily but no progress worth mentioning in the exploitation of this mineral could be made until the formation of the Assam Railways and Trading Company in 1881.

Makum coal field : Makum coal field near Margherita is 30 Km. long and about 5 Km. wide between the Dirak on the west and the hairpin bend of the Tirap river on the east. At least five workable seams of coal successively, 21.0m, 2.3m, 1.6m and 2.1m thick, are well developed with in the basal of 200 m strata of Tikak Parbat stage. The coal seams extend eastward from the Namdang, along the two opposite limbs of the east plunging Namdang syncline. The south limb of the syncline is obscured, at places by the Haflong-Disang thrust and consequently the coal seams extending along this are either highly distorted or totally cut off at intervals.[21]

At present working collieries in the Makum area, are at Ledo, Namdang, Tipong and Borgolai. These collieries are situated in a line along the lower hills about four miles south of Margherita. The coal field at Ledo (at Tikak, Ledo valley and Upper Ledo) was discovered in 1882 and since then it is producing coal of good quality. The work at Namdang and Tirap grants which formerly belonged to Mr. Haly and which paid a small dead rent in place of royalty, began in 1897 and 1898 respectively. The collieries at Borgolai and Tipong were established in 1909 and 1924.

All these collieries are located near railway stations. The Borgolai colliery is located near the Borgolai railway station, Ledo colliery near the Ledo railway station, Tipong colliery near the Lekhapani railway station and Namdang colliery near the Margherita railway station. The Assam Railway and Trading Company, Margherita has been working the coal seams through these different collieries since 1884. The collieries Department of this company is administered by the Chief Mining Engineer with a Colliery Superintendent under him. There is one Mine

20. Ibid, 186.

21. Note on the Geology of the Lakhimpur District by Geological Survey of India.

Manager at each of the above four collieries. The total output was estimated at 4,94,000 tonnes in 1962.

The following table shows the average output of coal and number of employees in the different collieries of the district.

Collieries	Average output	Labour	Other employees.	Officers
Ledo	75,886 Tonns	625	27	2 (Indian)
Namdang	19,005 "	518	33	2 "
Borgolai	180,498 "	1522	105	5 "
Tipong	62,924 "	672	56	2 "

Assam produces about 1.3% of the total Indian output of coal of which 80 to 85 percent comes from the Makum coal fields. Because of higher labour cost and greater difficulties of transport the costs of coal in Assam is higher in comparison to that of other coal producing centres in India.[22] Its quality is also described inferior though "among the various fields in Assam, the Makum coal is by far the superior"[23] All these make the Assam coal less attractive for the markets elsewhere in India. Almost the whole of it goes to tea gardens, and railways while domestic uses consume a part of it.

The higher sulphur content (about 3 to 5% in contrast to about 2% in Jharia and Raniganj fields) in the coke produced from Assam coal makes it unsuitable for metallurgical purposes except for smelting sulphuric ores, e.g. lead, copper or zinc. It is also not suitable for boilers. But this coal has the unique advantage of lesser ash content (about 2 to 5 per cent as compared to 15 to 25 percent in Jharia) and higher calorific value. If a process could be evolved to desulphurise it cheaply, then its demand will naturally show a sharp rise as it will then be ideally suitable for metallurgical purposes and will also produce much needed sulphur as a by-product. Until this is possible, Assam coal will have to rely solely on the internal markets within the State. However, with the pace of industrialisation, the use of coal in Assam is expected to increase manifold, especially in industries like cement where coal is not only used as power but also as a raw material.

(II) Large Scale Industries :

Tea Industry :—The history of the tea industry in Assam dates back to the year 1826, when indigenous tea plants growing in the plains of

22. P. C. Goswami—*The Economic Development of Assam*, p. 158—59.

23. *Industrial Programme For the Fourth Plan For Assam* by National Council of Applied Economic Research, p. 31.

Assam came to the notice of the East India Company. The cultivation of this plant, in the district, was first introduced in the thirties of the last century by the then East India Company's Government. In 1835, a few indigenous plants were taken from the forest at 'Ningroo' bordering the Singphoe country and grown at 'Koondilmukh' at Sadiya.[24] But the garden established there did not succeed because of the inferior quality of the soil. After that Government operations remained confined to the plantations in the Muttock country where a large number of indigenous tea plants had been discovered and the soil was also found suitable.

The Government garden in the locality alluded to at Chaboah was carried on from 1840 to 1848. Over this period the Government faced certain difficulties and consequently the garden was sold to a Chinaman named 'Among' in April, 1849. This Chinaman failed to improve the garden due to shortage of funds, lack of energy etc. In 1851, through the instrumentality of Colonel Hannay who contributed much to the development of tea cultivation in this part of Assam, the tea garden changed hands and became the property of Messers Warren Jenkins & Co. for a consideration of Rupees 475/-.

In the winter of 1852, Colonel Hanny who took keen interest in the products of the country, became successful in the plantation of China tea in his small experimental farm near Dibroo. He increased the cultivation of tea over an area of ten acres of land. During the same period Messers Warren and Jenkins, the proprietors of 'Chaboah' formed a Maeejan Tea *Barree* which later on became a flourishing tea garden.

The early sixties of the last century, i. e. from 1859 to 1863, was a period of steady boom. After this period the tea industry went through a severe crisis from the speculating classes because many of the promoters took advantage of **Fee Simple Rules of 1868** whereby an applicant could have larger estates for tea cultivation. Thus instead of promoting the industry, the speculators used to sell their estates at exhorbitantly high prices. By the year 1878 these trends were checked and the tea industry began to grow.

As in other tea growing districts in the State, the expansion of tea plantations led, on the one hand, to the continuous import of large number of labourers from the various parts of India, chiefly from Chota Nagpure, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Madras, and brought about the progressive development of methods of cultivation and manufacture of tea on the other hand. The increase in the quantity of the produce

24. B. C. Allen, *Assam District Gazetteers, Lakhimpur*, 1905, pp. 168—174. In the *Economic Development of Assam* by P. C, Goswami, p. 141, it is mentioned that 'a tea garden was started by the Govt. in 1833 in the Lakhimpur district.'

boosted up the fast expanding tea market. By 1900 the tea industry began to grow by leaps and bounds. The total area under tea in undivided Lakhimpur district was 67,509 acres and the outturn 25,698,000 lbs.

The Indian tea industry enjoyed one of its periodical waves of prosperity until the end of the 1st World War ; but a steady fall in prices thereafter, due to the release of tea stocks built up during the War period seriously affected the industry. As a result plucking in the tea gardens of Assam was stopped in 1920 to curtail the output with a view to provide support to the falling tea prices. A poor crop in 1921 helped the industry to recover and the state of prosperity that followed, continued till 1927. During this period rapid strides were made in the modernisation of factories and in the improvement of production techniques. In the early thirties the world wide depression seriously affected the tea industry. However, the government took some measures to save the industry ; these included conclusion of the International Tea Agreement, 1933, enactment of the Indian Tea Control Act 1933 and the institution of the Indian Tea Licensing Committee. These and other allied steps saved the industry from virtual collapse. During World War II and a few years thereafter, the industry passed through a period of prosperity until 1952 when tea prices slumped below the level of the cost of production. Among the causes attributed to this depression in prices, the most potent was the overproduction of tea. Meanwhile several tea producing countries, such as Indonesia, Japan, Formosa and East Africa offered stiff competition to Indian tea in the world market. Production of tea in India and Ceylon increased so much that it outstripped the demand in the world market. The glut in medium and other different grades of tea which could not find ready markets owing to the cessation of bulk purchases in U. K. and the impact of downward trend in commodity prices during the post Korean slump of late 1951 and early 1952, were the factors that precipitated the crisis. However, conditions improved considerably in the next year and since then the Indian tea industry has made some progress which was retarded to some extent by the drought in 1960.

Undivided Lakhimpur district had, till its bifurcation, the largest area under tea cultivation among all the districts of Assam. During the year 1968, there were altogether 235 tea estates in the district of which 44 were occupying an area of above 400 hectares, 72 between 200 to 400 hectares, 57 between 100 to 200 hectares, 28 between 50 to 100 hectares, 28 between 5 to 50 hectares and the rest remaining 6 upto 5 hectares.[25] The yield of tea per acre in the district was also the highest in the State. A number of large tea estates are owned by the European

25. Tea Board of India, *Tea Statistics*, 1968, P. 9—10.

Companies which are mostly incorporated in England. Undivided Lakhimpur produced more than 20 percent of tea produced in India. The following are the figures of total tea production in the district during the years 1951-68.[26]

Table showing the annual production of tea in the undivided district of Lakhimpur is given below.

(Figures in thousand Kg.)

1951	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
55996	68869	73339	71921	70160	79256	71155	74432	75094	79856

The Gauhati Tea Auction Centre: Marketing of tea has always been a problem for the industrialists. Previously Tea Auction Centre in Calcutta arranged for the sale of Assam tea in the world market. The West Bengal Entry Tax on Assam tea and consequent increase in its price made it imperative to open a tea auction centre, for the exported tea, in Assam which produces the bulk of it. The Gauhati Tea Auction Centre, third of its kind in India started fuctioning at Gauhati with effect from 25th September, 1970.

The Assam Railway and Trading Company : The Assam Railway and Trading Company at Margherita is one of the pioneer institutions that fostered the industrial development of Assam. It was formed in 1881 with an approximate capital of Rs. 1.96 crores. The company has three major establishments at Margherita, namely coal fields, timber works and brick fields. The colliery Department of the company is functioning since 1884 and its organisational monolith is headed by the Chief Mining Manager with a Colliery Superintendent below him and one Mine Manager for each of the 4 collieries under the Company. The average annual output of coal from the Company's collieries is of the order of 330888 tonnes.

The Timber Department of the company is administered by the Timber Superintendent with the help of a Mill Manager. In February, 1962, about 674 persons were engaged in this section. For the development of plywood industry the company opened its own factory at Margherita in 1924. During the period 1957-62, the production of the Timber section was as follows, (1) Tea chests Plywood 88,21,113 sq. feet, (2) Commercial Plywood 5,01,930 sq. feet, (3) Flashdoors 9225 sq.

26. Ibid, P, 6.

feet. The Brick section of the Company provides employment to more than 140 persons. The Ledo Brick Plant which is one of the two machine-operated brick fields of the undivided Lakhimpur district is owned by the company.

The Assam Railway and Trading Company also evinced keen interest in the development of communications in upper Assam, and after the formation of the Company in 1881, the work of construction of the Dibrugarh Steamerghat Railway was undertaken by them. The first railway line from Dibrugarh Steamerghat to Jaipur Road, was opened in 1882. The coal fields were connected by Railway lines in 1884.

Railway workshop at Dibrugarh : The railway workshop at Dibrugarh was established in the year 1881 with an approximate investment of Rupees fifty lakhs. This is considered to be one of the biggest workshops in North-east India. Altogether 1857 persons were employed in this factory in 1964. Besides overhauling works, repairing of locomotives and coaches are undertaken in the workshop and various components required for the above are manufactured. It also undertakes casting of both ferrous and non-ferrous metal and forging of steel items. The materials required in the workshop are provided by the Controller of Stores N. F. Railway, Pandu.

Plywood Industry : Plywood industry occupies an important place in the economy of the district. Tea is the mainstay of this industry. The existence of a large number of tea estates in the district itself and in other parts of the State, shows an immense potential for the growth of this industry. Tea grown in these estates are packed in plywood chests for despatch either to sale centres in India or for export to foreign countries. It is also in great demand for the manufacture of furniture, travelling boxes, and decorative pieces. Plywood is manufactured by combining several piles or veneers. The plying process helps in preventing dimensional changes due to swelling or shrinkage of timber and also strengthens the timber to resist the strains of use.

The history of plywood industry in the district, is of recent origin. Prior to World War I, all the tea chests required by the tea estates, used to be imported from abroad. In 1918 difficulties in importing the tea chests during the War led to the establishment of the Assam Saw Mill and Timber company, the first plywood factory in India. In 1924, the Assam Railways and Trading Company also started their plywood factory at Margherita. But the industry failed to make any noticeable progress due to foreign competition and by the end of 1938, there were only three factories in India. However, during World War II the industry expanded very rapidly and many factories were established

at various places, both inside and outside Assam. But soon after the War, another crisis befell the industry as it could not withstand the foreign competition and in the year 1946, the Tariff Board recommended protection for the industry until 1950. The protection was again extended later on and since then it is enjoying the benefits of protection.[23]

The Annual survey of Industires in Assam revealed that in 1960, there were fifteen registered plywood factories in the undivided Lakhimpur district. The productive capital of the industry amounted to Rs. 1,63,57,738.00 including fixed capital of Rs. 96,428,74.00 and working capital of Rs. 67,14,864.00 only. The industry employed 1774 persons, expended an amount of Rs. 20,83,491. 00 as salaries, wages, and other benefits and consumed raw materials worth Rs. 81,80,383.00 only. Total production of the industry in the particular years was as follows; plywood 24,27,406 cft. valued at Rs. 9,04,719.00, Tea chest 3,31,93,618 cft. worth Rs. 1,19,83,144.00, plank 1,19,272 cft. worth Rs. 7,75,208.00 and sawn timber 69231 cft worth Rs. 3,46,164.00 only.

In 1968, there were nine plywood and eleven veneer factories in the undivided Lakhimpur district. All these were located in Dibrugarh subdivision. Most of the plants are attached to saw mills. The National Saw and Plywood Work, Makum Road employs about 450 workers. *Simul* tree in which the State abounds is generally used for the manufacture of plywood. Other species of trees like *Hollock*, *Hollong* and Mango, suitable for plywood are also commonly available in the forests of the district. There is ample scope for expansion of the plywood industry. "A good number of tea chests required in the tea estates (total requirements in Assam is about four million chests) of the State are still imported from other parts of India particularly from Calcutta. In addition to the tea chests the plywood Industry in Assam can produce various other articles for export.[28]

(iii) **Small Scale Industries :**

Saw mills : The saw mills are playing an important role in the exploitation of the forest wealth of the district. The timber requirement of the Defence Department during the Second World War provided great impetus to the industry. The progress of the industry was accelerated by many other factors during the post-war period and now it occupies the place of an important industry. There were 234 saw mills in Assam in 1967, including 35 located in the undivided Lakhimpur district. Of these, only one was located in the North Lakhimpur Subdivision and the rest in Dibrugarh Subdivision of the undivided district. The production of these saw mills mainly goes to meet the demands of local constructional works, Railway sleepers and various other industrial uses outside the State.

27. P. C. Goswami ; *The Economic Development of Assam, pp.* 162—63,
28. Ibid pp. 163—64.

In 1960, there were 39 registered saw mills in the undivided Lakhimpur district. The total productive capital of the industry amounted to Rs. 67,57,270.00 including fixed capital of Rs. 22,93,299.00 and working capital of Rs. 44,60,971.00 only. The industry employed 966 persons, expended Rs. 11,99,102.00 as wages, salaries and benefits, and consumed raw materials worth Rs. 99,01,174.00 only. Total production of the industry was as follows :-

1. Sawn timber— 15,22,138cft.—worth Rs. 61,65,594.00
2. Fire wood— 9547 mds.—worth Rs. 10,181.00
3. Saw dust— 928 mds.—worth Rs. 339.00
4. Tea chest— 24,589 sets—worth Rs. 16,672.00

Total production— Rs. 1,18,84,199.00 only.

Timber Seasoning Plant : To meet the ever-increasing demand for seasoned timber, a timber treatment and seasoning plant has been established in the Public Sector by the Forest Department at Makum, at a cost of more than four lakhs of rupees.

Fibre Board Industry : To utilize the waste from the local saw mills and plywood factories one licence for establishing a factory at Makum for the manufacture of chip board has been issued. The volume of wastage in the saw mills and plywood factories is considerable. It varies from 40% to 50%. This waste is not put to any use other than as fuel. There are many nondurable species of timbers not suitable for any of the industries but which can be processed for production of hardboard and chip-board. The chip-board industry will depend mainly upon the local mill wastes.

Manufacture of furniture and fixtures : In 1969-70, there were in the undivided Lakhimpur district 24 workshops where furniture and fixtures were manufactured. 10 of these workshops were located in Dibrugarh, 4 in Digboi, 2 in Doom-Dooma, 2 in North-Lakhimpur, and 6 in Tinsukia. Tnis was revealed in a survey conducted by the Department of Economics and Statistics of Assam. Various types of wooden and cane furniture and folding steel chairs are manufactured in these workshops.

Rice Mill : In the urban and semi-urban areas of the district there are several rice mills some of which are combined rice and flour mills. In 1966-67 there were 36 rice mills of which 28 were in Dibrugarh Subdivision and 8 in North-Lakhimpur Sub-division of the undivided Lakhimpur district.

In 1960, there were 29 rice mills in the undivided Lakhimpur district. The total capital of the industry amounted to Rs. 25,95,622.00 only, including fixed capital of Rs. 19,24,635.00 and working capital of Rs. 6,70,987.00. The industry employed 316 persons of whom 205 persons were workers who earned Rs. 1,60,168.00 as wages and other benefits. The industry processed 6,89,752 mds. of paddy worth Rs. 7,26,413.00; 72,748 mds. of wheat valued at Rs. 10,24,749 and 18,394 mds. of mustard oil seeds worth Rs. 4,80,598.00 only. Total production of the industry was as follows[29] :—.

1. Rice—4,41,380 mds. worth Rs. 82,37,388.00
2. Atta—63,721 mds. worth Rs. 10,69,421.00
3. Mustard oil—5,513 mds. worth Rs.4,76,876.00
4. By-products—44,695 mds. worth Rs. 2,55,614.00
5. Others—worth Rs. 68,450.00

The total value of the production of rice mills amounted to Rs. 1,08,06,542.00 only.

Flour Mills : Formerly there were only four flour mills in the undivided Lakhimpur district. Since wheat is not locally grown in large scale, these mills depend upon imported foodgrain.

The Annual Survey of Industries of Assam, conducted by the Department of Economics and Statistics reveals that in 1960 there were 8 flour mills in the undivided Lakhimpur district. The total productive capital of the industry amounted to Rs. 20,40,572.00 only including fixed capital of Rs. 13,02,338.00 and working capital of Rs. 7,38,234.00 only. Only 76 persons of whom 53 were workers employed in this industry and they earned Rs. 9,696.00 as salary, wage and other benefits. The total value of various items of production amounted to Rs. 52,87,513.00. Total production of the flour mills were as follows :-

1. Flour—1,45,951 mds.—worth Rs. 27,23,180.00
2. *Atta*— 2,40,988 mds.—worth Rs. 20,46,550.00
3. Rice— 7,856 mds.—worth Rs. 1,51,000.00
4. *Bason*— 216 mds.—worth Rs. 4,133,00
5. By-products—17,130 mds.—worth Rs. 50,752.00

Oil Mills : In 1966-67 there were four oil mills in the undivided Lakhimpur district of which three mills were located in the Dibrugarh Sub-division and one in North-Lakhimpur Subdivision. These mills produce edible oils and almost the whole of it is disposed of in the local markets.

29. *Annual Survey of Industries in Assam*, 1960 ; pp. 28—33.

There were only four mills which manufactured edible oils in 1960 in the undivided Lakhimpur district. Capital-intensive as they were, the total capital involved amounted to Rs. 3,53,958.00 only of which Rs. 2,81,699.00 was fixed capital, and Rs. 72,259.00 was working capital. Only 37 persons were employed in this industry. They earned Rs. 42,378.00 as salaries, wages and other benefits. The industry manufactured 1390 mds. of mustard oil worth Rs. 1,50,000.00 and 3374 mds, of rice valued at Rs. 65,620.00.

Soap Making Industry : There is only one soap factory located at Doom-Dooma of the present Dibrugarh district. Bulk of the soap is however, imported from other States of India. The Industries Department has established one Training-cum-Production Centre at Chabua where training is imparted in soap and umbrella-making. There is a hostel at the Centre for accommodating the trainees

Brick Making Industry : With the increase in the tempo of constructional activities generated by the industrial development and high standard of living of the people, the brick making industry has come to occupy an important place in the economy of the district. The brick fields scattered mostly in the outskirts of towns bear testimony of the feverish house building activities in important towns. A few can be noticed even in the interior villages, but the bulk of the bricks is despatched to towns. The normal practice in the brick kilns is to make the bricks by manual process with the help of the moulds called 'forma' and then burn them in the oval pattern multichambered kilns. Only two brick fields, i.e., Ledo Brick field owned by the Assam Railway and Trading Company, Margherita and Naharkatia Brick Works, Duliajan, are operated by machines. The latter is stated to be an automatic plant, which utilises natural gas from Naharkatiya Oil fields.

Engineering Industries : In 1960 there were five such firms in the undivided Lakhimpur district. These were engaged in the manufacture of general items of machinery used in several industries such as equipments required for unit processing. The total investment of these firms amounted to Rs. 2,79,057.00 only including working capital of Rs. 5,198.00 and fixed capital of Rs. 2,73,859,00 only. The industry employed 86 persons who earned Rs. 2,68,836.00 as wages and other benefits. Total value of the products was Rs. 4,00,261.00 only. The industry has made steady progress during the following decade. The number of firms has gone up and the range of manufactures has also expanded. This industry also has made considerable progress since then.

Manufacture of tools and implements for tea industry : Tea is the main industry of the undivided Lakhimpur district and one of the country's leading foreign exchange earnears. In 1968 there were 235 tea

gardens in the district the largest acreage under tea cultivation among all the districts of Assam. The demand for various types of implements, machineries and spare parts is so great that this alone can support a number of ancillary industries. Several firms have already been established to cater to the needs of tea garden factory equipments, storage tanks, trailers, seeds and drum containers, trolleys, garden leaf shifters, pulleys, C.T.C. machines and their components, rice and oil machines etc. It may be noted that each tea garden has a factory of its own, to process tea leaves.

Eight firms of the undivided Lakhimpur district were engaged in the manufacture of tea machinery in 1960. Total investment of the industry amounted to Rs. 54,06,596.00 only. Nearly 45% of the total capital was fixed capital. The industry employed 683 persons and the total production amounted to. Rs. 32,84,450.00 only.

Steel Furniture : The new and multifarious uses of steel largely contributed to the growth and development of the steel furniture industry. The ever-increasing demand for steel furniture for offices, hospitals, shops, factories, and homes may be attributed to its economy, durability, and scarcity of good seasoned timber. A number of firms in the district of Lakhimpur are manufacturing steel furniture as subsidiary products. Three of these firms are located at Tinsukia.

Weights and Measures : With the introduction of the Metric System of weights and measures, the demand for these also increased manifold. Some of the firms are manufacturing weights and measures as subsidiary products.

Steel Structures : Tubular structures are mainly required for construction of structural houses like factory godowns, factory sheds etc. With the growth of industries the demand for these items has increased rapidly. Only one firm located at Tinsukia is now engaged in fabricating such steel tubular structures in the Dibrugarh district.

Wire fencing : A number of industrial units is engaged in making wire fencing of all types including barbed wire as a part of their other manufacturing activities and a few are exclusively engaged in making barbed wire. The main items of production include woven wire fencing, chain link nettings, hexagonal mesh net fencing, barbed wire fencing, fencing corner end posts, U. bolts, angle cross arms and other wire products. The tea gardens of the State are the leading consumers of wire fencing products. In the district there are nine firms which produce wire fencing. Six of these are located at Tinsukia, two at Dibrugarh and one at Digboi.

Agricultural Implements : There are a number of blacksmiths in the urban as well as in the rural areas of the district who are engaged in manufacturing and repairing different types of knives and other agricultural implements. Two fairly big firms located at Tinsukia manufacture agricultural implements. The items of production of these units are pruning knives, *daos*, hoes, weeding tools, transplanting spades, bore-hole-diggers, grass-cutters and other agricultural implements.

Buckets and Trunks : There are many small firms which make trunks. Buckets are manufactured by several firms of which two are located at Dibrugarh and one at Tinsukia.

Tea chest Fitting : There are eight firms which are engaged in manufacturing tea chest fittings. Tea chests are required for packing tea and the undivided district of Lakhimpur being the largest producer of tea in Assam, provided an ample local market for the same.

Re-Rolling Mills : The Assam Udyog Company is the only Re-Rolling Mill located at Dibrugarh. It is engaged in the production of rolled products like rods, bars etc. The mill is not working at its full capacity due to the shortage of raw materials.

Printing Press : Before bifurcation there were 16 printing presses in the urban areas of the undivided Lakhimpur district. These presses however, cannot meet the total demand for printing in the district. An important part of the printing work is entrusted to the presses located outside the district. In 1960 the total investment of 5 presses of undivided Lakhimpur district amounted to Rs. 1,23,603.00 only. The industry employed 69 persons, and consumed materials worth Rs. 72,990.00 only.

Miscellaneous Industries : A few industrial units have sprung up in the district ; some of these have already started production and others are in the process of installation. The sewing machine manufacturing unit at Dibrugarh, which is the chief manufacturer of such machines in Assam, has already started production of sewing machines. Another unit at Tinsukia is engaged in the manufacture of house hold and hospital furniture and equipments of all types. Plants and machineries which have been installed at Tinsukia for the manufacture of steel-wool, leadwool and other industrial wool are the first of kind in this State. Three more industrial units located at Dibrugarh are setting up plants and machineries for the manufacture of (1) galvanised iron pipe posts, telegraph posts and pipe fittings etc., (2) mines tower belts, door handles and other hard-ware goods, (3) non-ferrous castings and sheet metal stampings. There are two industrial units at Tinsukia, one engaged in the manufacture of brass and other domestic utensils and the other in the manufacture of camphor tablets, pain balms, inks, hair oils

etc. Besides these there are a number of other industrial units like bakeries, automobile and other servicing and repairing workshops, tyre retreading and vulcanizing workshops and others engaged in multifarious manufacturing activities. The industrialisation that has gained momentum during the last few decades, has changed the face of the Dibrugarh district and new industrial units are coming up almost every year.

Some of the salient features of industrialisation of the undivided Lakhimpur district, as revealed in the Annual survey of Industries of Assam, 1960, are enumerated below.

Summary of industries of the undivided Lakhimpur district (year-1960).

1.	Number of registered factories ..	331	(including petroleum industry)
2.	Productive capital	Rs.	35,53,78,590.00
	Fixed capital	Rs.	15,89,05,066.00
	working capital	Rs.	19,15,88,546.00
3.	Number of persons employed ..		35,046
4.	Salaries, wages and benefits ..	Rs.	54,69,67,890.00
5.	Materials, fuels, electricity. etc. consumed. ..	Rs.	33,14,17,302.00
6.	Production	Rs.	49,72,04,903.00

(IV) Cottage Industry :

Pottery : Pottery is an old time industry but the percentage of persons engaged in making and selling earthen wares was not very large in the undivided district. In 1901 about 200 persons were found engaged in this profession and the 1961 census revealed that there were only two pottery co-operatives comprising only 25 workers. Altogether 177 persons were engaged in pottery and related clay works. The growing popularity of ceramic and alluminium utensils adversely affected the pottery industry and the condition of the trade deteriorated to a great extent.

The common items of manufacture are pitcher like pots (known as *Kalah, Tekeli*) of different sizes used for keeping *gur*, milk products, water etc. The other items are earthen tumblers *charu, mola, gocha* etc. The instruments used in the manufacture of earthen vessels are the wheel (*chalk*) which is about three feet in diameter and rotates on a piece of hard pointed wood fixed firmly in the ground, the mould (*athali*), the mallet (*baliya piteni*) and the polisher (*chaki*). The margin of profit in the industry is negligible and the indigenous potters are

gradually being replaced by out-siders especially from Bihar and Bengal. The principal centres of the industry in the undivided Lakhimpur district are Dibrugarh, Madarkhat, Margherita, Tinsukia and Chabua.

Bamboo and Cane Works : Sylvan resources of the undivided Lakhimpur district are abundant and the forests are richly stocked with bamboos and canes of various descriptions. Bamboo and cane industry is perhaps the most universal of all the crafts in the district and is practised by a large number of artisans. It is an important industry of the district and according to the 1961 census it provides employment for 1133 persons of the undivided Lakhimpur district. Among them 973 were males and 160 females. The cane industry flourishes mainly in the urban and semi-urban areas and its principal product is the plucking basket which is in great demand in the tea gardens. In the rural areas cane baskets are used for carrying earth. The railways and collieries require cane baskets in large numbers for carrying coal. A number of units in the urban and semi-urban areas are engaged in the manufacture of cane furniture, and various other cane and bamboo products with distinctive features and typical designs. The manufacture of cane furniture however, calls for a high degree of skill and a majority of workers engaged in furniture making units are artisans from Bangaladesh. *Pati* (mat) is made from *patidoi*, a plant of a reed family. Cane works include a wide range of items of day to day use, such as *murha* (cane stool), chairs, baskets, sofa-sets, side tables, baby cots, plaited or woven baskets, school bags, picnic boxes etc. Government Emporium was established at Dibrugarh in the year 1954. All kinds of cane and bamboo products that are generally manufactured in the State can be had from this Emporium.

Making of bamboo products is a subsidiary occupation of the agriculturists in the rural areas of the district and every family makes at least a part of its domestic requirements of bamboo products. The main items of bamboo products are mats, baskets of various sizes and shapes, winnowing trays, fishing traps like *Jakoi, Khaloi, Chepa, Dingora, Palah, Juluki* etc. However, the most important item of bamboo products is the *Japi* (head wear) which is made of bamboo and '*Takou*' leaf. It is considered to be indispensable for the open air worker, especially the cultivator. Like plucking baskets, *Japis* are also in great demand in the tea gardens of the district.

Sericulture, weaving, goldsmithry, brass and bell metal industries are some of the important cottage industries which form an important segment of the economy of the district till today. These have been described earlier in this chapter. Among other cottage industries mention may be made of rice-pounding, *ghani*, blacksmithy, carpentry etc, which are traditionally associated with the village economy. Every rural family

has got a wooden implement called '*Dhenki*' to husk paddy by pounding it with foot. The rice husked in the *Dhenki* is taken with relish by the bulk of the rural population. Blacksmithy is pursued by the indigenous artisans mainly in the rural areas. The principal items of manufacture are common agricultural implements like pruning and other kinds of knives, rakes, *daos* etc. The blacksmiths excelled in making various fire-arms and weapons during the pre-British days. With the passage of time the industry suffered a gradual decay. The blacksmiths of the rural areas now lack improved technical knowledge and the industry does not fetch attractive dividends. The industry has been crippled to a large extent by the keen competition from well organised and mechanised units producing cheap and better finished products.

In the rural areas carpentry is more or less a subsidiary occupation. Besides furniture making and house building the carpenters engage themselves in manufacturing various agricultural implements like plough, harrow, yoke etc. required for day to day use. Despite the lack of training and financial resources, many village carpenters manufacture exquisitely carved figures, door penels and *simhasanas*. The wood carvings of the *satras* and *namghars* bear testimony to the excellent craftmanship of the village carpenters.

Many furniture-houses have sprung up during the post-Independence period, in the urban and semi-urban areas. Trained artisans are employed in these units. Sleek and elegant furniture manufactured here are kept for display to attract prospective buyers. Usually, these articles fetch very high prices.

Among other Cottage industries mention may be made of rope and fishing net-making, bee-keeping etc., practised by the individuals here and there. In the rural areas, *Gur* making is also very common. In recent years, tailoring also appears to have made large inroads into the interior areas of the district. Due to increasing popularity of bi-cycles, a cheap means of conveyance of village folk, many cycle repairing shops have been opened in the rural areas; but these are more conspicuous in urban and semi-urban areas than in the countryside.

(d) **Industrial potential and plans for future development** : The undivided Lakhimpur district had been the most highly industrialised district in the State of Assam. "About 40 percent of the factory labour and 45 percent of the total industrial output of Assam are in this district. More than 60 of every thousand persons work in factories in this district in comparision to seven out of every thousand persons in the State as a whole. Between 1951 and 1956 employment increased by 12 percent, forest industry and metalbased industries showing very marked

growth".[30] The southern part of the undivided Lakhimpur district made a steady progress in the field of industry in the first three Five Year Plans. The volume of industrial output increased by more than 40 percent between 1951-1966. According to the Annual Survey of Industries 1960, out of the total 1194 registered factories in Assam, 331 registered factories were located in the undivided Lakhimpur district.

The undivided Lakhimpur district also ranked first in its contribution to the State Income. In the year 1960-61 its contribution towards State Income stood at Rs. 639.8 million or 17.9 percent of the total State Income. During the same year contributions from the industrial organisations to the district income was also the highest in this district among all the districts of Assam. The industrial sector contributed about 51.4 percent of the district income of which the tea industry's share was 33.2 percent (highest) and that of other mining and manufacturing industries 18.2 percent.[31]

While the large industries are concentrated in the south bank of the Brahmaputra, there are very few industries in the north bank. The disparity is attributed to the lack of road and rail communications in the north bank. It was only in the sixties that this region made considerable progress in both rail and road communication. Present Lakhimpur district which is industrially backward, has a good industrial potential. Besides the forest based industries, the feasibility of setting up large industries has attracted attention of many enterpreneurs and the government.

Dibrugarh district occupies an important place in the industrial map of India especially in respect of oil and natural gas based industries. The area around Tinsukia is like a beehive humming with all types of industries. No wonder, this region is regarded as the industrial belt of the district. The commercial and industrial importance of Tinsukia began to rise after the construction of the Dibru-Sadiya Railway line. The development of tea, coal and oil-industries gave a fillip to the development of other manufacturing industries in the sector. There has been a steady increase in the number of industrial units such as rice mills, timber works, plywood factories, repairing and general engineering works, tea manufacturing machines, alluminium products etc. in Dibrugarh district.

In recent years the importance of Tinsukia-Makum areas has increased considerably because of the expansion of steel processing and light engineering industries and various fabrication workshops. The growth

30, *Techno Economic Survey of Assam* by NCAER New Delhi, p, 93.

31. *Economic Survey of Assam 1963*. by the Deptt. of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam, p. 31.

in this field in the Tinsukia-Makum area has been particularly marked as was evidenced in the Industrial Exhibition held at Tinsukia in 1961 in which a large variety of machineries, equipments and goods manufactured in the district bore marks of tremendous progress that this region has made in the field of industry.

Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Makum, Digboi and Namrup are the important industrial towns. Among the important industries located around these towns mention must be made of a large railway workshop located at Dibrugarh, two medium size engineering works at Tinsukia and Digboi, oil refinery at Digboi, fertilizer and thermal plant at Namrup, saw mills, plywood factories around Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Makum, Digboi and Naharkatiya. The location of rice mills is linear with the railway. Most of the printing presses have been set up in and around Dibrugarh. A new industrial area near the Naharkatiya and Moran oil fields is growing.

The southern part of the undivided Lakhimpur district has a very high industrial potential. The resources, both mineral and overground, when fully utilised will make this region one of the most highly industrialised regions in the country. Natural gas available in the new oil fields at Naharkatiya and Moran has helped to establish the fertilizer factory at Namrup. The Bongaigaon Refinery will utilise crude oil of Naharkatiya, Moran, Lakwa and Rudrasagar. The first of these two oilfields are located in this district. It has also led to the establishment of a Thermal Plant at Namrup and Gas Grid to the tea gardens.

Further, the newly found natural gas resources and prospects of the availability of more natural gas ushered in an era of industrial development in this region. It has been stated earlier that the Government have been setting up a petro-chemical complex at Namrup. "The project is considered one of the most important projects of the State as out of moulding powder and P.V.C. a number of small industries can be started as ancillaries to this petro-chemical unit. Glue has a local demand in Assam as the plywood industries and the hard-board units require this glue. The various items that can be manufactured out of this moulding powder and P.V.C., are plastic corrugated sheets, P.V.C. pipes, artificial leather, melamine products, coats iron sheets and various moulded goods known as 'Plastic products'[32].

The prospects for the establishment of synthetic fibre industry from the natural gas is very bright. "It is proposed not only to produce synthetic fibre but also to attach spinning and knitting units

32. Speech of the Shri A. D. Adhikari, Director of Industries, Assam in the Industries Conference, held at Shillong on August 25, 26, 27, 1967, pp. 5—6.

as part of the scheme. The industry of synthetic fibre and allied products are new to India and this will be the first of its kind to come into operation. A ready market could be found easily in any town, like, Gauhati, Silghat and Naharkatiya.[33] There is also enormous raw-material potential (e.g.natural gas and oil) for synthetic rubber plant.

The substantial increase in production of crude oil as expected from the Naharkatiya, Moran, Rudrasagar, Lakwa and Hugrijan, has brought about one more oil Refinery at Bongaigaon in Goalpara district of Assam with a refining capacity of 1.0 million tonnes of crude oil annually.[34] The progress made in the transportation of petroleum products by pipe line to the consuming centres, strengthened the claims of establishing additional refinery in Assam nearer to the oil fields.[35] The establishment of this refinery at Bongaigaon will not only give a big boost to a number of ancillary industries but will also go a long way in correcting the regional imbalance in the industrial development besides accelerating the pace of the economic development of Assam.

Other mineral resources like clay and coal offer ample scope for development of various types of industries. The clay resources of the State which can be utilised for the manufacture of crockery, sanitary accessories, tiles etc., have virtually remained untapped so far. Establishment of two roofing tile plants with an installed capacity of six tons a day and a total employment opportunity for 60 persons at Gauhati and Tinsukia and two mosaic tile plants with the same installed capacity and employment possibility at Gauhati and Dibrugarh appears to be feasible.[36] Licence for the establishment of a refractory plant with capacity of 10 tonnes a day at Dibrugarh has already been issued. Kaolin (china-clay) and glass sands which can be utilized for the establishment of pottery and glass industry are available in the undivided district of Lakhimpur. The indigenous production of potteries can be vastly improved.

At present manufacture of brick is the only important industry among those based on clay. With the rapid industrialisation and concommittant rise in the standard of living, the demand for bricks, one of the most important materials for construction, is expected to show a steep rise. Due to the plastic contents Assam clay is also considered to be very suitable for the manufacture of bricks. The process followed in the manufacture of bricks in the State is also described to be "supe-

33. *Te hno Economic Survey of Assam* By NCAER. p. 102.
34. For details see *Industrial Programmes For the Fourth Plan For Assam* NCAER.
35. Ibid. p. y5.
36. *Techno Economic Survey of Assam by* NCAER, p, 111.

rior to what is commonly adopted in the Indo-Gagentic plains. The use of pugmill for preparation of the clay for moulding purpose, which is a regular feature in Assam and some other parts of West Bengal is not found in most of the other parts of the country where bricks are mostly made by moulding methods".[37] Availability of coal within easy reach offers another advantage to the industry. Mechanisation has slowly but steadily strengthened the industry. Already two mechanised units for the manufacture of bricks are functioning in the Dibrugarh district and more are expected to follow. With the mechanisation of the industry, the cost of production is likely to come down and this will further stimulate the demand and there will be more scope for expansion.

Next to petroleum and natural gas, coal is an important mineral of Dibrugarh district, and it offers a wide scope for the development of coal-based industries. As already stated the peculiarity of Assam coal is that it is of very low ash content though rich in sulphur. This high sulphur content makes it unfit for metallurgical purposes. However, the preliminary investigation into the hydrogenation and liquification of Assam coal conducted by the Central Fuel Research Institute has shown encouraging results pointing to the possibility of the development of large scale coal-chemical industry.[38] "The percentage of tar acid in the total oil yields from coal ranges between two to five as against one to two in Raniganj coal. It is recommended that a low temperature coal carbonisation plant be established in the Margherita region with a capacity of 600 tonnes of coal intake per day".[39] After a long research in the Central Fuel Research Laboratories at Dhanbad, Margherita coal has been found suitable for a large Petro-chemical complex with an initial capital outlay of about Rs. 300 crores for production of industrial and medicinal chemicals.[40] The coal Survey Laboratory stationed at Jorhat, has shown numerous hitherto unknown ways of utilisation of Assam coal. Much has been done to explore the possibility of using Assam coal as a blend for metallurgical coke, conversion of Assam coal into liquid fuel and chemicals.

The high sulphur content of Margherita coal which is as high as 5.6% will help in the establishment of sulphuric Acid plant. In the process of carbonization about 50% of the sulphur will be liberated as gas and "about 600 tons of coals carbonized daily would liberate 6 tons of sulphur which would be converted into 18 to 20 tons of sulphu-

37. *Industrial Potentialities of Assam and Its Development*, Government of Assam, p. 74.
38. *Techno Economic Survey of Assam* by NCAER. p. 101.
39. Ibid, 101.
40. H. N. Das ; *Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh—Study on Contrast*, published in the *Assam Information*, Vol, xxii, No. 7, Oct. 71 ; p. 18.

ric acid. The NCAER recommended setting up of a sulphuric acid plant either along with the super-phosphate plant near Gauhati or near coalfield of Margherita".[41]

The high sulphur coal has also many other industrial uses. It is found ideally suitable in preparing ion-exchangers which find wide application in water treatment, for softening and desalting the water for industrial purposes. The continuous use of raw hard water in industrial equipments makes the insoluble calcium and magnesium salts deposited in the equipment and obstructs the smooth running of the plant. But when the same water is passed through sodium salt of the ion-exchangers, the hard contents of the water are retained in the exchanger and thereby the water is made soft. The ion-exchangers are made commercially by some firms in India by sulphonation from Assam coal and are being widely used. High sulphur Assam coal after oxidation have been found more suitable in removing alkalinity from soils than other conventional reclaiming agents like sulphur, calcium sulphate which are normally used in Indian '*Ushar land*' at present. Germanium contents of Assam coal is also worth recovering as the search for the source of this material has assumed increasing importance through out the world.[42]

The forest resources of the district, if exploited in a planned manner will contribute to the development of the forest based industries. The plywood industry has made a steady progress and is likely to expand further. There were only 17 plywood factories in Assam and their total production of tea chest and commercial plywood during the year 1959-60 was 40 million cft. and 9 million cft. respectively whereas total annual requirements of only tea chests in Assam varied from 61 million to 69 million cft. The rest of the demand is met by the plywood factories from West Bengal. The NCAER suggests that one plywood factory with an installed capacity of 5000,000 tea chests annually may be started at Tinsukia.[43]

A considerable waste varying from 40% to 50% results in processing timber in saw mills and plywood factories in the form of wood chips and saw dust which is not put to any economic use. Besides, there is considerable waste of timber in the forest. All these can be economically processed for the manufacture of hard-board and particle board. Particle-boards can be a good substitute for commercial plywood and natural timber the availability of which is decreasing gradually. As the district abounds in saw mills and plywood factories with prospects of further expansion there will be no scarcity of raw materials i.e., wood

41. *Techno Economic Survey of Assam*. NCAER ; pp. 101.
42. *Industrial Potentialities of Assam and Its Development*, pp. 51.
43. *Techno-Economic Survey of Assam*, by NCAER pp. 98.

chips and saw dust for the establishment of a plant to manufacture hard-boards and particle-boards. Timber of non-durable species in which the forests abound can be utilized for this purpose. Further this non-durable species of timber can be better utilsed by establishing timber treatment and seasoning plants. Already one such plant has been established by the Forest Department of the Government of Assam at Makum and there is scope for opening some more plants in the district. There is also a scope for wood working plants manufacturing flash doors, windows etc. One Joinery Mill may be established at Dibrugarh with a total installed capacity of 16 tonnes a day. Cane and bamboo resources of the nearby area can be utilized for the establishment of paper and pulp factories. Industries like fruit processing furniture making, bamboo and cane works, are likely to thrive along with the rising demand for these products.

A great deal of tea-waste is available in the tea gardens of Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh and caffeine can be manufactured from it economically in phyto-chemical plants. It is estimated that about 2000 tons of tea-waste will be annually available from the tea factories of Assam for the manufacture of this product. Assuming production of 26 to 30 Ibs of Caffeine a day single unit shift of 8 hours, it is possible to manu facture 700 to 750 Ibs of Caffeine a month. One maund of tea-waste which may cost Rs. 10 can give one pound of Caffeine priced at Rs. 25 to Rs. 30. Licences for the establishment of two units with a capacity of 6000 Ibs of Caffein per year have already been issued to two firms of Dibrugarh and Tinsukia. The factory at Dibrugarh has already gone into production and its products which were exhibited in the India Industries Fair 1961 at Delhi were widely acclaimed.

Live-stock population of the district may sustain the leather industry which is yet to occupy a significant place in the district economy. Buffalo hides of which the district of Lakhimpur is the main supplier are used mostly for the heavy boots which are at present imported from outside the state. In absence of any tannery industry almost all the raw hides go out of the State in wet-salted conditions. The district has also plenty of vegetable tanning materials which include non-edible oils like *Nahor* or *Nageswar*, resin etc. Wattle plants, a rich source of supply of vegetable tanning materials is also found in abundance in the hills districts.

The undivided district of Lakhimpur made considerable progress in the field of light engineering industries which have reasonable growth potential. A beginning has already been made in this direction with the establishment of the rerolling mill and eight other engineering industries in the undivided district. With the growing utilization of natural resources like natural gas, petroleum, coal, clay and forests etc. as discussed above, the demand for the products of these industries will go up. The tea industry may turn out to be the largest single purchaser of light engineering goods. Among the industries which are likely to grow and thrive in the district mention may be made of the expanded metal industry, wire drawing industries, and manufacturing tea garden machinery, steel structurals, steel furniture, agricultural implements, water pipe fittings, corrugated sheets, steel castings, steel pipes and tubes etc.

The State of Assam is deficient in all the mineral resources needed for an integrated steel plant but the transport bottleneck which throtles its economy from time to time justifies the establishment of a small steel plant with electric furnaces for melting the sufficiently available scrap in the State for the manufacture of mild steel ingots and billets. There will be sufficient demand for the products of this mill. In 1970-71 the demand for billets by the rerolling mills was estimated at 7000 to 7500 tonnes. Hence, the establishment of one unit either at Gauhati (Kamrup district) or Dibrugarh has been suggested by the NCAER for the production of 70000 to 75000 tonnes of billets per annum.[44]

Till the hydro-electric and thermal power potential of the State is harnessed fully there is need for installation of small diesel generating sets to serve the scattered industrial plants, factories etc. The NCAER has suggested that a unit may immediately be set up at Tinsukia or Dibrugarh with a capacity of 1000 engines of various sizes up to 50 H. P. annually.[45] The expansion of power projects will cater to the demand for insulators, angle brackets wires, insulated cables and other electrical accessories. Expansion of education will also accentuate the demand for stationery items and scientific instruments etc. However potentialities themselves are not enough to improve the industrial climate unless the natural resources are properly exploited. Finance, technical know-how and manegerial skill are as important as plants and machineries for industrial development of the region. With the nationalisation of banks more industrial firms have been benefited and consequently, the tempo of industrial growth has received a fresh fillip.

(d) Labour and Employer's Organisations :

Tea, petroleum, coal and other industries have well organised labour unions. Tea planters of the undivided district arrayed themselves in different organisations to safeguard the interest of the employers.

44. *Industrial Programme For the Fourth Five Year Plan For Assam* by NCAER, p. 56.

45. *Techno Economic Survey of Assam* by NCAER, p. 106.

The Assam Railway and Trading Company, Margherita Employers' Organisation is affiliated to the (a) Indian Mining Association, Calcutta, (b) Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Calcutta, (c) Eastern India Tea Chest and Plywood Manufacturer's Association, Margherita, (d) Indian Plywood Manufacture's Research Association, Bangalore.

The All India Manufacturer's Organisation has a branch at Tinsukia. Its constituent members are from the Engineering, Plywood, Veneer, Saw Mill and other establishments. The Assam Branch of the Indian Tea Association has set up its head office at Dikom. It is an Employer's Association for the whole State. Most of the European Tea garden owners, are its constituents. The Indian Tea garden owners have an association known as the Bharatiya Chah Parishad. The head office of this Association is located at Dibrugarh. The Parishad has branches all over the State. Some of the Indian Tea Garden owners are members of the Assam Tea Planter's Association, the head office of which is located at Jorhat.

There are many Labour Organisations in the district. The following are some of the important organisations :-(a) collieries-(i) The Assam Colliery Mazdoor Congress (affiliated to the INTUC) Boragolai, P.O. Lakhimpur, (ii) The Assam Coal Mines Worker's Union, (affiliated to the AINTUC) Ledo, (b) The Timber Industry-(i) The Assam Railways and Trading Company Workers Union, Margherita, (c) The Brick works-(i) The Lakhimpur District Brick Workers Union, Ledo, (d) The Tea Industry-(i) The All India National Trade Union Congress, (ii) The All India Trade Union Congress. (e) Miscellaneous establishments (i) The A. R. & T. Co., Mazdoor Union (affiliated to AITUC) Margherita.

The Indian National Trade Union Congress has branches all over Assam. The state head office of the I. N. T. U. C. is located at Dibrugarh. Two unions affiliated to the I. N. T. U. C. are the Assam Chah Mazdoor Sangha and the Chah Mazdoor Union ; the head offices of both of these labour unions are located at Dibrugarh. The All India Trade Union Congress has also branches in some tea gardens of the undivided Lakhimpur district. In the general industrial side, particularly, in the engineering industry, the Industrial Worker's Union, affiliated to the INTUC has a firm hold among the workers.

There is a labour union in the Assam Oil Company, Digboi, The total number of members of this Union forms approximately 70% of the workers employed in this Company. The transport workers have their own employees Association.

(e) Welfare of industrial Labour :

In the context of promoting cordial relationship between employees and the employers and maintaining industrial peace and increasing the efficiency of the working class the importance of labour welfare measures can hardly be over emphasised. Both the Central and State Governments have initiated a number of welfare measures to ameliorate the conditions of the working people and to bring out healthy changes in the outlook of the employers and employees. The tendency is to make a number of labour welfare items enforceable through legislation so that employers have no option but to carry them out. With this end in view, new legislative measures were adopted and some of the old Acts were suitably amended. The Workmen's Compensation Act of 1923, Indian Trade Union Act of 1926, Payment of Wages Act of 1936, Assam Maternity Benefits Act of 1944, Industrial Disputes Act of 1947, Factories Act of 1948, Minimum Wages Act of 1948, Plantation Labour Act of 1951, Assam Tea Plantation's Employees Provident Fund Scheme Act of 1950, Assam Tea Plantation Employee's Welfare Fund Act, Indian Mines Act of 1948 etc., are some of the landmarks in the history of labour legislation in Assam. The over-all impact of these legislations is clearly reflected in the improvement of the general condition of the Industrial labour in the State. As a whole, they now enjoy large measures of social security, earn fair wages and are well organised to ventilate their grievances. The Directorates of Labour of the Central and State Governments are there to look after the implementation of the labour welfare provisions of the various acts. A brief survey of labour welfare measures adopted in different industries is made below.

Tea Industry : Labour Welfare in the tea industry has made significant progress. The enactment of the Plantation Labour Act in 1951 embodies many welfare measures aimed at the improvement of the condition of the workers of the tea industry. It is a comprehensive piece of legislation and has put tea garden employers under obligation to provide for various facilities to their labourers. In most of the tea estates free education upto Lower Primary standard is provided by tea garden managements. The Act envisages that the housing facilities are to be provided free of cost and a certain percentage of standard type quarters for the labourers are to be built every year. Provision for drinking water, improved sanitation, recreational facilities, creches with necessary equipments, medical facilities and regulation of working hours are the other statutory safeguards embodied in the Plantation Labour Act. In almost every large tea estate there is a dispensary or a hospital manned with requisite medical staff. The small estates have made arrangements with local hospitals for treatment of their workers. Maternity benefits under the Assam Maternity Benefits Act are also provided to the expectant mothers. Under the Assam Tea Plantation Provident Fund Scheme, the Contributory Provident Fund benefit is extended to all the tea garden workers. Under the Tea Plantation Employee's

Welfare Fund Act, a fund is constituted out of the unpaid accumulations, sums unclaimed or forfeited in the provident fund accounts of the employees and fines realised from the employees. Grants from this fund are made to the various labour welfare organisations in recognition of their labour welfare works in the tea gardens. The Employees Provident Fund Act, the Workmen's Compensation Act and the Assam Maternity Benefit Act are applicable to all factories employing twenty or more workers.

Some labour welfare institutions are managed by the Government and other agencies. There is a Regional Workers Education Centre at Tinsukia to impart some training on the workers drawn from industrial and plantation establishments. The Centre is under the supervision and control of the Government of India. The administrative staff includes one Director and several Education Officers and other administrative staff. The representatives after completing training in the education centre give in their turn necessary training to their fellow workers in their respective establishments. There are about 225 L. P. Schools with 260 teachers provided and maintained by employers. The State Government have also set up welfare centres at Powai, Chota-Tingrai and Dijoo. Similar centres are also proposed to be set up at Dikom, Talap, Mankotta and Khowang.

In addition to these institutions, there are several other welfare centres which are run with the help of the Grants-in-aid received from the Government; but these are under the control and supervision of non-official social welfare organisations such as the Assam Seva Samity, Gauhati; Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangha, Sibsagar; Kasturba Rastriya Smarak Trust, Delhi and Assam Chah Mazdoor Sangha, Dibrugarh. These centres are located at Borhapjan, Raidingia (Moranhat), Khowang, Kanjikhowa, Daimukhia, Dikom, Dibrugarh, Bordubi, and Saboti. Borhapjan welfare centre established in 1952, has received a donation of Rs. 26,000/- from the Indian Tea Board for construction of hostel buildings. The recurring expenditure of the centre is borne by the Assam Seva Samity. In this centre instructions are imparted on craft training, particularly on the subjects of carpentry, agriculture and blacksmithy. In other centres also, training is imparted on general education particularly on basic, weaving, knitting, sewing and other handicrafts, besides physical training. In Dijoo centre, training is imparted in carpentry and tailoring.

The affiliated unions also conduct a number of night schools, clubs and welfare centres etc. and in this respect the Bordubi Welfare Centre run by Tingrai branch of the Assam Chah Mazdoor Sangha and Chah Mazdoor Kalyan Samaj of Dibrugarh, a branch of the A.C.M.S. deserve special mention. Stipends to the workers' children from secondary

schools to post-graduate classes, have also been offered by the above unions. Works done on cultural side by the Unions are also worth mentioning. A full length feature film entitled *Kesa Son* depicting various aspects of life of tea garden labour was produced jointly by the cultural section of the Assam Branch of the I.N.T.U.C. and the Tezpur Branch of A. C. M. S. This is said to be the first film of its kind ever produced in India through the efforts of the trade unions. The A. C. M. S. is also publishing its fortnightly organ *Mazdoor* from its own press at Chiringchapari, Dibrugarh. This union has organised a number of training camps in different parts of the State for training of workers in trade unions at the unit level.

The records of the Labour Department of the Government of Assam show that in 1968 the total resident population of the labourers and the staff of the tea gardens of the undivided Lakhimpur district was 260587 and the requirement of houses for the labourers was estimated at 560783 as against the existing 32035 pucca houses, 8391 semi-pucca houses and 5998 mud huts. 537 houses of the first category, 18 of the second category and 76 mud huts were constructed during the year. There were 157 hospitals with 4374 beds and 70 dispensaries where 157 qualified doctors, 165 visiting doctors, 211 compounders, 129 midwives, 107 *Dhais*, 148 nurses, 82 Health Assistants and 152 Dressers were employed. 18 canteens were provided by the management and 59 by contractors. For the benefit of the labourers 230 Central Creches and 499 Statellite creches with facilities of food, clothing, and play things were provided by the authorities. 48441 children of school going age received education in 231 schools. An amount of Rs. 840496. was spent on the labourers as sickness benefit.

Petroleum Industry : Among other industries where notable labour welfare works have been done, mention may be made of the petroleum and coal Industries, The Assam Oil Company has provided for educational facilities both to the employees and their children. There are six Lower Primary Schools, one M. E. School and three High Schools for the labourers under the A. O. C. Education is free for the children of the employees upto Class VI. A few post-Matriculation scholarships are also awarded to the pupils who secure a place among the first ten in the Matriculation Examination. Besides, the Company has opened a Workers Night School for the benefit of the workers and artisans. Housing accommodation is provided to 4,305 employees in Company's quarters and settlement areas at Digboi and Tinsukia. Electricity is supplied free of charge and all those employees who are not provided with Company's quarters, are paid house allowance. There is a well equipped modern hospital with 200 beds. Free medical facilities are provided to the employees and their dependents.

The Company is also running three canteens, two at Digboi and one at Tinsukia where meals, snacks etc. are served. As regards sports and games, the A. O. C. organises inter-departmental football league and knockout competitions. The annual Vegetable Show is a popular programme among the employees of the Company,. A recreation cum-education programme is held regularly in the evening to entertain the employees and their families. The Company also offers donations when some socio-religious functions are held by the labourers and community development works are done.

Similarly the Oil India Limited, Duliajan and the Fertilizer Corporation of India, Namrup have adopted various welfare measures for the benefit of workers serving under them. Housing accommodation, medical facilities, supply of electricity and water are some of the important measures provided by these two organisations.

Coal Industry : In the collieries under the Assam Railway and Trading Company, various welfare measures have been adopted for the benefit of the workers. In the early period, the working condition in the collieries was hazardous and mortality was high among the labourers. However, the gradual extension of clearings and elaborate precautions taken to safeguard the labourers' health have yielded good results and at present the mortality among coal workers is low. Of the various welfare measures adopted for the workers mention may be made of the provision of statutory institutions like Pit head Bath and creches in all collieries, canteens for use of labour and staff at Boragolai and Ledo, hospital facilities at Namdang, Ledo and Tipong collieries. There is also a well equipped central hospital at Margherita and ambulance service is provided between central hospital and collieries. The workers are provided with safety boots at concessional rates. In addition, the workers and families are provided with rent free quarters, free medical service and rations at concessional rates. Sanitation gangs are raised at all collieries, who are responsible for maintaining cleanliness in the Labour lines, D. P. P. treatment is also adopted at periodic intervals. A welfare officer of the Company supervises the labour welfare activities of the Company.

CHAPTER VI

BANKING, TRADE AND COMMERCE

A. Banking and Finance.

(a) History of indigenous banking :

The origin of indigenous banking in the district is shrouded in obscurity. During the Ahom period, circulation of money was not considerable compared to that of our times, and banks as we understand today, did not exist. With the advent of the British, a number of enterprising *Marwari* merchants established themselves in the district and many of them functioned as indigenous banks. Probably the banking business they transacted was only a side-line as they call it in business parlance. The *Assam Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee* (1929-30) found that in many towns of Assam the banking business was confined to large *Marwari* firms who accepted deposits and lent money on interest. The report of the Committee revealed that these firms did not invite deposits ; but the local people kept deposits at about 6 per cent interest *per annum* and these deposits were withdrawable at call. Smaller firms owned by the people of this community also occasionally received deposits, but usually they depended for their finance on bigger firms in towns. No separate account of the banking business was maintained by these firms and similarly no separate balance sheets for losses and profits of banking transactions were prepared. Loans were usually given to the villagers as advance on condition of repayment of the principal along with the interest in the shape of produce.

Giving evidence before the *Assam Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee* (1929-30), some of the leading businessmen of Dibrugarh observed as follows :

"Indigenous bankers are doing many kinds of work, the most important of which is financing the tea gardens. The garden manager pays the bankers with Calcutta cheques at the commencement of each month and the banker has to arrange for necessary finance throughout the whole month. Besides this, the indigenous bankers also help the import and export trade of the district by allowing and receiving payments by *hundies* for the exporters and importers. Indigenous bankers are not as a rule interested with agriculture but those who reside in the rural districts help the cultivators by allowing them advances, etc., for which they charge rather high rate of interest. Indigenous bankers help the trade and industry of the district by arranging payments through *hundi* system.....There are many firms working only with a small capital in comparison with the volume of business they have developed. None has any fixed capital like the Joint-stock Banks and everyone does business according to his own will and opportunities that come before him. Amongst the indigenous bankers there exist a business relationship and they accept and make pay-

ment for hundies, cheques, etc. This again is done only when the parties are known to each other. With the Imperial Bank the relation is that when the indigenous bankers receive Calcutta cheques from their clients, they can get ready money from the Imperial Bank. The Imperial Bank merely acts as the treasurer of the indigenous bankers. This help the bankers used to get through the Government Treasury before the branch establishment of the Imperial Bank was started here..... ..... Generally loans are granted by taking proper securities and for periods as required by the borrower. In cases where gentlemen and parties are known to the bankers, loans are granted on personal security only. To meet their demands the indigenous bankers issue '*madati*' *hundies* on Calcutta firms with whom they have business relationship. By issuing these hundies the banker gets his required amount readily and he has to repay the amount after the days for which the amount was required and of which duration was mentioned in the *madati hundi*. The drawees of such *hundies* charge a certain percentage of interest for the period for which their money is being utilised by the drawer. The rate of interest allowed by the indigenous ban-bankers on deposits varies from Rs. 4 to Rs. 9 per cent per annum. This depends on the need of the banker requiring the money. Merchants and dealers residing in the agricultural districts usually do this nature of business and this practice is not prevalent amongst the indigenous bankers as a class. Rate of interest paid by the agricultural community varies from Rs. 18 to Rs. 24 per cent per annum.....There is no provincial or central money market in Assam and as already stated, major portion of *hundies*, etc., are drawn on Calcutta branches or firms and discounted there.[1]"

In 1929-30 when the Assam Provincial Banking Committee held the enquiry, there were no co-operative or joint stock banks in the district. The Imperial Bank had a branch at Dibrugarh but it was precluded from lending money on immovable property only, or giving long term accommodation. However, the indigenous banks were vitally affected with the setting up of a branch of the Imperial Bank at Dibrugarh. A memorandum submitted before this Committee observed, as follows :

"Opening of new branch of the Imperial Bank of India has helped the people to become acquainted with banking habits and many people have now opened accounts with such branches. People who formerly used to deposit with the indigenous bankers have now transferred their accounts to the Imperial Bank and the tea gardens who formerly kept their accounts with the indigenous bankers have also transferred their accounts. From this point of view the establishment of the Imperial Bank has resulted in a loss to the indigenous banking community. All the indigenous bankers have now opened accounts with the Imperial Bank and they cash the Calcutta cheques from the bank which they used to send to Calcutta. Severe competition has resulted in the bank's endeavour to secure trade by reducing the discount and the indigenous bankers are gradually pushed aside. Briefly, the establishment of the Imperial Bank has helped to a certain extent the growth of 'deposit habit but it has done a great loss to the merchants and indigenous banking community."[2]

(b) General credit facilities :

As in other districts of Assam there is a considerable burden of indebtedness in rural areas. But for the non-availability of credit in

1. *Report of the Assam Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee*, (1929-30) *Vol*-11, *p*.273.
2. Ibid, P. 27.

rural areas the incidence of indebtedness could have been higher. The causes of rural indebtedness have been summarised as follows in the *Survey of Rural Economic Conditions in Lakhimpur* : "Inspite of considerable inherited agricultural skill and abundance of labour, agriculture to our majority of cultivators is a deficit economy. The basic physical and environmental defects of our agricultural economy, such as small and fragmented holdings, overstrained soil, and inefficient cultivation processes, vagaries of monsoons and insecurity of crop have all combined to keep down the bulk of the cultivators on the brink of or even below the level of subsistence for years together. For many of them, returns from land are not sufficient to cover the expenditure on farming and other domestic needs. The non-existence of sufficient scope for extraneous earning from village handicrafts or cottage industries has increased the pressure on agriculture. This has enhanced the competition for land and weakened the position of the cultivator and exposed him for exploitation. These factors in combination with others such as extravagance in marriages and domestic ceremonies, ill health, love of litigation etc., which are commonly associated with the character of rural peasantry have resulted in their general poverty and the presence of a large volume of indebtedness, the greater part of which is incurred for unproductive purposes".[3]

Dr. P. C. Goswami summarising the causes of indebtedness said :-, "Growth of population and stagnation in rural productivity with limitation of employment opportunities are sure to lead to greater indebtedness".[4]

The extent of rural indebtedness in the undivided Lakhimpur district was revealed in the *Survey of Rural Economic Conditions in Lakhimpur District*. The statement given below indicates the position, as prevailed in the district in 1948-49.[5]

Name of the district	% of indebtedness to total families in sample	Average debt per family.	Average debt per indebted family.
Lakhimpur	30.95	Rs. 57.73	Rs. 186.54

Nearly two-fifths of the total number of rural families inhabiting the areas covered by the survey were indebted in 1948-49. The average debt per indebted family remained at much the same level as in 1929 ; but considering the rise of the price level during these twenty years this can be regarded as an improvement.

3. *A Survey of Rural Economic Conditions in Lakhimpur District* (1954), Department of Economics & Statistics, Govt. of Assam, Shillong *P*.52
4. *P. C. Goswami* : The *Economic Development of Assam*, (1963) *P*. 60.
5. *A Survey of Rural Economic Conditions in Lakhimpur District* (1954) P. 53.

The Survey of Rural Economic conditions in Lakhimpur conducted by the Department of Economics and Statistics of the Government of Assam further reveals that out of 2,430 families covered by the survey as many as 1,678 or 69.05 per cent were debt-free families. The average debt per indebted family was Rs. 186.54. The percentage of debt-free families was the highest (79.45 per cent) in ex-tea garden labour villages and the least (35.20 per cent) in East Bengal immigrant villages. Debt in kind constituted a negligible proportion of the amount of money debts. About 92 per cent of the debt was unsecured. The bulk of the debt constituted short-term loans ; about 82 per cent of the cash debt was contracted during the three years preceding the above Enquiry. The private or semi-professional money lenders formed the main source of rural debt and loans incurred from that source accounted for 54.15 per cent of total borrowed amount. Facilities of commercial banks were not generally available to the rural agriculturists. The Co-operative banks played an insignificant role.

The rate of interest charged on government advances for agricultural purposes was $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent ; and that commonly charged on loans from co-operative banks was 9 per cent. The rate charged by private traders and semi-professional money lenders generally ranged from a minimum of 10 per cent to more than 100 per cent, though for majority of loans incurred, the interest rates were found to be in the range of 30 per cent to 50 per cent. The average burden of debt was higher among the non-cultivators. Among agricultural families, the owner cultivators were more in debt. The burden of debt was heavier on the small holders, the rates of interest charged from them was also higher.

The rural people take loans mainly for social ceremonies like marriage, *sradha* (funeral ceremonies) and for productive purposes like purchase of cattle, seeds, implements etc., and improvement of land. The proportion of loans for providing education to children is as low as for medical expenses. Other causes of loans are attributed to low level of money income and crop failures. The following table represents the percentage of total cash loans for different purposes in 1948-49 :

District	Purpose		per cent
1	2		3
Lakhimpur	1. Repayment of old debt	..	2.7
	2. Marriage, *sraddha* etc.	..	10.5
	3. Famine and failure of crops	..	8.8
	4. Purchase of farm cattle, implements seeds etc.	..	13.0
	5. Purchase of land and its improvement	..	2.4
	6. Education of children	..	3.3
	7. Litigation	..	1.2
	8. Medical expenses	..	3.4
	9. Outstanding bills	..	11.2
	10. Others (tncluding friends and relatives	..	42.4

Measures to regulate money-lending : To relieve the rural people from the burden of indebtedness the Government of Assam took some measures after the economic depression in 1931-33. These measures are enumerated in the '*Economic Development of Assam*' as follows : "The Assam Money Lenders Act was passed in 1934 to reduce money lenders' extortions from debtors. Compound interest was prohibited and the rate of simple interest was restricted to $9\frac{3}{8}$ percent and $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, depending whether the loan was secured or not. During 1936 to 1939 several Debt Conciliation Boards (under Assam Debt Conciliation Act of 1936) were established to help the debtors in settling old debts with creditors by arranging reduction of the total amounts and payment in instalments. The outbreak of the Second World War gave a great opportunity to the people of Assam to earn in various new jobs arising out of the War efforts in the State. This helped to reduce indebtedness considerably. But even then, the heavy burden of indebtedness on 1948-49 would be realised by comparing average debt par indebted family with the net annual average income per rural family. It has been found that the average burden of indebtedness is higher for non-cultivating families than for cultivating ones and in both these categories the burden is heavier on land owners than on the landless, which may be due to better credit worthiness of land owning families."[6]

Role of Private money-lenders : The village money-lenders constituted the largest single source of the rural credit system in the undivided district of Lakhimpur. Friends and relatives are the second important source of loans. The land owners whose fields are cultivated by the debtors, cater to a tiny fraction of the credit need in the rural areas. Nearly ninety six per cent of the rural credit are supplied by money-lenders, friends and relatives. The following table shows the sources of loans as percentage of total cash loans in the undivided Lakhimpur district.[7]

Source	Percentage
1. Co-operative Banks	0.01
2. Money-lenders	53.6
3. Land-owners	2.9
4. Government	0.5
5. Commercial Bank	0.5
6. Others (including friends & relatives).	42.5

6. P. C. Goswami, *The Economic Development of Assam*, (1963) p.62.
7. *A Survey of the Rural Economic Conditions in the Lakhimpur District* (1954), p. 53-54.

Some Afgan nationals popularly known '*Kabuliwallas*' are reported to be engaged in money lending business in the undivided district of Lakhimpur. The volume of credit supplied by them is not known. It is, however, certain that they extort interest at a high rate which at time goes upto 20% at compound rate. A number of big business firms lend money to the tea garden management on short-term basis. The business is mostly confined to the Marwari people.

It has been mentioned in the *Assam Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee Report* that in the Assam Valley, professional money lenders were a few. The Committee found that the rate of interest charged by money lenders in Sibsagar, Lakhimpur and Darrang districts was 37½ percent *per amum*, however, fluctuations of this rate were not uncommon.

Joint Stock Banks : A well organised banking and credit system is a *sine qua non* for a country's economic progress. In Assam, the growth of joint stock commercial banking is of comparatively recent origin and has been tardy. Uptil now the banking and credit facilities available in Assam are inadequate. Not a single head office of any scheduled commercial bank is located in this State, though a good number of them is working here with branches located in the State. This observation holds good in case of the banking and institutional credit facilities of the district of Dibrugarh which is the most industrialised among the districts and as such requires more banking and credit facilities.

The oldest of the modern banking institutions in this district was a branch of the Imperial Bank (renamed as State Bank of India in 1955) at Dibrugarh. Branches of other Commercial Banks have since been gradually established. Besides these, two branches of the Assam Co-operative Apex Bank at Dibrugarh and North Lakhimpur are also working in the district. The Commercial banks provide credit for industry, trade and commerce while the co-operative Apex Bank has to shoulder the additional responsibility of rural credit finance out of the funds available from the Reserve Bank of India and from its own resources.

The State Bank of India, the United Bank of India and the Punjab National Bank opened branches in different parts of the undivided Lakhimpur district. Fourteen commercial banks including the last two, were nationalised on July 19, 1969. In 1961 there were only ten bank offices in the undivided Lakhimpur district. The position of Assam as a whole was also far from satisfactory. Only one per cent of the bank offices in operation in India was functioning in Assam at the end of June 1969.

The Lead Bank scheme introduced in 1969 is an important event in the history of banking in India. Under this scheme a co-ordinated development of banking business in the districts where banking facilities were inadequate was envisaged. A Lead Bank is responsible for carrying out a survey of the credit needs, opening of branches and extension of credit facilities in the district allotted to it. The United Bank of India is the Lead Bank for five districts of Assam ; these are Cachar, Dibrugarh, Nowgong, Lakhimpur and Sibsagar. The area comprising the undivided Lakhimpur district was thus allotted to the United Bank of India to discharge its duties as the Lead Bank. Apart from catering to the credit needs of the small scale and large industries, the Lead Bank is responsible to extend credit facilities for improvement of agriculture. Other beneficiaries of liberalised credit facilities from the Lead Banks are retail traders, self-employed and professional people, unemployed educated youths and engineers who start industries. Transport is another sector where credit from banks should flow in an adequate measure. In short, primary function of a nationalised bank is to play a vital role in the nation-building activities and to mobilise deposits in a planned and co-ordinated manner. The following analysis will give an idea of the functioning of the commercial banks in the undivided Lakhimpur district.

The United Bank of India Limited : In 1972 the branch network of this bank covered eight centres of Dibrugarh district. These branches were opened at Dibrugarh, Digboi, Duliajan, Tinsukia, Naharkatiya, Doom Dooma, Margherita and Chabua. The first branch of this bank was established at Dibrugarh, the headquarters of the undivided Lakhimpur on November 22, 1935. It has functioned very smoothly for nearly four decades and has contributed much to the development of trade, commerce and industry of the district.

In the present district of Lakhimpur there are three branches of the United Bank of India, at North Lakhimpur, Bihpuria and Laluk. These branches in the district were opened on the 30th December 1971. The United Bank of India has extended financial assistance to the tea industry and a large number of tea-based industries including general engineering, chemical and insecticides, plywood and veneer industries. The agriculture and transport sectors are also covered by this bank, although on a very moderate scale.

The Punjab National Bank Limited : In 1970, this bank had two branches in the district one at Dibrugarh and the other at Tinsukia. Prior to nationalisation the bank used to offer credit facilities against readily saleable securities such as food grains, pulses, seeds, oil, sugar, iron and steel, and other metals. Hypothecation of tea also received considerable attention from this bank.

The State Bank of India : In 1970 the State Bank of India had five branches in the undivided Lakhimpur district at Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, North Lakhimpur, Namrup and Dibrugarh University. The Dibrugarh University branch of the State Bank of India is only a pay office. Another branch of this Bank has been established at Dhemaji in 1972.

The State Bank of India is the name given to the former Imperial Bank, which was nationalised in 1955. In connection with the functioning of this Bank at Dibrugarh *The Assam Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee* observed that this bank had two branches in Assam, one in the plains at Dibrugarh, and the other at Shillong. The Agent of the Dibrugarh branch declined to give evidence before the Committee being under the impression that he was forbidden to do so by his Head office Although details are not available it can safely be said that the establishment of the Imperial Bank has accelerated the development of trade and industry in the district.

The United Commercial Bank : Till bifurcation of the district there was only one branch of this Bank at Dibrugarh. The Dibrugarh branch of this bank has been showing considerable progress in the deployment of its funds in various sectors of the economy. Tea, plywood and hardboard industries received sizable credit from this bank which liberally subscribed to various loans and securities floated by the State Government and other agencies.

The following statement shows the advances made and deposits mobilised by the Commercial Banks in the undivided district of Lakhimpur.[8]

Purposes of Advances	1962	1963	1964	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5
1. Industry	3,027 (17.17%)	3,455 (8.67%)	12,937 (22.27%)	Amount of Rupees in thousands.
2. Trade and Commerce	12,548 (71.16%)	3,460 (86.86%)	43,058 (74,15%)	
3. Agriculture	472 (2.68%)	228 (0.58%)	217 (0.37%)	
4. Professional	4 (0.02%)	432 (1.08%)	1,137 (1.96%)	
5. Personal	1,398 (7.93%)	326 (0.82%)	288 (0.50%)	
6. Others	183 (1.04%)	793 (1.99%)	438 (0.75%)	
Total	17,632 (100.%)	39,935 (100.%)	58,070 (100.%)	
Types of Deposits :				
1. Demand Deposits	149.07 (85.19%)	202.20 (87.31%)	208.44 (85.10%)	Amount of Rupees in Millions
2. Time Deposits	12.84 (7.34%)	13.14 (5.68%)	15,57 6.36%))	
3. Savings Deposits	13.06 (7.47%)	16.24 (7.01%)	20.93 (8.54%)	
Total Deposits	174.97 (100%)	231.58 (100%)	244.94 (100%)	

8. *Report from the Department of Economics and Statistics*, Govt. of Assam, Shillong.

Co-operative credit societies and banks : The Co-operative Societies Act, 1904, ushered in an era of co-operation in the field of rural credit in the undivided district of Lakhimpur. The object of the above Act was confined to provision of cheap credit to the agriculturists and some co-operative credit societies were formed under this Act in the district. The main difficulty of the rural societies formed during the period from 1904 to 1912 was the paucity of working capital. In order to expand the area of activity of the co-operatives, the Co-operative Societies Act of 1912 was passed. This Act removed the restrictions on non-credit co-operation and allowed formation of productive and distributive societies besides the central organisations. The co-operative movement suffered a serious set-back during the great depression of the thirties. The co-operatives could overcome these difficulties primarily because of the relief-cum-preventive measures taken up by the Government. During World War, II control was imposed on supply of essential commodities. At this juncture the co-operatives were called upon to play a crucial role. Accordingly, a new type of co-operatives known as the Consumers Co-operative Societies was formed to put the movement on a new gear. The success of these societies led to the formation of Primary Trading Societies, and Central Trading Co-operatives in the districts of Assam including Lakhimpur. Mismanagement and some other factors led to the liquidation of many of these societies and before the attainment of Independence the movement was virtually on the verge of decay.

In 1948, there were two Co-operative Central Banks, 59 Agricultural Societies and 171 non-Agricultural Societies in the district af Lakhimpuy. The total working capital constructed by the loans from

individuals, banks and societies, share capital and deposits (except in case of the Co-operative Central Bank) was Rs. 29,002, Rs. 49,091 and Rs. 5,59,621 respectively for the above three types of Co-operative societies. The loans issued by the Central Bank amounted to Rs. 7500 as against Rs. 4230 issued by the Agricultural Societies and Rs. 5183 issued by the non-Agricultural Societies. These figures indicate that the role of the co-operatives in the Lakhimpur district at the time of Independence was far from satisfactory.

With the opening of the Co-operative Apex Bank in 1948, the co-operative movement gained momentum. In 1951 when the First Five Year Plan was launched the co-operative movement in Assam received a fresh fillip During the successive Five Year Plans emphasis was given on revitalisation of the co-operative movement and it started functioning as an agency to provide rural credit and facilities for marketing, processing, distribution and storage of agricultural products. The milestone of progress of the co-operative movement in the district during this period was the launching of the Credit Revitalisation Scheme by the Reserve Bank of India as per recommendations of the *Rural Credit Survey Committee*. Larger Credit Co-operatives, Primary Marketing Societies, Apex Marketing Societies were formed from 1956 onwards. According to the recommendations of the *National Development Council* a new type of society namely the Service Co-operative Society came into being and was entrusted with marketing, processing and distribution in addition to the supply of cheap credit. Government provide for subsidy for construction of godowns and management of the society and participates in share capital. These have bolstered up the co-operative movement. The impact of new agricultural strategy has generated a vastly increased demand for credit and ancillary services. Co-operatives continue to be an important institutional source for agricultural credit. The major emphasis is on strengthening and expansion of institutional agencies for provision of growing demand of credit for agriculture. The objectives and the strategy of the Fifth Five Year Plan in Assam in respect of the Co-operatives are to ensure :-

(a) adequate flow of credit to the farmers ;
(b) greater involvement of Marketing Co-operatives in the handling of agricultural products ;
(c) strengthening of processing Co-operatives ;
(d) systematic development of co-operative Stores to facilitate handling of wholesale trade and to provide essential commodities to consumers ;
(e) enlargement of storage capacity ;
(f) provision of co-operative training to larger number of officials and non-officials.

The Fifth Five Year Plan aims at removal of structural and managerial inadequacies so that the co-operatives may be in a position to lend adequate support to agricultural production programmes and play a significant role in the spheres of rural credit, marketing, processing etc. An analysis of different types of co-operative societies functioning in the district is given below.

Agricultural Credit Societies : At the initial stage of the co-operative movement a number of *Gaolia* Banks (Village Credit Banks) were established in different parts of Dibrugarh sub-division. The following list shows some of the Credit co-operative Societies registered during the period from 1906 to 1914.

Name of the Society	Year of establishment
1. Dinjoy Chabua *Gaolia* Bank	1906
2. Niz Chabua *Gaolia* Bank	1906
3. Lahoal *Gaolia* Bank	1907
4. Gharbandi *Gaolia* Bank	1907
5. Baligaon *Gaolia* Bank	1913
6. Dahotia *Gaolia* Bank	1913
7. Dhuanguri *Gaolia* Bank	1913
8. Gahoripam *Gaolia* Bank	1913
9. Morankari *Gaolia* Bank	1914
10. Na-khat *Gaolia* Bank	1914
11. Kholowlowa *Gaolia* Bank	1914
12. Lengeri *Gaolia* Bank	1914

The *Gaolia* Banks used to function as such till 1958 when many of them were gradually converted into Service Co-operative Societies. In 1921 two Consumers' Co-operative Societies were organised in the district. These were the Assam Railway Co-operative Stores Ltd., and the Tamulbari Co-operative Stores Ltd. The first went into liquidation but the second one is still functioning.

In 1948-49 there were about 57 Agricultural Societies in the undivided district with membership of 1231 persons. The Primary Agricultural Credit Societies registered a further rise from 213 in 1958-59 to 402 in 1960-61 with a corresponding rise in membership from 11,753 to 19,017. Of these 402 Societies, 372 were small-sized societies including Service Co-operative Societies and 30 large-sized societies. The share capital and working capital of these societies in 1960-61 were Rs. 4,36,800 and Rs. 2,064,800 respectively. A total amount of Rs. 4,230. only was granted to the cultivators in 1948-49 as short and medium term loans which in 1950-61 reached the level of Rs. 4,23,900. From 1959 to 1960-61, Rs. 48.57 lakhs were invested for the promotion of agricultural business through co-operative societies. The large-sized

societies received State Government participation in share capital to the extent of Rs. 7,500 each and managerial subsidy on a gradually decreasing scale had also been provided with. Financial assistance in the shape of loan and subsidy for construction of storage godowns, at the rate of Rs. 12,500 per godown came from the Government. In 1956, there was only one godown for storage of agricultural crops ; but in 1961, nine more godowns were constructed in different trading centres. Managerial subsidy at Rs. 150 per society has also been granted to the Service Co-operatives set up newly in the wake of re-organisation of small-sized credit societies.

By the end of June 1968, there were in the district 292 Agricultural Credit Societies, of which 169 were in Dibrugarh subdivision and 123 in North Lakhimpur subdivision. The figure of the total membership of these societies stood at 24007. The total working capital of these societies amounted to more than thirty lakhs of rupees of which borrowings accounted for seventeen lakhs. The level of outstanding loans was almost equal to the level of borrowings and this figure stood at Rs. 17,80,000. sixty two of these societies earned Rs. 85,000 as net profit.

Non-agricultural Credit Societies : Besides the above agricultural credit societies, there were 21, non-agricultural credit societies in the district in 1958-59. The membership of these societies was 3,126 with a paid-up capital of Rs. 2,52,227. The amount of credit advanced by these societies during the same year amounted to Rs. 11,09,012 as against an outstanding loan of Rs. 13,50,103. Total assets and liabilities of these societies were of the order of Rs. 22,54,131 and Rs. 22,39,001 respectively. In June 1967, the total number of these Societies came down to 15 ; but the strength of membership rose to 4238. The paid-up capital amounted to Rs. 3,86,163. During the year under review these Societies advanced Rs. 5145 as short term loans and Rs. 49,684 as medium term loans.

Co-operative Marketing Societies : Co-operative Marketing in the State of Assam is a recent development. These societies were established towards the end of the First Five Year Plan. The farmer who is the backbone of agricultural economy must be ensured a reasonable reward for his labour. In the absence of co-operative marketing, the farmer has to dispose of his marketable surplus at the dictated price of the business community having plenty of financial resources. The object of co-operative marketing societies is to strengthen the position of the farmer, to assure him a regular market and to enable him to obtain a reasonable price. As observed by the Co-operative Planning Committee, co-operative marketing "integrates marketing and productive operations, reduces waste by preventing duplication of agencies and provides facilities for improvement in the quality of agricultural products. It further attempts to eliminate those undersirable forms of stimulation in which motive is profit from price manipulations. The operation of Co-operative Marketing organisation teaches farmers that agriculture is primarily a form of bussiness."

In 1958-59, nine co-operative Marketing societies were functioning in the district with a paid-up capital of Rs. 95,732 and had a membership of 1,256 persons, the loan and subsidy extended by the Government during the same year to these societies amounted to Rs. 86,600 and the total assets and liabilities of these societies were of the order of Rs. 3,11,893 and Rs. 3,04,664 respectively. All the societies have been undertaking the responsibility of executing the State Trading Scheme with effect from 1.1.61. The total number of these societies rose to 16 by June 1967 ; each of the two subdivisions of the undivided district of Lakhimpur had eight such societies. The total number of members was 989 in Dibrugarh and 2445 in North Lakhimpur sub-divisions. The paid-up capital of the societies of Dibrugarh subdivision amounted to Rs. 4,33,823 and that of the other subdivision was Rs. 7,62,843. The Primary Marketing Societies had 3 godowns in Dibrugarh subdivision and 13 godowns in North Lakhimpur sub-division. Total assets of the Primary Marketing Societies of North Lakhimpur amounted to Rs. 9,70,184. as against Rs. 9,16,186. held by their counterparts in the other sub-division.

The Co-operative Farming Societies : Co-operative Farming is still in the stage of experiment. The number of co-operative Farming Societies in the district has increased from 16 in 1956 to 25 in 1958-59 with total membership of 736 persons and paid-up capital of Rs. 45,858. An amount of Rs. 22,015 has also been advanced by the Government to these societies as loans and subsidies. The societies are seized of the problems of good and qualified leadership, technical guidance, transport bottleneck etc. In June 1967, the number of Farming Societies came down to two, having only 55 members. These Societies had an area of 110 acres under their possession ; but cultivated only 42 acres of land. The total assets of these Societies was Rs. 15,216. as against the total liability amounting to Rs. 12,266. only.

The Weavers' Co-operative Societies : The progress of Co-operation in handloom weaving industry has been rapid in Assam since 1951. The number of Weavers' Co-operative Societies in the district has increased from 110 in 1956-57 to 171 in 1958-59. The membership of these societies has also increased from 1,500 to 4,147 during the same period. The paid-up capital of these societies in 1958-59 was Rs. 14,752. and an amount of Rs. 23,326. was received as loan and subsidies from the

Government. The total assets and liabilities of Weavers' Co-operative Societies during the same year amounted to Rs. 1,07,017. and Rs. 88,932. respectively. Handloom weaving is a subsidiary occupation with the majority of the rural population of the State and thus most of weavers' societies are formed by the part-time weavers.

The Industrial Co-operative Societies : The number of Industrial Co-operative Societies other than weaving societies was nine in 1958-59. These societies had membership of 269 persons with paid-up capital of only Rs. 8,548. Their total assets and liabilities were Rs. 50,646. and Rs. 50,034. respectively and production was valued at Rs. 71,059. These societies are guided by the Department of Industries so far as the technical side is concerned and by the Department of Co-operation, in respect of finance and other organisational matters.

The Fishery Co-operative Societies : There were 14 Fishery Co-operative Societies in the district with membership of 910 and paid-up capital of Rs. 14,951. in 1958-59. The working of the societies is linked up with acquiring fishing rights in Government Fisheries. So, when the rights cannot be acquired due to high bid or otherwise, the societies remain defunct.

The Consumers' Co-operative Stores : In 1958-59, there were 65 Primary Stores (Primary Trading Societies) and one Central Wholesale Society in the undivided district. The total strength of membership of both these types of societies was 18,993 and 82 and the paid-up capital amounted to Rs. 1,44,423. and Rs. 9,050. respectively. The assets and liabilities of Primary Stores were Rs. 2,63,943. and Rs. 2,55,353. The total sales and purchases of Primary Stores during the same year amounted to Rs. 5,87,905. and Rs. 6,03,031. respectively. The total assets and liabilities of Dibrugarh Central Wholesale Societies Ltd., was Rs. 1,89,487. and Rs. 1,92,719. repectively.

The Multipurpose Co-operative Societies : Besides the Co-operative Societies stated above, there were 15 Multipurpose Co-operative Societies in the district in 1958-59 with membership of 530 and paid-up capital of Rs. 28,984. The total assets and liabilities of these societies were of the order of Rs. 1,72,495. and Rs. 1,70,667. respectively during the same year. The total number of these societies came down to seven in June 1967, when they had only 159 members. These societies advanced Rs. 14,700 as short term loans and Rs. 4,000. as medium term loans. The paid-up capital amounted to Rs. 15,722. out of the total assets amounting to Rs. 76,370. only.

The Dibrugarh Central Co-operative Bank Limited : This Bank was established in 1913 under the name of the Dibrugarh Central Co-operative Banking Union. In 1958, it underwent a change and was renamed as

the Dibrugarh Central Co-operative Bank which had an authorised capital fixed at Rs. 12 lakhs. Its share capital which was only Rs. 47,500. in 1913-14 rose to Rs. 1,27,004. in 1958-59. Its membership has also increased from 80 (nine individuals and 71 banks and societies) in 1956-57 to 138 in 1958-59. Since its registration till 1954-55, this Bank confined its business of issuing loans to the affiliated societies from its meagre fund created out of deposits received from members, non-members and share capital and thus this bank could not make satisfactory progress during this long period. But in 1955-56 when the Reserve Bank of India came forward to finance the Apex Bank and Central Co-operative Banks for agricultural purposes, this bank also availed itself of the opportunity and took short-term and medium-term loans for Rural Credit financing. Since 1955-56, till 1959-60 it made advances of Rs. 15,06,900. to the agriculturists through the Primary Credit Societies. Due to natural calamities and other reasons the borrowers failed to repay the loans to the Bank and as a result 75% of the total outstanding loan was lying overdue in 1961. For this reason the Bank found it difficult to augment its own fund position to the extent expected earlier. Inspite of difficulties caused by the heavy accumulation of overdues it continues to finance the new and deserving societies. During 1960-61, it issued Rs. 1,08,600. to its affiliated societies. The balance sheet of the bank for the year ending in June '67, revealed many distressing features. The total outstanding loans amounted to about Rs. 10 lakhs. The Bank received Rs. 33,000. as loans from the Reserve Bank of India and repaid Rs. 26,000. It showed a net loss of Rs. 39,000 during that year.

The Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Assam, Shillong deputes one Deputy Co-operative Officer to act as Secretary of the Bank who is fully responsible for day to day administration. He runs its business according to the policy laid down by the Board of Directors.

The Dibrugarh Co-operative Land Mortgage Bank Limited: The Dibrugarh Primary Land Mortgage Bank Limited and the Dibrugarh section of the Assam Co-operative Central Land Mortgage Bank Limited have been amalgamated into one organisation to form a strong economically viable unit under the name, the Dibrugarh Co-operative Land Mortgage Bank Ltd. To manage the day to day affairs of the Bank, there is one Assistant Co-operative Officer-cum-Secretary, attached to the Bank. The function of the Land Mortgage Bank is to issue long-term loans to the members of the Bank against security of land. The Secretary scrutinises and recommends the loan application of long-term loan against the mortgage of land to the bank which in turn obtains finance from the Central Land Mortgage Bank.

In 1962 the Bank had 150 members and a working capital of Rs. 57,208. During the period from 1958 to 1962, this Bank issued Rs. 47,300. as long-term loans out of which only Rs. 9,000. was realised. In 1966-67, the total liabilities of the Bank amounted to Rs. 29,301. including paid-up capital amounting to Rs. 1,600. Outstanding loans amounted to Rs. 22,884. only. The North Lakhimpur Land Mortgage Bank had the total liability of Rs. 1,33,975. during the same year. Its paid-up capital stood at Rs. 7,509. and borrowings at Rs. 99,802.. There is a Land Mortgage Bank at Dhemaji also.

The Assam Co-operative Apex Bank Limited : This bank sponsored and financed by the Government of Assam, was registered under the Co-operative Societies Act on 7th December, 1948 with its registered office at Shillong. The Bank was opened at a time when depositors and businessmen experienced serious difficulties due to failure of a large number of Commercial Banks. Its function primarily was to channelise credit to the rural agriculturists through central and primary co-operative societies. The Bank also aimed at providing finance to the middle class entrepreneurs who were badly in need of finance. The Bank had two branches in the undivided Lakhimpur district, one at North Lakhimpur and the other at Dibrugarh.

The Bank has been financing Marketing, Credit, Industrial and Multipurpose Co-operative Societies. The Bank is also financing Assam Co-operative Apex Marketing Societies for procurement of paddy and distribution of consumer goods in the State. It also offers credit facilities to the agriculturists through *Krishi Sahayak Samabai Samitis* under short-term loan for seasonal agricultural operations for a period of maximum one year on personal surity and on the strength of credit limits ascertained from the value of properties of the agriculturists. In the same way, medium-term loans are issued against mortgage of agricultural land for a maximum period of three years for purchase of cattle, reclamation of lands, repaying *Mahajan's* debts etc. Special long and medium-term loans are also issued for similar purposes for a maximum period of six years. In 1963, the amount of loans issued by the Bank to the agriculturists through the local Central Bank was as follows :-

STATEMENT OF SHORT-TERM MEDIUM-TERM AND SPECIAL LONG & MEDIUM-TERM LOANS ON 10.6.63 (Amount in rupees).

Particulars	Total amount disbursed.	Total repayment	Total interest realised	Balance outstanding
1	2	3	4	5
Short-term				
1957-58	4,40,390/-	4,08,258.00	29,920.61	32,671.23
1958-59	5,25,450/-	16,043.00	73,821.47	509,407.00
1959-60	1,60,000/-	14,05,700.00	18,228.32	145,943.00
Medium-term.				
1956-57	66,000/-	15,315.18	12,191.62	50,648.82
1961-62	30,000/-	11,700.00	1,159.31	18,300.00
Spl. M. T.	5,000/-	2,400.00	1,241.15	2,501.00
Spl. L. T.	5,000/-	1,648.00	1,825.83	3,351.25

(c) **General and Life Insurance :**

Some private Insurance Companies with limited liability operated in the district since 1947-48. The Life Insurance Corporation of India started its business in the Dibrugarh Sub-division in 1959. The rapid expansion of the volume of business till the end of 1971 led to the setting up of branch offices at Dibrugarh and Digboi, one sub-office at Tinsukia and a Development Centre at North Lakhimpur. During January 1972, the volume of insurance amount rose to Rs. 12.04 lakhs in the Dibrugarh branch and to Rs. 8.89 lakhs in the Digboi branch. During the same period Tinsukia sub-office accounted for Rs. 7.16 lakhs and Lakhimpur Development Centre made Rs. 2.38 lakhs showing an increase of 340 per cent of business during that year. The performance of the Life Insurance Corporation of India in the rural areas was impressive.

Among the General Insurance Companies which extended their business to the undivided district of Lakhimpur mention may be made of the Commonwealth Assurance Company Ltd., Hindusthan General Insurance Company Ltd., Northern India Motor Works Insurance Company Ltd., Oriental Fire and General Insurance Company Ltd., Ruby General Insurance Company Ltd., Hanover Insurance Company Ltd., and Caledoman Insurance Company Ltd.

The President of India On May 13, 1971 promulgated the General Insurance (Emergency Provisions) Ordinance, 1971 in terms of which the management of all insurers, Indian (with the exception of L. I. C. and State Governments) as well as foreign, registered under Insurance Act for transacting one or more classes of general insurance in India, vested in the Government. Later, the General Insurance (Emergency Provisions) Act, 1971 was enacted and it became effective from May 13, 1971. Provision was made for payment of compensation in cash to insurers whose management was taken over. The Central Government also appointed custodians drawn from the insurance field for management of insurance companies whose management was taken over by the Government.

The Life Insurance Corporation of India commenced transacting general insurance business from April 1, 1964. From April 1, 1971, it discontinued open market business and also arranged for transfer of its tied accounts business to the Oriental Fire and General Insurance Company Ltd., which was its subsidiary. It, however, continues to write general insurance business in the public sector.

The Emergency Risks (Goods) Insurance Act, 1962 and the Emergency Risks (Factories) Insurance Act, 1962 and the schemes framed thereunder were in operation since 1st January 1963. Under these Acts and schemes provision was made for compulsory insurance of goods (with certain exceptions), factories, inland vessels, plants and machinery of mines, oil installations, gas and electric supply undertakings, standing tea crops etc. The schemes were framed to ensure normal commercial activities without any fear of loss as a result of enemy action. With the revocation of proclamation of Emergency from 10th January 1968, the Acts and schemes framed thereunder ceased to be in force on that date. However, liability to pay arrears of premium as also the relevant claim that arose due to enemy action which have remained unpaid continues.

Small Savings : Much emphasis has been given on mobilisation of small savings during the plan periods. The following table shows the year-wise collections in the undivided Lakhimpur district, as shown in the **Economic Survey of Assam**, 1969.

Year	Collections (In million rupess) Gross	Net
1960-61	9.6	2.5
1961-62	10.4	3.1
1962-63	9.1	1.6
1963-64	11.6	4.3
1964-65	13.9	6.3
1965-66	11.7	5.0
1966-67	11.7	2.1
1967-68	16.3	1.0
1968-69	18.1	3.6

(d) **State assistance to industries** :

In order to encourage entrepreneur's interest the State Government has undertaken a selective strategy of promotional efforts. In recent years, both financial and technical assistance have been more widely diffused in order to remove regional imbalances. Stress has been laid on dispersal of industries to the less developed and backward regions of the State. In industries where private investment is shy, more investment in the public sector projects and greater State participation in private sector projects have been emphasised. Financial assistance extended by the State Government or State Government agencies falls under two categories, (i) grants-in-aid (ii) loans under the State Aid to Industries Act of 1956. Grants-in-aid either in kind or cash are granted to the deserving artisans, cottage industries and Industrial Co-operative Societies upto Rs. 500/- in a year, for the purchase of improved tools and machinery and to augment the working capital. Loans upto an amount of Rs. 1000/- are granted on personal security and upto Rs. 2500/- on furnishing one surety or more by the District Board. The amount in the latter case has been raised to Rs. 5000/-. In cases of political sufferers needing rehabilitation through small enterprises, the amount of loan may be raised to Rs. 7500/-. All other loans upto Rs. 20000/- are issued by the State Level Board against hypothecation of immovable property. The loan bears an interest of 4½ percent per annum and is repayable in five equal instalments after a gestation period of one year. The industrial units registered with the Directorate of Industries are also entitled to industrial loans from the State Bank of India.

The Directorate of Industries also sponsors the applications of the registered industrial units for the purchase of machinery on hire-purchase system from the National Small Industries Corporation, Okhala, New Delhi. As the newly constituted Lakhimpur district is one of the seven economically backward districts of Assam, the entrepreneurs desirous of establishing industrial enterprises in the district will get a rebate to the extent of 15% on capital invested in the machinery. Besides, a power subsidy of 9 paise per unit is also made available to small industrial units except the rice mills, *atta-chaki* and *oil-ghani*.

Recently transport subsidy to the extent of 50% for transporting finished products and raw materials has been made available to the industrial

units in the north-eastern region. The Assam Small Industries Development Corporation also undertakes to supply raw materials at controlled prices to industrial units registered with the Directorate of Industries, Assam. There are also special provisions for providing import licences for import of raw materials and machinery for industrial units located in the economically backward areas. Of the loans sanctioned to the educated unemployed desirous of establishing industrial enterprise, 25 percent of the total amount is regarded as grant and the rest as loan.

The Industrial Co-operative Societies receive financial help from the State Government either by way of working capital, share capital, loan or subsidy. The weaving societies are also supplied with credit by the Handloom Board in the form of working capital and share capital loans. The societies raise 75% of their share capital from loans of the Board which are given in the shape of yarns. They are also supplied with handloom accessories on the basis of 75% loan and 25% subsidy. During the year 1958-59, Government issued an amount of Rs. 13,687 as loan and Rs. 9,639 as subsidy to the weaving co-operative societies in the district.

The Assam Financial Corporation, set up in 1954, deals with industrial loans exceeding Rs. 20,000/-. in value. During the year 1958-59, the Corporation could deal only with twenty such cases and issued loan of Rs. 46,25,000/- throughout the State. Till the end of March 1971, the Corporation sanctioned financial assistance amounting to Rs. 72.45 lakhs to fifty small industrial units and Rs. 116.85 lakhs to 32 other industrial units of the undivided Lakhimpur district.

With a view to encouraging the banking institutions in the State to enter into the field of industrial credit, it was decided to channelise the disbursement of at least 10% of the bank loans through the Assam Financial Corporation and Urban Co-operative Banks. The Assam Financial Corporation acts as an agent of the State Government for sanction and issue of loan cases of Rs. 10,000/- each under certain terms and conditions. The three Commercial Banks, the State Bank of India, the United Bank of India and the Punjab National Bank, operating in the district have also made considerable advances to the Industrial sector. During the period 1962 to 1964, the advances made by the three Commercial banks under the head 'Industry' were of the order of Rs. 30,27,000/-, Rs. 34,55,000/- and Rs. 1,29,37,000/- respectively corresponding to 17.17, 8.67 and 22.27 per cent of the total advances.

The demand for industrial loan has been gradually going up with the industrial growth of the district. Caiptal in the State, has either been shy or its formation has been rather slow to accelerate the pace of

industrialisation. The increased financial assistance provided by the Five Year Plans is believed to help the growth of industries in the State.

Besides rendering financial assistance, the State Government also established, a Marketing Corporation during the Second Five Year Plan, with a view to facilitating the marketing of products of cottage and handicrafts industries purely on commercial basis. The Corporation has an authorised capital of Rs. 50 lakhs and upto 1963-64, the State Government participated in the share capital with an amount of Rs. 21,20,000/-. The Corporation took over 18 emporia from the Industries Department. The Corporation has four emporia in this district at following places. : North Lakhimpur, Dibrugarh, Digboi and Tinsukia. They have since closed down the emporia of North Lakhimpur and Digboi. There are three emporia under the Khadi and Village Industries Board at Dibrugarh, Tinsukia and North Lakhimpur.

During the Third Five Year Plan another corporation, the 'Small Industrial Development Corporation' has been established with a view to promoting establishment and execution of industrial projects or enterprises, for the manufacture and production of plant machinery, tools and equipments to promote industrial development in the State. So far Government has participated with an amount of Rs. 20.50 lakhs in share capital of the Corporation. The Corporation has already started one Jack-Board Factory at Tinsukia. All the Industrial Estates and Raw-material Depots in the State are in the process of being taken over by the Corporation. It also envisages starting of some industries for which raw-materials are locally available and for which there is demand in the State and such industries might be handed over to the private entrepreneurs if and when demand comes from them.

By way of giving incentive to the young entrpreneurs the State Government also supplies machineries on hire-purchase basis. The Department of Industries allots quotas of raw materials like pig iron, coal and coke, copper, zinc, camphor, C. I. Sheets, steel of various specifications etc. The Department is also maintaining one raw material depot at Tinsukia wherefrom the raw materials are supplied to entrepreneurs even on deferred payment.

To render technical assistance to the industries an Industrial Extension Centre has been established at Tinsukia. This Centre offers various facilities to the local people for receiving necessary training for different kinds of industries. Moreover, to impart training to village artisans some training-cum-production centres have been established at Chabua, Dhemaji and Joypur. The training-cum-production centre at Chabua was established in the year 1958 for imparting training in

soap and umbrella making. There is also provision for starting an upholstery section at the centre. The other two centres at Dhemaji and Joypur have been opened for providing facilities for training in tailoring blacksmithy and carpentry. A knitting and embroidery centre was established at Dibrugarh for imparting training to twenty to twenty four girls in knitting and embroidery. Stipends are given to the trainees of Industrial-Cum-Production centres and after completion of training, any trainee desirous of setting up his own industry can apply for grants-in-aid and loan upto Rs. 2,500/-. For undergoing any special training course outside the State, a stipend of Rs. 100/- p. m. is given to suitable persons.

The establishment of the Industrial Estate at Tinsukia in 1963 marked the beginning of a new chapter in the history of the industrial development of the district. The object of the Industrial Estate is to create conditions congenial for efficient and smooth functioning of the units, maintenance of uniform standards in production and economic utilisation of materials and equipments. It enables a number of small scale units to have the advantage of common services and other facilities such as good site, electricity, water, gas, steam, railway sidings, watch and ward etc.

The Small Industries Service Institute of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, has set up its state branch at Gauhati. It has been rendering technical, economic and industrial management guidance besides providing liaison and information services to the existing industrial units and prospective industrialists of the State.

(e) Currency and coinage :

The numismatic evidence of the pre-Ahom period of this district is very meagre ; but there is distinct proof of the use of coins in ancient Assam. The Nalanda Seal and the copper plate inscriptions of Kumar Bhaskar varman, bear testimony of the art of melting metals and impressing seals on melted metal, as early as the Seventh century A. D. The king struck coins of his own. It is mentioned in the Silimpur Stone slab Inscription, that the king (Jaypala : 1115-1175) offered 900 gold coins together with other gifts to a learned Brahmin, Prahasa by name. However, coins of this period are yet to be discovered.

Ahom coins : As early as the fourteenth century A. D. Sudangpha *alias* Bamuni Konwar (1397-1407) struck coins in his own name at the time of his accession to the throne. Since then it was a practice of each Ahom king to issue coins in his own name while ascending the coronation building known as *Singarighar* which contained a throne of gold for the new monarch to occupy. In his book "*Catalogue of the Provincial Coin Cabinet Assam*". A. W. Botham ascribed the credit of minting the first Ahom coin to Suklengmung. This view however, is not accepted by all historians. During the Ahom period, both gold and silver coins were in circulation. The coins of Suklengmung bore inscriptions in Tai language and character. Jayadhaj Sinha and his successor Chakradhaj Sinha replaced Tai by Sanskrit inscriptions. In all probability, this replacement was due to king Jayadhaj Sinha's conversion to Hinduism. Gadadhar Sinha replaced Sanskrit again by Tai inscription as he was not converted into Hinduism. Rudra Sinha (1696-1714) introduced annual issue of coins from 1696 in Assamese script using Sanskrit language. This practice was followed till the end of the Ahom rule. During the reign of Siva Sinha a square coin with Persian script was issued in 1651. Rajeswar Sinha also did the same during the first year of his reign (1674) ; but he issued square coins with Assamese script.

The coins of the early Ahom period bore only the date of accession of the king ; but with annual issue of coins the year of issue of coin was indicated on the obverse side together with the name of the king ; while the reverse showed an impression of the king's devotion to a particular deity. The deities most commonly mentioned were *Indra* and *Siva* (with or without his consort). The standard coins of Ahom kings weighed one *tola* or 96 *ratis* (11.66 grams). Half rupee and quarter rupee coins were introduced by Rudra Sinha and Siva Sinha respectively. This was carried further by Rajeswar Sinha who introduced new coins of the denomination of eigth and sixteenth of rupee and *Muhar*. There is no mention of mint place on the body of Ahom coins, except on those with Persian script issued by Pramatheswari and Rajeswar Sinha. There is evidence to show that coins were minted by different Ahom kings at Gargaon, Rangpur, and Desoi at various periods. No copper coins were issued during the Ahom period. Cowries or conchshells were issued for minor transactions.

Coins of Moamarias : Bharat Sing who was installed at Rangpur by the Moamarias as their king struck coins in his name. His coins dated 1791, 1792, 1795 and 1797 have been found. In these coins Bharat Sing described himself as a descendant of Bhagadatta. Another petty king Sarbananda who ruled the territory of the Morans, east of the Dihing also struck his own coins, using the Ahom title *Swargadeo*. His coins dated 1794 and 1795 are still extant.

Other coins : The Koch kings struck their own coins. The kingdom of the Koch king Narnarayan extended over the whole of Assam valley. Coins of the Koch kings are of different shapes and bear inscriptions in Sanskrit or archaic Assamese. The first Koch king to strike coins in his name was Narnarayan. His son Laksminarayan and his

descendants, however, ruled over the western part of the vast kingdom, only as vassals of the Moghul empire. The right of minting full rupees was denied to them and their coinage consisted only of half rupees with incomplete inscriptions known as "Narayani Rupees." But there are two or three full coins of Pran Narayan now preserved in the British Museum dated *Saka* 1556 (1633 A.D.). The Koch kings of the western part of the Koch kingdom struck coins in their own name upto the last part of the 19th century ; but out of several kings of the eastern Koch kingdom only Raghudeva is known to have issued some rupee coins.

Kachari rulers of Assam also had their own coins. The coins of Yosonarayan Deva and Satrudaman alias Pratapnarayan are still extant. The coins of Tamradhaj show that one series of coins was issued during his reign for a period of twenty years.

Jaintia kings also issued coins. Their rupee coins bore the inscription Jayantipura Purandara' on the obverse without the names of the kings. Their coins bearing *Saka* era 1591, 1592, 1630, 1653, 1707 and 1772 have been found. Presumably these dates indicate the time of accession of Jaintia kings who issued these coins. With the consolidation of the British rule in India, coinage was standardised throughout India. Besides the silver rupee coins, half rupee, four *anna*, two *anna*, one *anna*, nickel coins and one paise copper coins were issued during this period. The whole range of coins underwent a radical change when the country switched over to the decimal coinage system in 1956. Decimal coins now in circulation include rupee coins and coins of the demomination of 1, 2, 3, 5, 10, 25 and 50 paise.

B. TRADE AND COMMERCE

(a) Course of trade :

Exports and imports : The articles exported from the district though few in number are of considerable value. They consist mainly of tea, petroleum and petroleum products, coal, timber and timber products, cane, and cane-products, tea-chests, jute and other miscellaneous products of small scale industries established in recent years in the district. The principal item of export is tea which is of considerable economic importance to this district. Out of the country's total production of 650 million lbs. of tea, Assam produces more than half of it. Undivided Lakhimpur district in turn produces the highest quantity of Assam tea. This has been discussed in detail in Chapters IV and V. It is interesting to note that except for a small quantity of tea sold in the local markets, the entire output is disposed of in the Tea Auction Centres wherefrom tea finds place in the international markets. In fact tea industry is dependent on the export market. The Government of India and the Tea Board have taken various steps to improve the sale of tea in foreign countries.

Another principal item of export from the district is petroleum and its products. The first oil refinery in India was established in the district at Digboi and since its inception in 1899, this refinery is catering to the petroleum requirements of the country. From 1934 to 1952, this refinery produced from 63 to 67 million gallons (184 to 187 thousand gallons per day) of petroleum *per annum*. The recent discovery of new oil fields at Naharkatiya, Hugrijan and Moran in 1952-54 has given this district a prominent place in the oil map of India. The discovery is claimed to be of such importance that "more than 50 percent of India's present requirements of petroleum may eventually come from the new oil fields in place of the present supply of about 8 per cent from the Digboi oil fields."[9] To refine the newly found crude oil, two refineries under the Public Sector have been established, one at Barauni in Bihar with a refining capacity of three million tons *per annum* and another at Gauhati in Kamrup district with a refining capacity of 0·75 million tons per annum. The new oil fields at present are producing about 3.01 million tons of crude oil annually and this crude oil is being refined in the three refineries of Digboi, Gauhati and Barauni. With the supply of crude oil from the new oil fields, the annual production of the Digboi refinery has increased by more than 100 million gallons. The crude oil is transported to the refineries of Gauhati and Barauni through a pipe line. The petroleum and other products of Digboi and Gauhati refineries are exported outside the State except the quantity required within the State of Assam. Thus, the oil resources of this region have helped the country a great deal in saving considerable foreign exchange.

Coal is another important item of export from the district. Assam produces about 1.3% of the total Indian output of coal. About 80 to 85% of coal in Assam comes from the Makum coal fields of this district. But the cost of coal in Assam is higher in comparison to other coal producing centres in India because of higher labour cost and greater difficulties of transport. Its quality is also described as inferior though among the various coal fields in Assam, coal of Makum fields is by far the best. All these make Assam coal less attractive for markets elsewhere in India and as such almost the bulk of it is consumed within the State by the tea gardens and the railways, and the rest is put to domestic use.

9. P. C. Goswami ; *Economic Development of Assam*, 1963. pp. 160-61.

The main items of import to the district are various raw materials and machineries required for major and small scale industries, wheat, rice, pulses, gram, peas, groundnut, spices, all kinds of oil, sugar, chemical fertilizers, cement, C. I. sheets, iron materials, hardwares, paints and varnishes, tubewell pumps and pipes, cycles, motor cars, clothes and garments and all other kinds of consumer goods. Imported articles like machineries, raw materials, manufactured articles and food grains are required to meet local demands mainly from the tea gardens as also from the oil and other industries, and the demand is increasing with the development of medium and small scale industries.

The present Dibrugarh district is deficit in rice, which is brought from neighbouring districts such as Lakhimpur, Nowgong, and Sibsagar. Other commodities like onions, garlic, spices, dal and sugar are imported from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Mustard oil produced locally is insufficient and has to be imported from places like Kanpur. The stationery articles also come from outside Assam.

(b) **Trade Centres :**

In the undivided Lakhimpur district, Tinsukia was the main centre of wholesale business, next in importance being Dibrugarh. It continues to be so till today. It is a distributing centre of all wholesale commodities to neighbouring places around. Its wholesale business is not only confined within this district but also extends to other parts outside the district. Tinsukia originally was a small village ; several factors such as the opening of direct rail communication, growth of tea, oil and coal industry in the surrounding areas have helped Tinsukia to attain its present position. The discovery of oil wells has increased the importance of Tinsukia as this is the only distributing centre of petroleum produced at Digboi. This is also an important foodgrains market of Upper Assam, and approximately 10 wagons of foodstuff are distributed daily to different parts of the locality. Wholesale business in all important commodities such as foodstuff, clothes etc, is carried on from this centre on a large scale. The goods traffic of Tinsukia railway station is expanding from year to year and for 1956-57 it was 46, 74, 616 mds. inward and 73, 17, 050 mds. outward. The tea and petroleum products are the major items of goods traffic.

In recent years the importance of Tinsukia has increased considerably because of establishment and expansion of steel processing and light engineering industries and various fabrication workshops. From a centre of trade, Tinsukia has now achieved prominence as an industrial town in this north-eastern region of India.

Dibrugarh is another important centre of trade in the district. It is also the oldest town in the district. Several factors such as its connection with Calcutta by air and rail, the location of administrative headquarters and financial institutions in the town itself have contributed to the development of trade and commerce in Dibrugarh. The chief articles of trade are tea, oil, foodgrains, salt, clothes, general hardwares, luxury goods, and various articles of common use.

Other important trade centres of the present Dibrugarh district are Digboi, Doom Dooma, Margherita, Moran, Khowang, Makum, Chabua, Naharkatiya, Bordubi and Panitola. North Lakhimpur, Bihpuria, Dhalpur, Narayanpur and Dhemaji are the main centres of trade and commerce in the present Lakhimpur district.

Markets : A great deal of business is transacted at the local markets or *hats*, which for the convenience of both buyers and sellers, are held mostly on Sundays. At certain places these *hats* are held on Saturdays and in tea gardens on pay-days. Ex. cept the urban people who visit daily *bazars* in towns, both the villagers and the tea garden labourers are dependent on these *hats* for their daily necessities. Here the villagers sell their vegetables, rice, betelnut and leaf etc., The petty traders who flock here from towns and small trade centres sell cotton piece, oil, salt, pulses, spices, cosmetics utensils etc. usually at a price higher than the prevailing market rate. In tea garden *hats* the most important buyers are the labourers and they buy from both the villagers and petty traders, as they are not habituated to cultivating anything in their homesteads.

Melas : Two big *melas* are held in Dibrugarh district, one on the occasion of *Diwali* at Ganeshbari T. E. and another on '*Ashok Astami*' near the Municipal Park at Dibrugarh. *Melas* are also held in some temples of the present Lakhimpur district on festival days. These congregations have very little significance from the commercial point of view. Only tea and sweetmeat stalls and toy and doll hawkers have a flourishing business on such occasions. A list of rural marketing centres is given in the Appendix to this chapter.

(c) **Co-operation in wholesale and retail trade :**

Though there is co-operation in wholesale and retail trade, there is no market which deals exclusively in wholesale or retail trade. Both wholesale and retail trade go side by side in almost all trade centres of the district. Of course, the majority of the wholesalers operate

their business transaction from the two major towns of Tinsukia and Dibrugarh. The products dealt with by these wholesalers are consumers goods and foodstuff.

(d) State Trading :

State Trading in Assam was introduced in a limited scale as early as the Second World War when the Government took up procurement of paddy to supply rice to the urban population. Procurement at this stage was done on agency system which was substituted by the system of procurement through licensed wholesale dealers and rice millers. This system was abolished in 1954 when control was relaxed. State Trading in foodgrains (paddy and rice) was reintroduced in the Dibrugarh Subdivision in January 1961. About 1,75,000 mds. of paddy were procured in the first year but due to the change in the procurement policy in 1962, procurement in the year came down to 500 mds. The Assam Co-operative Apex Marketing Society Ltd. functioned as the sole nominee of the State Government and purchased paddy at fixed price through its branches. This was discontinued in the Dibrugarh Subdivision at the end of the Third Five Year Plan. The society procured 50,859.58 mds. and 31,342.74 mds. of *sali* paddy during 1964-65 and 1965-66 (upto 19-6-66 only) respectively in this subdivision.

In the North Lakhimpur Subdivision the scheme of State Trading was introduced in 1960 and it is still continuing. The Assam Co-operative Apex Marketing Society procured from the North Lakhimpur subdivision under State Trading, 3,36,741.94 mds of *sali* paddy and 19,000.50 mds. of *Ahu* paddy during 1964-65. Since then procurement of paddy decreased in the North Lakhimpur subdivision as well. During 1965-66 (upto 19-6-66 only) 3,29,805.23 mds. of both *sali* and *Ahu* paddy were procured in this subdivision. During the following seven months upto January 67, paddy procured came down to only 82674.69 mds. Since that date Government's policy of paddy procurement in this subdivision was also changed.

Procurement from growers is done by the Service Co-operatives at a price fixed by the Government. The Apex Marketing Society and the Food Corporation of India collect paddy from these Co-operatives. Some individuals were also appointed by the F. C. I. when there was no Service Co-operative Society. Paddy procured is stocked in Government ware-houses, co-operative ware-houses and sometimes at private godowns, wherefrom the stock is lifted by rice millers for milling at a fixed charge. The finished product is allotted by the Supply Department to the dealers for distribution among consumers.

Fair Price Shops : Many fair price shops were established during the Second World War to curb the price rise and to distribute essential articles among the consumers at a reasonable price. Though many of these shops ceased to function with the virtual abolition of control during the post-war period, they received a fresh spurt during the fifties when distribution of essential articles was channelised through these shops. The fair price shops are under the strict supervision of the Supply Department. Besides the fair price shops there are some approved retail shops through which atta, flour, and sugar are also distributed.

(e) Trade Associations :

There are Chambers of Commerce at Dibrugarh, Tinsukia and North Lakhimpur. These are registered under the Societies Registration Act of 1960. The object of these Chambers is to promote the interest of the business community in respect of inland and foreign trade, commerce manufacture, agriculture, shipping, transport, banking, insurance and industry.

(f) Weights and Measures :

As regards the units of weights prevailing in the district in the later part of the 19th century, W. W. Hunter in his *Statistical Account of Assam* writes as follows :

"There are no regular weights in use in the district, nearly everything being sold by measurement, generally according to the following standard. 10 *Katha* = 1 *don* ; 3 *don* = 1 *pura*. The *pura* is supposed to be equal to thirty pounds weight but the actual quantity varies. In the case of paddy, twenty two pounds weight makes up a *pura*."

"A '*don*' is a wicker basket of which the size varies somewhat but the standard size contains 3½ seers of paddy. The standard size is known as the '*Don kathiya Don*' which has a capacity of 5 seers, of rice (not paddy). When labourers come, the villagers measure with their own '*don*' and get full value– when the trader comes, he purchases with a '*don*' in the same way but his '*don*' is apt to be larger than the standard size and he is an expert in manipulating the paddy so as to get more in the basket."[10]

Of course, the use of '*don*' is now declining to a considerable extent and is rarely seen in some interior villages of Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh district.

10. Quoted in the *Assam Provincial Banking Enqiury Committee Report*, 1929.

Prior to 1852, land in Assam was measured by a '*tar*' a measuring rod of 8 '*hats*' (cubits), in length equal to nearly 11½ English feet. "In 1852, by order of the Government, the standard Bengal *bigha* of 14,400 square feet was introduced into Assam and since that date, all measurement papers have been prepared according to this standard".[11]

With the enactment of the Standards of Weights and Measures Act, 1956, and the Assam Weights and Measures (Enforcement) Act, 1958 (Assam Act No. XIX of 1959) the metric system of weights and measures was introduced in Assam. The following table shows the dates from which the metric system of weights and measures became compulsory in the undivided Lakhimpur district.

Sl. No.	Subjects in which Metric System was introduced.	Date of introduction	Date of compulsory enforcement.
1.	Jute mills in so far as they undertake the purchase of raw jute and sale of jute products.	1-7-1958	1-7-1960
2.	Forward contracts in raw and manufactured jute.	1-7-1958	1-7-1960
3.	(i) The Indian Airlines and Air India International Corporations in so far as they undertake air transport services, excepting matters relating to air distances and speed of air craft.	1-10-1958	1-10-1960
	(ii) Govt. Departments and commercial and industrial undertakings owned or controlled by Govt. in so far as they undertake the purchase or supply of stores, including drugs.	"	"
	(iii) Govt. Departments in so far as they undertake survey of land or mines.	"	"
	(iv) Govt. Departments in so far as they undeetake the study or publication of any technical, scientific or marketing data relating to weather, irrigation and power projects or undertake drawings and specifications of scientific apparatus for use in laboratories and educational institutions except in matters relating to air distances and speed of air craft.	"	"
3.	(v) Cotton textile mills in so far as they undertake the purchase of cotton or sale of cloth.	1-10-1958	1-10-1960
	(vi) Iron and steel factories in so far as they undertake the purchase of raw materials or sale of iron and steel products.	"	"
	(vii) Factories engaged in engineering industry in so far as they undertake the sale of their products.	"	"
	(viii) Factories engaged in the manufacture of heavy chemicals in so far as they undertake the purchase of raw materials or sale of their products.	"	"
	(ix) Factories engaged in the manufacture of cement in so far as they undertake the sale of cement.	"	"
	(x) Factories engaged in the manufacture of salt in so far as they undertake the sale of salt.	"	"
	(xi) Factories engaged in the manufacture of paper, pulp or paper board in so far as they undertake the sale of paper, pulp or board.	1-10-1958	1-10-1960
	(xii) Factories engaged in the manufacture of refractories in so far as they undertake the sale of refractories.	"	"
	(xiii) Coffee Board in so far as it undertakes the sale of coffee from the surplus pool, either by itself or through its agents.	"	"
	(xiv) Factories engaged in the manufacture of copper, aluminium, lead, antimony and tin in so far as they undertake the sale of copper, aluminium, lead, antimony and tin including alloys aud products of these metals.	"	"

11. W. W. Hunter, *Statistical Account of Assam*, pp. 133-34.

	(xv) Associations recognised by the Central Govt. under section 5 of the Forward Contracts (Regulation) Act, 1952 (74 of 1962) in so far as they undertake the regulation and control of forward contracts in cotton.	1-10-1958	1-10-1960
	(xvi) Sale of raw rubber.	...	..
4.	Units of mass in respect of sugar factories in so far as they undertake the purchase of sugarcane or sale of sugar.	1-11-1959	1-11-1961
5.	Crude petroleum and petroleum products.	1-3-1960	1-3-1962
6.	Units of mass in respect of sale and purchase.	1-4-1960	1-4-1962
7.	Ports and Shipping industry.	1-8-1960	1-2-1962
8.	Raw Wool and woollen products by woollen mills.	1-10-1960	1-10-1962
9.	Length measures.	1-10-1961	1-10-1962
10.	Mass in all respects.	1-10-1961	1-4-1962
11.	Manufacture and sale of alcohol and levy of excise duties of alcohol.	1-6-1961	1-6-1962
12.	Capacity measures.	1-10-1961	1-10-1962
13.	Unit of area.	1-10-1962	(i) 1st October, 1965 in respect of land area. (ii) 1st April 1963 in respect of the other units of area other than land area.
14.	Units of volume.	1-10-1962	1-4-1963

In order to enforce the metric system of weights and measures a new Directorate has been opened under the Agriculture Department of the Government of Assam. The Controller of Weights and Measures heads the State organisation. He is assisted by one Deputy Controller and six Assistant Controllers. There is an Assistant Controller of Weights and Measures at Tinsukia and his jurisdiction extends over

the entire Dibrugarh district and a part of Sibsagar district. Present Lakhimpur district falls within the jurisdiction of the Assistant Controller of Weights and Measures, Tezpur. These officers are assisted by a number of Inspectors who are posted at sub-divisional headquarters. The organisation has a publicity wing of its own. In 1973, there were in Dibrugarh district five licensed firms authorised to manufacture standard weights and measures.

TAMIL NADU STATE LIBRARY
No. 26267

APPENDIX*

LIST OF *HATS* AND MARKETS IN THE DISTRICT

Sl. No.	Names of *hats* and markets	Places where held	Whether daily/ Bi-weekly/weekly/ Fortnightly.
1	2	3	4
1.	Badati *Hat*	Badati	Weekly
2.	Dhunaguri *Hat*	Bahgora Dhunaguri	-do-
3.	Laholial *Hat*	Laholial	-do-
4.	Bangalmora *Hat*	Bangalmara	-do-
5.	Tinthengia *Hat*	Tinthengia	-do-
6.	Kehutoli *Hat*	Kehutoli	-do-
7.	Laluk *Hat*	Laluk	Daily
8.	Tunijan	Tunijan	Weekly
9.	Dongibil	Dongibil	-do-
10.	Bihpuria	Bihpuria	Daily
11.	Dhalpur Sombaria *Hat*	Dhalpur Dakua	Weekly
12.	Dikrong *Hat*	Narayanpur Dikrong	-do-
13.	Barbali *Hat*	Barbali	-do-
14.	Simaluguri *Hat*	Simaluguri	-do-
15.	Jamuguri *Hat*	Jamuguri	-do-
16.	Rongati *Hat*	Rongati	-do-
17.	Joyhing *Bazar*	9/6 Koliamari Grant	-do-
18.	Joyhing Koliamari	Nakari Mauza	Fortnightly
19.	Ananda *Bagan Bazar*	Ananda *Bagan*	Weekly
20.	Lilabari *Bazar*	Kakoinai Rajgorh Grazing	-do-
21.	Baginadi *Bazar*	Baginadi	-do-
22.	Ujjalpur *Bazar*	Ujjalpur Balijan Grazing	-do-

Sl. No.	Names of *hats* and markets	Places where held	Whether daily/ Bi-weekly/weekly Fortnightly.
1	2	3	4
23.	Bamunbari	Bamunbari	Weekly
24.	Rajgarh	Rajgarh	-do-
25.	Borbam Budhbaria *Hat*	Borbam	-do-
26.	Tingkhong	Tingkhong	-do-
27.	Merbil	Merbil	-do-
28.	Joypur	Joypur	-do-
29.	Kathaloni	Near A. P. and Dev. Block office	Fortnightly
30.	Namsang	Namsang	-do-
31.	Joypur	Joypur T. E.	Weekly
32.	Hapjan	Hapjan Parbat	-do-
33.	Balimara	Balimara T. E.	-do-
34.	Dilli	Dilli T. E.	-do-
35.	Rukong	Rukong T. E.	-do-
36.	Namrup	Namrup T. E.	-do-
37.	Lengrijan	Lengrijan T. E.	Fortnightly
38.	Tinali	Tinali T. E.	Weekly
39.	Tingkhong	Tingkhong T. E.	Fortnightly
40.	Dillibari	Dillibari T. E.	-do-
41.	Nilmoni	Nilmoni T. E.	-do-
42.	Sarojani	Sarojani T. E.	-do-
43.	Karangani	Karangani T. E.	-do-
44.	Rajgarh	Rajgarh T. E.	-do-
45.	Longboi	Longboi T. E.	-do-
46.	Borbam	Borbam T. E.	-do-
47.	Kenduguri	Kenduguri T. E.	-do-
48.	Pithaguti	Pithaguti T. E.	-do-
49.	Diroi	Diroi T. E.	-do-
50.	Ouphulia	Ouphulia T. E.	-do-
51.	Salmari	Salmari T. E.	-do-
52.	Achabam	Achabam T. E.	Weekly
53.	Umatara	Umatara T. E.	Fortnightly
54.	Desam	Desam T. E.	-do-
55.	Dhemaji Brihaspatibaria *Hat*	Khublia G. P.	Weekly
56.	Chisi Charili *Hat*	Bhebeli G. P.	-do-
57.	Bathua Thanmukh *Hat*	Bathua Thanmukh G.P	-do-
58.	Batgharia *Hat*	Hatigarh G. P.	-do-
59.	Butikur *Hat*	Naruathan G. P.	-do-

Sl. No.	Names of *hats* and markets	Places where held	Whether daily/ Bi-weekly/weekly/ Fortnightly.
1	2	3	4
60.	Kalakhowa Chariali	Kalakhowa Chariali	Weekly
61.	Ghoronia T. E. Private Mkt.	Within T. E. area.	Fornightly
62.	Lepetakata T. E. Private Mkt.	-do-	Bi-Weekly
63.	Dewanbari T. E. Private Mkt.	-do-	Fortnightly
64.	Medla Grant T. E. Pvt. Mkt.	-do-	-do-
65.	Barbarooah *Hat*	Barbarooah	Weekly
66.	Jamirah T. E. Private Mkt.	Within T. E. Area	Daily
67.	Barbarooah T. E. Pvt. Mkt.	-do-	Fortnightly
68.	Jakaisessa *Hat*	Jakai	Weekly
69.	Margherita *Hat* and Makt.	Margherita	Weekly *Hat* and
70.	Ledo *Hat* and Market	Ledo	Daily Mkt.
71.	Tirap *Hat* and Market	Tirap Gate	-do-
72.	Borgolai *Hat* and Market	Borgolai	-do-
73	Powai	Powai T. E.	-do-
74.	Dehing	Dehing T. E.	-do-
75.	7th Mile *Bazar*	Na-Sadiya	Weekly
76.	Sunpura	Sunpura	-do-
77.	Kundil	Kundil (Sadiya)	Daily
78.	Chapakhowa	Chapakhowa	Weekly
79.	Dholla	Dholla	-do-
80.	Jonai (M/Sellek)	Jonai (Murkongsellek)	Daily
81.	Ghoramara *Hat*	Romai	Weekly
82.	Nagaghoolie	Nagaghoolie T. E. Compound	-do-
83.	Tingrai *Bazar*	Tingrai Tinali	-do-
84.	Guijan *Bazar*	Guijan	-do-
85.	Guijan *Bazar*	Guijan	Daily
86.	Makum	Makum	Weekly
87.	Makum	Makum	Daily
88.	Sukanpukhuri	Sukanpukhuri T. E.	Fortnightly
89.	Dighaltarrang	Dighaltarrang T. E.	-do-
90.	Daisajan	Daisajan T. E.	-do-
91.	Tiphuk	Tiphuk T. E.	-do-
92.	Baghjan	Baghjan T. E.	-do-
93.	Deamulie	Deamulie T. E.	Weekly
94.	Rupai	Rupai T. E.	-do-
95.	Sukanguri	Sukanguri T. E.	Fortnightly
90.	Hansara	Hansara T. E.	-do-
97.	Samdang	Samdang T. E.	-do-

Sl. No.	Names of *hats* and markets	Places where held	Whether daily/ Bi-weekly/weekly Fortnightly
1	2	3	4
98.	Bessakupie	Bessakupie T. E.	Fortnightly
99.	Doemukhia *Bazar*	Doemukhia T. E.	-do-
100.	Pabhajan *Bazar*	Pabhajan T. E.	-do-
101.	Dhoedaam *Bazar*	Dhoedaam T. E.	-do-
102.	Raidang *Bazar*	Raidang T. E.	-do-
103.	Silikha *Bazar*	Silikha T. E.	-do-
104.	Limbuguri *Bazar*	Limbuguri T. E.	-do-
105.	Dhella Khat *Bazar*	Dhella Khat T. E.	-do-
106.	Sanmari *Bazar*	Sanmari T. E.	-do-
107.	Katchujan *Bazar*	Katchujan T. E.	-do-
108.	Gelapukhuri *Bazar*	Gelaphkhuri T. E.	-do-
109.	Nakhrai *Bazar*	Nakhrai T. E.	-do-
110.	Gongabari *Bazar*	Gongabari T. E.	-do-
111.	Rongagora *Bazar*	Rongagora T. E.	-do-
112.	Longsoal *Bazar*	Longsoal T. E.	-do-
113.	Guijan *Bazar*	Guijan T. E.	-do-
114.	Bagapani *Bazar*	Bagapani T. E.	Weekly
115.	Holonghabi *Bazar*	Holonghabi T. E.	-do-
116.	Shrikrishna *Bazar*	Srikrishna T. E.	-do-
117.	Borhapjan *Bazar*	Borhapjan T. E.	-do-
118.	Betjan *Bazar*	Betjan T. E.	Fortnightly
119.	Anandabag *Bazar*	Anandabag T. E.	-do-
120.	Nalani *Bazar*	Nalani T. E.	-do-
121.	Bazaltali *Bazar*	Bazaltali T. E.	-do-
122.	Hapjan *Bazar*	Hapjan T. E.	-do-
123.	Haveda *Bazar*	Haveda T. E.	-do-
124.	Sewpur *Bazar*	Sewpur T. E.	-do-
125.	Padumani *Bazar*	Padumani T. E.	Fortnightly
126.	Doolahat *Bazar*	Near Doolahat T. E.	Weekly
127.	Dejoo *Bazar*	Near Dejoo T. E.	-do-
128.	Silonibari *Bazar*	Silnoibari T. E.	-do-

* District Census Handbook, Lakhimpur, 1961,

CHAPTER—VII

COMMUNICATIONS

(a) **Old time trade routes, highways and modes of conveyance : Trade routes :**

Information about the old time overland trade routes of the undivided Lakhimpur district is very meagre. Dr. P. C. Choudhury, refers to several old accounts which show that as early as in 200 B. C. there were land routes connecting China, through Burma with Kamarupa.[1] Some of these routes stretched through this region. It is evident that the undivided district of Lakhimpur had been a doorway to the plains of Assam in early times when the tribes of the Mongoloid stock migrated through the steep hills of Arunachal Pradesh. The mighty Brahmaputra that bisects the old Lakhimpur district not only provided an extensive river-front to the district, but also facilitated a highly developed water-borne traffic in early times. The merchants of Kamarupa, of which this district formed a part, carried their merchandise in large boats down the Brahmaputra and reached the sea after skirting round the Garo Hills. They crossed the sea and traded in sea ports like Tamralipti. The land routes and water routes connecting Assam with the rest of India were in existence from ancient times.

Travellers who traversed the land during the 18th and 19th centuries left some interesting accounts of the trade routes of this region. "Mc Cosh refers to as many as five roads leading from Sadiya, the frontier station of the Brahmaputra valley into Tibet, or China proper. They are : the pass of Dibong, the Mishmi route, the Phungan pass to Manchee and China, the route by Manipur to the Irrawaddy, and the Patkai pass to Bhamo on the Irrawaddy. The most important and the easy route was on the north-eastern side over the Patkai to the upper districts of Burma and thence to China. Through this route, Shan invaders came to the Brahmaputra valley. In 1816 during the Burmese invasion, some 6,000 Burmese troops and 8,000 auxiliaries crossed the Patkai into Assam. In former days, the Burmese government took care that there should be a village or rather a settlement every twelve or fifteen miles along the route and it was the business of the people to cut the jungles and to remove all other obstructions from the path."[2] During the reign of Koch king Narnarayana, an embanked road running from Koch Bihar to Narayanpur of the present Lakhimpur district, was constructed. The king's brother Gohain Kamal supervised the work and the road was known as the "Gohain Kamala Ali."

1. Dr. P. C. Choudhury : *The History of Civilization of the People of Assam to the Twelfth Century A.D.* pp. 378-380.
2. E. A. Gait : *History of Assam*, pp. 273.

In addition to these routes mention must be made of the water-ways which connected this region with the rest of Assam and other territories. In the past when other means of communication were not so developed the Brahmaputra served as the life-line of the entire Assam valley. It is described in the old Gazetteer as follows : "Till recently, the Brahmaputra was the only means of communication between Lakhimpur and the outside world, and a large part of the trade of the district still enters it and leaves it by that route. The other rivers are not much used for the purposes of commerce, as they do not tap the most productive portions of the district, and in many cases snags, rapids and a strong current offer a serious obstacle to traffic".[3] Even in the early part of the British administration in the district the Brahmaputra was the main line of communication which connected Lakhimpur with Bengal. There were routes connecting different regions within this district but the undivided Lakhimpur district did not have a network of inland roads during the Ahom period. The *Dhodar Ali* constructed during the period of Ahom rule ran through the southern part of Sibsagar district and ended at Jaipur in Lakhimpur district. Only eight miles of this road ran through this district. One reason for the neglect of road transport was the almost exclusive dependence of the people on the water-ways.

After the advent of the British, there was marked improvement in transport and communications in the undivided district of Lakhimpur particularly in Dibrugarh sub-division. The condition of roads has been described as follows in the old Gazetteer of Lakhimpur : "In addition to its most convenient railway, Lakhimpur is fairly well supplied with roads. In 1902-03, there were 23 miles of metalled and 723 miles of unmetalled roads, maintained either by the Public Works Department or the Local Boards, the last named authorities being responsible for about five-sevenths of the total length."[4] The history of rail communication of the district dates back to the eighties of the last century. In 1853 steamer services between Calcutta and Gauhati were also extended to Dibrugarh and in 1884, a daily mail steamer was started between Dibrugarh and Dhubri over the Brahmaputra and this represented an enormous advance in the facilities for communication between Assam and the outer world. Till 1950, the Brahmaputra played a very significant role in the development of trade and commerce at Dibrugarh. Boats of all sizes used to ply in the river besides steam launches and other river-going vessels. The steamer service was closed down in 1965 in the wake of the Indo-Pakistan war.

Modes of conveyance of early times : From numerous references in the inscriptions and other records, it appears that bullock carts (*sakata*),

3. B. C. Allen : *Assam District Gazetteers, Lakhimpur*. 1905, p. 233.
4. *Ibid*, p. 229.

carriages drawn by elephants and horses were the principal modes of conveyance in early days. Besides the carts, both animals and boats were used for the purpose of internal and external trade. Palanquins were used by the nobles and other dignitaries during the mediaeval period. Till about the thirties of this century bridegrooms also travelled in palanquins, while the jubilant marriage parties rode on elephants. In the *Rukmini-haran*, it has been mentioned that Lord Krishna kidnapped Rukmini from Kundil, in Dibrugarh district near Sadiya, in a chariot. The authenticity of this episode is however not established.

(b) **Road Transport :**

National Highway : The Assam South Trunk Road, now known as the National Highway Route 37, enters Dibrugarh district from Sibsagar at a point 45.6 kms. west of Dibrugarh. It runs from Moran in the north-easterly direction up to Dibrugarh crossing the river Buridihing. From Dibrugarh the road runs along the railway line in a north-easterly direction up to Makum, through Tinsukia, an important trade centre of the district. The road then stretches along the railway line in a north-easterly direction up to Doom-Dooma and then towards the north through Talap up to Saikhowa-ghat which stands on the bank of the river Luhit. The National Highway No. 38 which was formerly known as Makum-Lekhapani road takes off from Makum and runs towards the south-eastern corner of the district through many industrial towns like Digboi, Margherita and Ledo. Another road known as Stilwel road starts from the terminal point of National Highway No. 38 and runs in a north-easterly direction across the Tirap river to Joyrampur. This road runs across the hills of Arunachal Pradesh, connecting the hilly tract with the fertile plains of the Brahmaputra valley.

The total length of National Highway No. 37, is 150.063 kms. within Dibrugarh district and National Highway 38, runs a total distance of 54.908 kms.[5] These two form the artery of road communication of the district of Dibrugarh. Besides the industries located in places mentioned above, these two roads pass through many tea gardens. A number of gravel and blacktopped roads have branched off from these two roads, and the network of roads so formed has greatly helped the industrialisation of the district.

State Roads : The State Government roads in the district are maintained by the Public Works Department of the State. Most of the roads maintained by this Department are either gravelled or blacktopped. At

5. Above figures have been quoted in the *Census Handbook of Lakhimpur District*, 1961 (p. 354). However, in the *Statistical Handbook of Assam*, 1969 total length of the National Highways within the district has been shown as 179.2 kms. (page-120).

the end of 1961, the total length of roads under the management of the Public Works Department was 1268.177 kms, of which 215.34 kms. were blacktopped, 865.316 kms. gravelled and 270.179 kms. earthen. There has been considerable extension of the State roads during the last few years. The Department has taken up improvement and expansion of the existing single lane carriage way to two lanes, and reconstruction of weak and narrow bridges and culverts. Some of the old roads have been extended and a few others have been newly constructed. The position as in 1970-71 can be summarised as follows[6] :—

Length of Roads under the P.W.D. in Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh Districts 1970-71.

Name of the district	Black topped	Gravelled	Earth	Total (in km.)
Lakhimpur	258.01	508.94	181.06	948.01
Dibrugarh	402.20	936.35	44.33	1382.88
Total :	660.21	1445.29	225.39	2330.89

While the Dibrugarh sub-division of the undivided Lakhimpur district was criss-crossed by a net-work of good roads, the road communication of the north bank till recent times was not well developed. Road communication in the eastern side of the present Lakhimpur district particularly in the area beyond the river Subansiri was worse than in the western part. The only embankment road in this area is part of the Brahmaputra embankment which is maintained by the Public Works Department. A Local Board road, subsequently taken over by the State Government connects North Lakhimpur town with Dhakuakhana, Machkhowa and Dhemaji. The most important road in Lakhimpur district is the North Trunk Road, which provides the main road link between North Lakhimpur and Tezpur. This is the main road in the district which connects Darrang and Lakhimpur districts and touches important places like Narayanpur, Bihpuria and Laluk. From North Lakhimpur this road runs further to Silapathar. This is an all-weather road ; but during floods the turbulent rivers often damage bridges or cause breaches at vulnerable points. Till a few years back, there were ferry services on the four rivers between Tezpur and North Lakhimpur. Now permanent bridges have been constructed at the ferry points. The North Lakhimpur-Kamalabari P. W. D. Road covers a distance of 19 miles and connects the sub-division with Majuli. The

6. *Statistical Handbook of Assam*, 1971, p. 107.
(The figures are inclusive of National High Ways).

road was totally disrupted by the great flood of August, 1962. It was made motorable ; but motor services generally remain suspended during the summer season.

The Town Committees and Municipalities also maintain some roads, within their respective jurisdictions. Most of the roads in urban areas are however blacktopped.

Village Roads : Formerly the village roads were maintained by the respective Local Boards. But with the introduction of the Assam Panchayat Act, 1959, the Local Boards were abolished and since then rural communication has been taken over by the Community Development Blocks. Almost all the village roads are unmetalled and become motorable only in the dry season. Proper maintenance of village roads in the flood affected areas is a colossal task. As per the 1961 Census, there were 718 village roads of varying lengths in the undivided Lakhimpur district. Formerly, these roads were repaired by the local people. However, their meagre funds were occasionally augmented by grants from the Local Boards. At present the Development Blocks allot some amount for construction and development of village roads.

The Tea Estates also have many roads constructed primarily to transport the garden products. Broadly speaking the condition of these roads is much better than that of village roads. The bridges in village roads are constructed with bamboo poles and timber ; but on some village paths very narrow bridges are constructed by putting across the streams or rivulets one or two bamboo poles over the supporting posts. These supporting poles are clogged together in the shape of the letter "X" ; these bridges are locally known as *sakon*. This type of bridge is commonly found in the interior areas which are susceptible to recurring floods. These types of temporary bridges have been gradually replaced by permanent bridges and culverts.

Vehicles and conveyances : Bullock carts were the main means of transport before the advent of mechanised vehicles. They are still used in rural areas where the task of extension of motor services is beset with numerous problems, including the floods in the turbulent rivers. Buffalo carts are used throughout the district in the rural areas. The highest number of these carts are found in the eastern part of the present Lakhimpur district. Besides these, carts drawn by horses are also pressed into service for transportation of goods.

Every farmer usually has a buffalo or a pair of bullocks which provide main draught power needed for agriculture and rural transport. The undivided district of Lakhimpur was also rich in cattle wealth. According to the Livestock Census of 1966, the total cattle population of the univided Lakhimpur district was 7,44,271 and the buffalo population

72,397. The total strength of different types of beasts of burden, such as bullocks, buffaloes, horses and ponies, was 3,25,002 in 1966. Trained elephants are also used to extract timber from the dense forests.

The economy of the undivided district of Lakhimpur was predominantly rural and facilities for rural transport till the Second World War were very inadequate. Circumstances have, however, changed to a great extent during the last two decades which witnessed improvements in road communication and road transport. The bicycles have become very common in the counryside while large numbers of rickshaws provide cheap transport in the urban areas. Motor cars, buses, taxis, trucks, motor-cycles, jeeps and station wagons are the different categories of automobiles which ply in the district. Haulage of merchandise is mostly accomplished by vehicles run on diesel, yet petrol-vehicles still account for the bulk of the road transport. The following list shows the increase in the number of motor vehicles during the period from 1960-61 to 1970.

Years	Motor cycles	Motor cars (other than Taxi cabs)	Taxi-cabs	Buses	Private carriers	Public carriers	Trai-lers	Trac-tors
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1950-51	206	1733	20	50	1236	336	142	124
1955-56	268	2355	27	58	1731	538	363	326
1960-61	413	3477	30	108	2193	706	564	476
1969-70	597	3769	96	149	—	3579*	425	1250

(* indicates total number of trucks)

Public Transport :

State-owned Services : To provide a sound footing to the public transport system the Government of Assam embarked upon the policy of progressive road transport in 1948. The momentous day in the history of road transport was January 16, 1948 when the State Government buses plied on the 75 mile route between Gauhati and Nowgong. Since then there has been progressive nationalisation of road transport in Assam and all the districts have been covered under this scheme. Initially the "Assam Transport" which came into being during the Second World War ran the services on the nationalised routes. This organisation was converted into the State Transport and a Corporation under the name and style of the Assam Road Transport Corporation came into being on August 31, 1971. Subsequently when the State of Meghalaya was born, this was renamed as the Assam and Meghalaya State Road Transport Corporation.

The Assam and Meghalaya State Road Transport Corporation operates on National Highways 37 and 38 and the North Trunk Road. It runs two direct bus services between Dibrugarh and Tinsukia at one end and Gauhati at the other. The route on which the State buses ply link up Sibsagar, Jorhat and Nowgong and many other important towns on the southern bank of the Brahmaputra. In the present Dibrugarh district, the nationalised route courses a total length of 130 kms. There are transport stations at Moran, Khowang, Dibrugarh, Chabua, Namrup, Margherita, Digboi, Tinsukia, Doom-Dooma and Saikhowaghat. Besides these, there are some wayside stoppages to cater to the needs of the wayside travellers. On October 2, 1962 a 37 mile long route running from Makum to Lekhapani was nationalised and the State Government buses regularly ply between Dibrugarh and Lekhapani.

On the north bank the nationalised route emanates from Lakhimpur district and extends beyond Darrang district in the west. The buses of the Assam Meghalaya State Road Transport Corporation ply between Dhemaji and North-Lakhimpur. Other important towns of Assam, such as Tezpur, Gauhati, Shillong are linked up with present Lakhimpur by several bus routes. There is direct bus service between Tezpur and North Lakhimpur, also between Shillong and North-Lakhimpur. Road Transport Stations in the present district are located at Dhemaji, Machkhowa, Dhakuakhana, Ghilamara, North-Lakhimpur, Laluk, Bihpuria and Narayanpur.

Progressive nationalisation of road transport has heralded a new era of road journey. The Corporation plies buses which have spacious bodies and are well ventilated. At bus stations waiting rooms, canteens, and other facilities are provided. Facilities for booking and reservation are also available at important places. Overloading in the buses is prohibited. In case of break down of vehicles, relief buses are quickly detailed. Arrangements are made for extra trips to cope with the rush of passengers during festivals. Many Express and Super Express services have been introduced by the Corporation to ensure quick and comfortable travel. For repair of the vehicles there are workshops in all divisional headquarters of the Corporation.

Private bus services : Private bus services form an important segment of the road transport system. Prior to the operation of the State Transport, private buses used to ply on all motorable roads. Now, the private buses operate on the routes which have not been nationalised. The Road Transport Authority of each district issues permits for buses and regulates services. In the undivided district of Lakhimpur there was one such Regional Transport Authority at Dibrugarh. The Deputy Commissioner was the Chairman and the District Transport Officer was the Secretary of the Authority. The jurisdiction of the authority exten-

ded all over the undivided district of Lakhimpur. Since the bifurcatio nfo the district, two separate authorities are functioning in the two districts. The salient feature of different bus services of the district is that the important trade centres have been linked up by these services.

The bus services are managed by different associations and syndicates which regulate the timings subject to the approval of the District Transport Officer. Elaborate rules have been framed under the Motor Vehicle Act, to ensure regularity of services and to provide reasonable comfort to the passengers. *Bazar-bus* permits are issued by the appropriate authority to some buses which ply in between some important trade-centres and places where *hats* or *bazars* are held.

Following the rapid rise in the number of motor vehicles, there has been a considerable increase in the number of driving licences. In 1960-61, 10,282 driving licences were issued as against 6,095 in 1950-51. The figures include the driving licences issued to private car owners.

In 1958, the Department of Economics and Statistics of the Government of Assam conducted a survey of Road Traffic (Goods) in the districts of Assam. The Survey brought to relief many interesting features of road traffic. The following are some of its findings.[7]

FREIGHT RATE

(Per ton-mile/tonne-kilometre)

For trips within distance (mile) groups

Season	25		25—50		50—75		75 and above	
	Per ton-mile	Per tonne-km	Per ton-mile	Per tonne-km	Per ton-mile	Per tonne-km	Per ton-mile	Per tonne km
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
June to August	0.59	0.36	0.44	0.27	0.28	0.17	0.27	0.16
September to November	0.60	0.36	0.44	0.27	0.32	0.19	0.30	0.18
December to February	0.57	0.35	0.47	0.29	0.30	0.18	0.29	0.18
March to May	0.62	0.38	0.45	0.27	0.32	0.19	0.29	0.18
Whole year	0.60	0.36	0.45	0.28	0.31	0.18	0.29	0.18

7. Report on the Survey of Road Traffic (Goods) in Assam, 1958 ; pp. 56—64.

HAULAGE

(Distribution by season)

Season	Full hauling capacity		Actual haulage for trips within distance (miles) groups					
			≤25		25≤50		50≤75	
	Lakh-ton miles	Lakh-tonne kms	Lakh-ton miles	Lakh-tonne kms	Lakh-ton miles	Lakh-tonne kms	Lakh-ton miles	Lakh-ton miles
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
June to August	177.2	290.7	12.0	19.6	4.0	6.6	6.0	
September to November.	181.4	297.5	12.6	20.6	6.3	10.3	6.3	
December to February	217.2	356.2	16.5	27.0	7.1	11.6	10.0	
March to May	185.0	303.4	15.5	25.5	9.2	15.0	3.8	
Whole Year	760.8	1247.8	56.6	92.7	26.6	43.5	26.1	

HAULAGE (Continued)

Season	50∠75		75 and above		Total		
	Lakh-tonne kms.	Lakh-ton miles	Lakh-tonne kms.	Col. (3)+(5)+(7)+(9) lakh-ton-miles	Col. (4)+(6)+(8)+(10) Lakh-tonne kms.	P.C. of columns (11) to (1) or (12) to (2)
	8	9	10	11	12	13
June to August	9.8	18.0	29.5	40.0	65.5	22.54
September to November	10.3	16.8	27.5	42.0	68.7	23.13
December to February	16.3	14.3	23.4	47.9	78.3	22.03
March to May	6.2	15.6	25.7	44.0	72.4	23.87
Whole Year	42.6	64.7	106.1	174.0	284.9	22.87

INTENSITY OF OPERATION

Percentage of cases reporting intensity of operation as—

Season	Normal	Below normal due to			Above normal due to
		Slackness in demand	Bad condition of vehicle	Bad condition of road	Increased demand
0	1	2	3	4	5
June to August	62.5	24.4	9.4	3.3	0.4
September to November	64.5	23.4	8.8	2.9	0.3
December to February	77.4	12.4	8.8	0.4	1.0
March to May	67.0	19.9	10.2	2.2	0.7
Whole year	67.9	20.0	9.3	2.2	0.6

FREIGHT EARNED

For trips within distance (mile) groups (Lakh Rupees)

Season	∠25	25∠50	50∠75	75 & above	Total
0	1	2	3	4	5
June to August	7.0	1.8	1.7	4.9	15.4
September to November	7.5	2.8	2.0	5.0	17.3
December to February	9.4	3.3	3.0	4.2	19.9
March to May	9.6	4.1	1.2	4.6	19.5
Whole year	33.5	12.0	7.9	18.7	72.1

OPERATING EXPENDITURE

Season	Wages and salary			Other operating expenses (lakh Rs.)	Total operating expenditure (lakh Rs.) col. (3) +col. (4)
	Man-months worked (thousand)	Emolument per man-month (Rupees)	Total emolument paid (lakh Rs.)		
0	1	2	3	4	5
June to August	6.42	86.11	5.5	6.6	12.1
Sept. to Nov.	6.29	96.32	6.1	6.9	13.0
Dec. to Feb.	6.31	87.57	5.6	9.8	15.4
March to May	6.15	86.96	5.3	8.9	14.2
Whole year	25.16	89.24	22.5	32.2	54.7

NET EARNINGS AND INCOME PRODUCED (Lakh Rupees.)

Season	Gross freight earned	Operating expenditure			Net earning of vehicles col. (1)– (4)	Total income produced col. (1)-(3)
		Wages/ salary	Others	Total		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6
June to August	15.4	5.5	6.6	12.1	3.3 (19)	8.8. (22)
Sept. to November	17.3	6.1	6.9	13.0	4.3 (25)	10.04 (26)
December to February	19.9	5.6	9.8	15.4	4.5 (26)	10.1 (25)
March to May	19.5	5.3	8.9	14.2	5.3 (30)	10.6 (27)
Whole year	72.1	22.5	32.2	54.7	17.4 (100)	39.9 (100)*

* Figures in brackets show percentages to total.

ECONOMICS OF OPERATION OF A VEHICLE

Season	Gross earning (thousand Rs.)	Wages/salary		Other operating expenditure (thousand Rs.)	Total operating expenditure (thousand Rs.)	Net earning per vehicle col. (1)-(5) (thousand Rs.)	Income produced per vehicle col. (1)-(4) (thousand Rs.)
		Man-month employed	Emolument paid (thousand Rs.)				
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
June to August	1.9	7.8	0.7	0.8	1.5	0.4	1.1
September to November	2.1	7.6	0.7	0.8	1.6	0.5	1.3
December to February	2.4	7.6	0.7	1.2	1.8	0.6	1.2
March to May	2.3	7.4	0.6	1.1	1.7	0.6	1.2
Whole year	8.7	30.4	2.7	3.9	6.6	2.1	4.8

(c) **Railways :**

As stated elsewhere, the development of rail communication in the district can be attributed to the tea industry which was heavily concentrated in the Dibrugarh district and the Sibsagar district. Waterways could not cope with the volume of exports and imports and the necessity of providing railway connections became obvious to those connected with the tea industry. Moreover, coal needed by the tea factories had to be imported from coal fields in Bengal at a high cost as the Assam coal could not be worked out because of the dearth of transport facilities. An unsuccessful attempt to form a Railway Company was made in 1879. In 1881 the Assam Railway and Trading Company was formed. This Company took up the construction of Dibru-Sadiya Railway line and in 1882, the first railway line in Upper Assam, from Dibrugarh Steamer-Ghat to Jaipur Road was opened. This was connected with the coal fields in 1884. In 1904 through rail communication was established between Chittagong and Dibrugarh.

The Dibrugarh-Sadiya Railway line which was only 78 miles in length, was a private railway line and it was constructed by the Assam Railway and Trading Company, Margherita. In 1910 it was extended by another

eight miles from Talap to Saikhowaghat. In 1943, its operational control was taken over by the Bengal and Assam Railways and ultimately in April, 1945, it was purchased by the Government. This railway line now forms a part of the North Eastern Frontier Railway.

The metre gauge line extends upto Lekhapani in the north-eastern corner of Dibrugarh district. Another section of the metre gauge system takes off from Makum and extends upto Saikhowaghat. During the great earthquake of 1950, this line was badly damaged. This line now extends only upto Dangeri, a few kilometres anterior of Saikhowaghat. Tinsukia and Makum are two junctions of Dibrugarh district. Almost all the places with industrial or commercial interest, such as Dibrugarh, Margherita, Digboi, Ledo, Namrup are connected by the railway system. One mixed and one passenger train run between Makum and Dangeri ; one mail and two passenger trains run between Dibrugarh and Lekhapani. The Assam Mail connects Dibrugarh town directly with Barauni in Bihar by metre gauge line and thence with Delhi by broad gauge line. Besides the Kamrup Express a number of passenger trains run on the trunk line.

The total railway mileage of this district is 122 miles or 196 kms. Tinsukia is the most busy railway junction both in respect of passenger and goods traffic. It is the principal disembarking point for imports of all kinds of foodgrains and industrial goods. Similarly the exported goods like mineral oil, coal, timber and tea are despatched by train mainly from Tinsukia Railway Station. The area around Tinsukia abounds in tea ; the town itself is the hub of many industrial activities. The oil fields and coal mines of Dibrugarh district are linked with Tinsukia either by road or rail. With the establishment of the fertilizer factory at Namrup the volume of goods traffic by rail has gone up considerably and Tinsukia bears the brunt of the enhanced traffic.

Next in importance is the Dibrugarh Railway Station. Tea chests exported from the neighbouring tea gardens are routed through it. Bulk of the merchandise is also transported by road from Dibrugarh to Gauhati. The following are the railway stations in the present Dibrugarh district: (1) Namrup, (2) Balimara, (3) Naharkatiya, (4) Duliajan, (5) Bordubi Road, (6) Chariali (7) Tinsukia Goods Shed (8) Tinsukia Junction, (9) Panitola, (10) Chabua, (11) Hatiali Ground Siding, (12) Dikom, (13) Lahoal, (14) Chaulkhowa (15) Dibrugarh Town, (16) Makum junction, (17) Barhapjan, (18) Hahsara, (19) Doom Dooma Town, (20) Rupai, (21) Talap, (22) Dangeri, (23) Tingrai, (24) Bagapani, (25) Digboi, (26) Powai, (27) Margherita, (28) Bargolai, (29) Ledo and (30) Lekhapani.

The first railway line in the north bank of the undivided district of Lakhimpur was opened in 1961—62 only. At the initial stage

North Lakhimpur town was connected with Rangapara of Darrang district covering a distance of about 107 miles. This new Rangapara-North Lakhimpur line was further extended in 1965 connecting North Lakhimpur town with Murkongsellek. The North Lakhimpur-Gogamukh metre gauge section of the North-East-Frontier Railway was opened for passenger traffic with effect from the 1st July, 1965. Two new stations, namely Lilabari and Boginadi started functioning from the same date. This new line crosses the turbulent river Subansiri at a point about 23 miles east of North Lakhimpur. This long bridge over the Subansiri is the second longest bridge in Assam. The following are stations so far covered by the railway line from Rangapara to Murkongsellek : (1) Uttar Kathani, (2) Tatibahar, (3) Tipling, (4) Harmati, (5) Tunijan, (6) Kathal-pukhuri, (7) Silanibari, (8) North-Lakhimpur, (9) Lilabari, (10) Siajuli, (11) Boginadi, (12) Subansiri, (13) Gogamukh, (14) Bordoloni, (15) Dhemaji, (16) Maridhal, (17) Sissibargaon, (18) Silapathar, (19) Dipa, (20) Telan, (21) Laimekuri, (22) Jonakareng, and (23) Murkongsellek. The average daily passenger traffic in 1965 at Uttar Kathani, Tatibahar, Tunijan and Kathalpukhuri was 150,100, 200 and 250 respectively. The corresponding figures for other stations are as follows : 75 each at Lilabari and Gogamukh, 50 at Silapathar and only 15 at Baginadi.

Goods traffic is heavy in the Rangapara-North Lakhimpur-Murkongsellek line. Booking of fish in 1965 was found to be heavy at North Lakhimpur and Tatibahar stations. Timber and cane are generally booked at North Lakhimpur, Kathalpukhuri, Harmati, Tatibahar and Uttar Kathani. Harmati is also the loading station for logs and timber.

It may be mentioned here that Sonarighat on the north bank of the Brahmaputra opposite to Dibrugarh town is only seven miles off from Silapathar station. This route is much shorter than the rail route that connects Dibrugarh with North Lakhimpur *via* Rangia and Rangapara. The opening of the Rangapara-Murkong-sellek line *via* North Lakhimpur is regarded as a landmark in the history of development of communications in the Lakhimpur district.

The North-East Frontier Railway being the life-line of the whole of Upper Assam, the slightest disruption of train communication causes immense difficulties to the entire population of the present Lakhimpur district. Such a contingency is usually followed by a rise in the prices of foodstuffs and other essential commodities.

(d) Waterways, ferries and bridges :

Steam navigation : Although the undivided district of Lakhimpur is bisected by the river Brahmaputra and a number of tributaries of this river flow across the plains of the district, steam navigation was introduced here only during the latter part of the last century. The

journey by boat from Gauhati to Dibrugarh took about a month even in cold weather and in the rains against the current the journey was a much more lengthy business. Few people had sufficient time and patience to undertake a voyage during the rainy season. "Week after week the weary traveller must have pursued his tedious way, his view bounded, as a rule, by high banks of treacherous sand, which then, as now, were continually being undermined by the current, and falling with a crash into the water. It was only occasionally that he could relieve the monotony of the voyage by a stroll on shore, as through the greater part of its course down the valley, the banks of the river are covered with high reeds and grass, which are quite impenetrable to a man on foot ; and the tedium of this dreary voyage of fully three months duration, must have been immense. Canoes, of course, could travel faster against the current, but a canoe is not a vessel in which the ordinary man can journey for many days in comfort."[8]

Since 1848 Government steamers were allowed to ply between Calcutta and Gauhati. Five years later the service was extended upto Dibrugarh, with the approval of the Lieutenant Governor. Several voyages were made during 1853 with results that were not unsatisfactory from the financial point of view. In stark contrast to the endless delay of the voyage in country boats, the journey from Gauhati to Dibrugarh and back occupied no more than fifteen days. The cargo tendered soon exceeded the capacity of the steamers. Rates initially charged were fairly high. Freight on ordinary stores were charged at the rate of one rupee per cubic foot between Calcutta and Gauhati. As the planters were never sure of availability of the steamer service, a great part of the trade continued to go by country boats. The planters used to maintain a fleet of country boats to ensure regular despatch of their products. Inspite of the fact that the cost of working the line was heavy and that a considerable portion of the river traffic was done by country boats, the steamer service operated with a fair margin of profit.

In 1860 the Indian General Steam Navigation Company took over the steam navigation of Assam Valley upto Dibrugarh by virtue of a contract to run a pair of vessels every six weeks on condition that the government boats were withdrawn from the line. This Company was associated with the River Steam Navigation Company. In 1884 daily mail service was started between Dibrugarh and Dhubri. The introduction of the daily service represented an enormous advance in the facilities for communication between Assam and the outer world. During the rains, Dibrugarh was reached on the fifth day after leaving Dhubri while the downward journey was performed in three days. The navigation was not entirely free from difficulty ; particularly with regard to the time taken and amenities provided to the passengers. On

8. B. C. Allen : *Assam District Gazetteers, Lakhimpur*, 1905, pp. 223-224.

completion of the Assam Bengal Railway, the Steamer Company realised that it was necessary to accelerate their timings, if they were to retain their traffic. A service of fast steamers was soon introduced between Dibrugarh and Calcutta *via* the Sundarbans.

Following World War II there was considerable expansion of the steamer service in the Brahmaputra. But after the great earthquake of 1950 the steamers ceased to ply upto Dibrugarh due to deterioration of the channel conditions. Disangmukh in Sibsagar district became the eastern-most river port of Assam and merchandise was carried from Dibrugarh by road for transhipment at Disangmukh. After the partition of the country, the journey by steamer from Dibrugarh to Calcutta became restricted as East Bengal through which the river Brahmaputra winds its way comprised the erstwhile East Pakistan. However, the services of cargo steamers continued with fluctuating fortunes till 1965 when services were closed as an aftermath of the Indo-Pak War. The Central Inland Water Transport Corporation Ltd., a Government of India undertaking was registered in 1967 and started its operation in Assam and Calcutta. The conservancy works on the Brahmaputra are carried out by the Corporation, besides running lighterage services. Following the liberation of Bangladesh steamer service by the Brahmaputra has been revived. The Inland Water Transport Corporation, a new undertaking of the State Government has now taken over the charge of steam navigation in Assam ; but a regular steamer-service linking Upper Assam with the rest of the country has not yet been introduced. Several development programmes including improvement of ferry services, introduction of commercial services and maintenance of river channels have been taken up by the Corporation. In August 1968, the Government of India set up a Committee under the chairmanship of Shri B. Bhagawati, M. P., in order to examine the question of co-ordinated development of inland water transport system in selected regions of the country. The Committee submitted its report in October 1970. It was convinced of the viability of the schemes for running internal river services and recommended the following schemes :—

(i) Criss-cross service on the river Brahmaputra.
(ii) Commercial river service on the river Barak, and
(iii) Subansiri river service.

The State Government submitted to the Government of India plans for implementation of the schemes mentioned above and the latter sanctioned a sum of Rs. 5 lakhs for the Subansiri scheme. The Transport Department of the State Government is processing the scheme.

In December 1971 a survey was conducted by the Inland Water Transport Corporation about the navigability of the Brahmaputra from Gauhati to Calcutta. The survey showed that the route could be used

with immediate effect. Accordingly, under certain treaties with the Bangladesh Government, arrangements have been made to run steamer services connecting Assam with Calcutta *via* Bangladesh. The Inland Water Transport Corporation proposes to ply a passenger Hover craft service between Gauhati and Dibrugarh. This service will cover a distance of 440 kilometres in about 7 hours with intermediate stoppages at Tezpur, Arimora and Neamati.

Ferries : The Government of Assam run thirteen ferries along the Brahmaputra, including four ferries plying in the undivided Lakhimpur district. These are :– (1) Sadiya-Saikhowaghat, (2) Laikajam-Murkong Sellek, (3) Dibru-Kachari-Oriamghal, and (4) Dibru-Sonari-Burisuti. Many other ferry services are run in the districts of Dibrugarh and Lakhimpur. These ferries are auctioned out by the Government of Assam to private contractors. The general maintenance and supervision of the same are done by the Public Works Department.

The following is the list of important ferries of the undivided district of Lakhimpur.

1. Sissughat Ferry on the Sissughat road over the Dihing river.
2. Kundil Ferry.
3. Sadiya-Saikhowa Ferry.
4. Sissi Ghat Ferry.
5. Kumati in the North Bank at Ghilamara.
6. Dhekerajan in North Bank Ghilamara.
7. Badati ferry on Bihpuria Badati road connecting South Bank.
8. Lohit ferry on the North Lakhimpur-Kamalabari road.
9. Khaboli ferry on the North Lakhimpur-Kamalabari road.
10. Chouldhowa ferry on the Trunk Road.
11. Ghunasuti ferry on the North Lakhimpur-Dhalghat-Ghunasuti road.
12. Ghagar ferry on the North Lakhimpur-Dhalghat-Ghunasuti road.
13. Mora-Khabuli on the No-Ali-Panigaon road.
14. Arimora ferry on the Dhalpur-Subansirimukh road.
15. Dikrong ferry on the North Trunk Road.

The ferries previously maintained by the Local Boards were taken over by the *Mahkuma Parisads* on abolition of the former. The following is the list of ex-Local Board ferries.

1. Dihing-Than Ghat– Dihing river.
2. Tipam Ghat– Dihing river.
3. Sissi Machkhowa– Sissi river.
4. Nagakhelia ghat– Dibru river.
5. Chandmari ghat– Dibru river.
6. Kenduguri ghat– Dihing river.
7. Jokai Khamti ghat– Dihing river.
8. Romai ghat– Romai river.
9. Tirap ghat– Dihing river.

Bridges : There are also numerous bridges across the rivers of the district. On the National Highway Road No. 37, there are about 14 major bridges constructed and maintained by the Public Works Department. Among important bridges mention may be made of the Doom Dooma bridge, the Bisa Copi bridge, the Tiphook bridge, the Dangori bridge, and the Dholla bridge. Smilarly on the National Highway road No. 38 (Makum-Lekhapani road) there are about ten major bridges such as the Tokopani bridge and the Namdang bridge. Present Lakhimpur district is criss-crossed by a number of turbulent rivers many of which have already been bridged. Important bridges in the district are the Subansiri bridge (1430 ft.), the Dikrong bridge (725 ft.) and the Ranganadi bridge. The estimated cost of the Subansiri bridge was more than Rs. 128 lakhs and that of the Dikrong bridge was Rs. 18 lakhs.

(e) Transport by air :

The Second World War saw a phenomenal expansion of the nearly non-existent air service in Assam. The exigencies of war necessitated an air-link between Calcutta and important towns of Assam including Dibrugarh. After the war, these aerodromes were used for civil purposes. In the undivided district of Lakhimpur, there are two civil aerdroomes one at Mohanbari in the Dibrugarh subdivision and the other at Lilabari in the North Lakhimpur subdivision. The distance from Dibrugarh town to Mohanbari airfield is about ten miles and it is located at a distance of about one mile from the Dibrugarh-Tinsukia road. Mohanbari is also connected with the air strips of Arunachal Pradesh and there are regular air services between Arunachal and Mohanbari. An air booking office is located at Dibrugarh town. The passengers both in-coming and out-going are provided with transport facilities both from and to the aerodrome by the Indian Airlines.

Lilabari air field which was taken over as a regular air port by the Indian Airlines Corporation in 1953, is situated at a distance of about 3 miles from the North Lakhimpur town. During the summer season, air services remain suspended for days together on account of inclement weather.

(f) Travel and Tourist Facilities :

There are two Circuit Houses, one at Dibrugarh and the other at North Lakhimpur, and a number of Dak and Inspection Bungalows in the two districts. The Circuit House at North Lakhimpur was constructed only after Independence. The old Circuit House and the Dak Bungalow of Dibrugarh were engulfed by the Brahmaputra in 1954. A new Circuit House and one Dak Bungalow were constructed thereafter at Dibrugarh. The present Circuit House is quite spacious and is ideally

situated. The management of the Circuit Houses and Dak Bungalows at Dibrugarh and at North Lakhimpur is vested with the respective Deputy Commissioners. The Public Works Department maintains the buildings.

In other parts of the two districts there are as many as twenty Inspection Bungalows constructed and maintained by the Public Works Department. There are two Dak Bungalows at Dibrugarh, and North Lakhimpur, three Dak-cum-Inspection Bungalows at Tinsukia, Chapakhowa and Jonai, and Inspection Bungalows at Doom Dooma, Philobari, Margherita, Modarkhat, Chabua, Khowang, Joypore, Dhemaji, Sissimukh, Lepatkata, Moran, Saikhowa, Sadiya, Tengakhat, Howajan Badati, Laluk and Panigaon. The Assam Oil Company and other big companies have their own Guest Houses.

Hotels and restaurants are found in all the important towns of the district. Facilities for board and lodging are provided in most of the hotels.

In the Dibrugarh district there are two *Dharmasalas* one at Dibrugarh and the other at Tinsukia. About a 100 persons can be accommodated at the Dibrugarh *Dharmasala* and about 250 persons at the other. The *Dharmasalas* are registered under the Registration of Societies Act. The Tinsukia *Dharmasala* is managed by a Committee of the Marwari Panchayat. Similarly the Dibrugarh *Dharmasala* is managed by the Shaharia Charity Trust Estate.

(g) Posts and Telegraphs and Telephones :

Prior to bifurcation of the district there were 203 Post Offices in the district of which 138 were located in the Dibrugarh sub-division and 65 in the North Lakhimpur sub-division. Many more post offices have been opened during the last few years. It is interesting to note that in 1876, there were only 6 Post Offices as against 35 Post Offices in 1903-04 in the whole of the district. The names of different Post Offices in the district is given in the Appendix.

Both the districts of Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh are well served by the telecommunication system. The telecommunication services have been extended to this region only during recent years. Before the attainment of Independence telegraph services in the district were not well developed. But soon after Independence in 1947, and especially at the beginning of the Second Five Year Plan, it was decided to provide telegraph offices as a matter of policy at all subdivisional towns and thanas. In 1965 there were forty-five telegraph offices in the district. In Tinsukia and Dibrugarh there are two Divisional Telegraph Offices which are connected with small offices scattered

all over the district. These two offices finally route the traffic to different stations inland and overseas *via* the Gauhati Central Telegraph Office. Occasionally, Dibrugarh and Tinsukia work round the clock on voice frequency telegraph system between Dibrugarh-Gauhati, Tinsukia-Gauhati and Mohanbari Air Field-Gauhati. The Morse system is mainly used for working the feeder lines to small Telegraph Offices.

There is in addition a permanent wireless station attached to the Dibrugarh Divisional Telegraph Office for speedy disposal of traffic in case of heavy pressure or serious breakdown. Moreover North Lakhimpur town is also connected by wireless and telegraph with Jorhat. Over and above these, radio teleprinters work between Digboi and Calcutta for the Assam Oil Company on a guarantee basis. Telegraph services in *Devanagari* script have been introduced at Dibrugarh and Tinsukia Divisional Telegraph Offices. Proposals are being processed to install Telex Exchanges at Dibrugarh and Tinsukia.

Delay and uncertainty in the trunk services to places outside Assam and even within the State during the monsoon were regular features during the pre-Independence period. In 1947, the direct route to Assam *via* East Bengal was lost and dependence thereafter on only one route *via* Kathihar without alternative route for diverting traffic in the event of breakdown has been a severe handicap. The existing wireless link with Calcutta has not been able to meet the requirements of commercial traffic. As recently as 1962 Assam was connected beyond its borders with only a link between Gauhati and Patna and that too with the simplest carrier system of three channel type, which could provide for four circuits or maximum of four simultaneous conversations using one pair of wires.

Towards the end of 1962, many eight channel carrier systems were installed on several routes each of which could provide circuits on a single pair of wires sometimes upto twelve. New lines to suit such working, were also erected speedily and the existing lines reconstructed. This enabled provision of direct circuits from Gauhati to Calcutta and Delhi and additional circuits on Gauhati to Shillong and Gauhati to Dibrugarh routes.

Open-wire land lines in this area with its peculiar topography and vagaries of nature such as cyclones, storms and landslides cause interruptions despite the best efforts of the Department. It is practically a struggle between the ability of man and the fury of nature. To overcome these difficulties, and to cope with the increasing trunk traffic, the Department has undertaken what is known as the Microwave Project for the first time in the country, installation of which has started already in Assam.

Between Calcutta and Shillong and Shillong and Dibrugarh, towers have been erected at a number of places varying in height from 15 to 100 metres and very high frequency waves in 4000 and 7000 M/c bands are transmitted, as narrow and sharp radio beams from tower to tower. The scheme provides reliable speech and telegraph circuits with immunity from interference due to weather conditions and natural calamities and speeds up the traffic.

There are telephone exchanges at Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, North Lakhimpur, Bihpuria, Laluk, Ledo, Makum, Margherita, Mohanbari, Moranhat, Namrup, Panitola and Saikhowaghat. Public Call Offices are attached to most of the Post Offices in these places. There are proposals to install Telex Exchanges at Dibrugarh and Tinsukia. To cope with the ever increasing demand for more telephones, the capacity of the existing exchanges in Dibrugarh and Margherita has been doubled to 100 lines each. Work on a 100 lines exchange at Digboi has been completed. The existing Assam Oil Company Exchange is connected to trunks *via* Margherita and Tinsukia. Dibrugarh and Tinsukia are connected directly by trunk services with Gauhati and Shillong. Provision has been made for improved methods of transmission, by installation of carrier channels between Dibrugarh-Gauhati, Dibrugarh-Shillong, Dibrugarh-Jorhat, Dibrugarh-Tinsukia, Tinsukia-Mariani-Mokokchang.

(h) Radio and Wireless Stations :

The Dibrugarh Station of All India Radio went into air on 15.2.69. Its capacity is 100 Kw and operates on Medium Wave frequency. This station caters to the needs of the people of the north-eastern part of Assam and neighbouring areas.

(i) Organisations of owners and employees in the field of transport and communications :

The employees of the Assam and Meghalaya State Road Transport Corporation have their own associations. The employees working under Steamer Companies have also their association known as '*Jahaj Karmachari*,' affiliated to the All India Labour Organisation. There are also unions of the Post and Telegraph employees of different categories which have their branches in the district. There are also associations of bus owners, truck owners and rickshaw pullers in the district.

APPENDIX

LIST OF ALL CATEGORIES OF POST OFFICES IN THE DISTRICTS.

DIBRUGARH DISTRICT.

I. Head Post Office
Dibrugarh H. O.
(2nd Class) Upper Assam Division.

II. Branch Post Offices
1. Akanaj Barmunia E. B.
2. Burisuti E.
3. Batuamukh E.
4. Botanipum E.
5. Cementmukh E.
6. Hilaifharagaon E.
7. Jokai E.
8. Khaliamari E.
9. Mankata E.
10. Muktaiarchapori E. B.
11. Rosaki Tengana Mirigaon E.
12. Maridhal E.
13. Naliapool E.
14. Purnanda Road E.
15. Rajabhata E.
16. Choorania E.
17. Kalakhowachapori E.
18. Lezai E.
19. Jamirah E.
20. Baminibill E.
21. Bismile E.
22. Chetiagaon E.
23. Dinjoy E.
24. Hatibandha E.
25. Bangohongi E.
26. Bagapani E.
27. Pengari E.
28. Powai E.
29. Bachapathar E.
30. Dighelia E.
31. Garpara E.
32. Madarkhat E.
33. Oakland E.
34. Bandarkhati E.
35. Dighaltarang E.

36. Direknaitheng E.
37. Kakapathar E.
38. Philobari E.
39. Sanglang E.
40. Tonganagaon E.
41. Rupai E.
42. Bakulani Chariali E.
43. Shadal Panchali E.
44. Kathalguri E.
45. Nachali E.
46. Tingri Chaiali E.
47. Tipam E.
48. Raj Ali E.
49. Ushapur E.
50. Gazpuria E.
51. Kotoha E.
52. Kalakhowa E.
53. Nahajar E.
54. Rungohaligaon E.
55. Sonohuapukhuri E.
56. Sissughat E.
57. Tinthengia E.
58. Bakul E.
59. Nagakhalia E.
60. Sarbodoya E.
61. Lokhapanim E.
62. Tirap E.
63. Tingari E.
64. Lakhimpathar E.
65. Makumpathar E.
66. Boragolai E.
67. Bogibil E.
68. Bamun Park E.
69. Balimara E.
70. Bogadat E.
71. Dehingkonar E.
72. Dillibari E.
73. Jalani Dibrudwar E.
74. Denduguri E.
75. Kaliapani E.
76. Konwarigaon E.
77. Rajgarh E.
78. Salimari E.
79. Sasoni E.
80. Tingkhong E.

81. Ghinai E.
82. Gharipam E.
83. Laipuli E.
84. Molokgaon
85. Barnabera E.
86. Kukuramara E.
87. Dargarigaon E.
88. Bordoainagar E.
89. Baraguri E.
90. Hansara E.
91. Hijuguri E.
92. Mankhooli E.
93. Rongagora E.

Sub-Post Offices :

1. Assam Medical College.
2. Borhapjan.
3. Borbam.
4. Chabua.
5. Borborooah.
6. Chowkidingee E. D. S. O.
7. Digboi.
8. Digboi Chariali S. O. (N. D.)
9. Dikom.
10. Doomdooma.
11. Hoogrijan.
12. Jalannagar S. O.
13. Jeypore
14. Kadamani.
15. Khowang.
16. Khowangghat E. D. S. O.
17. Kundil.
18. Lahoal.
19. Ledo.
20. Makum Junction.
21. Margherita.
22. Mohanaghat.
23. Mohanbari Air Field (P. C. O.)
24. Muliabari.
25. Naharkatiya.
26. Namrup.
27. Netaji Road E. D. S. O.
28. New Market E. D. S. O.
29. Panitola.

30. Rehabari.
31. Sadiya.
32. Saikhowaghat.
33. Santipur.
34. Senairambazar.
35. Sripuria E. D. S. O.
36. Sukanpukhuri.
37. Talap.
38. Tengakhat E. D. S. O.
39. Tinsukia.

LAKHIMPUR DISTRICT.

Branch Post Offices :—

1. Batghari E. (in A/C with Rajmai C. S. O.)
2. Jurkata E. -do-
3. Sissi E. -do-
4. Noroathan E. -do-
5. Mackhowa E. -do-
6. Kharkatamukh E. (in A/C with Densangmukh C. S. O.)
7. Lengribazar E. (in A/C with Moran C. S. O.)
8. Ouphulia Chariali E. (in A/C with Moran C. S. O.)
9. Doomardolong E. (in A/C with Moran C. S. O.)
10. Pathalipam E. (in A/C with Moran C. S. O.)
11. Tarajan E. (in A/C with Moran C. S. O.)
12. Japjup E.
13. Borbil E.
14. Dungibil E.
15. Banpuria E.
16. Padamapur E.
17. Bholanbari E.
18. Duliapathar E.
19. Goraibari E.
20. Meramukh.
21. Dhemaji.
22. Jonai E.
23. Panbari-Lakhimpur.
24. Rangatichariali.
25. Simulguri-Lakhimpur.
26. Bakulguri E.
27. Govendpur E.
28. Deoriborban E.
29. Jariguri E.
30. Kekuri E.
31. Bahgera Dawari E.
32. Hermati-Morbil E.

33. Islamgaon E.
34. Kutubpur E.
35. Marnoi Khora E.
36. Sonapur-Lakhimpur E.
37. Laholial E.
38. Angarkhowa E.
39. Azad E.
40, Barmurichuk E.
41. Bilmukh E.
42. Bordoloni E.
43. Boginadi E.
44. Bholabari E.
45. Chabati E.
46. Doolahat E.
47. Dijoo (T. E.) E.
48. Dhomukhana E.
49. Garchiga E.
50. Ghilamara E. B.
51. Ghunasuti E.
52. Hindugaon E.
53. Kadam E.
54. Kimin E.
55. Lakhimpur North Bazar.
56. Barnai Bebejia E.
57. No-ali Mirigaon E.
58. Pahumara E.
59. Panigaon E.

Sub-Post Offices :

1. Badati.
2. Bihpuria.
3. Dikrong.
4. Dhakuakhana.
5. Dholpur E. D. S. O.
6. Laluk C. S. O.
7. Lakhimpur North.

CHAPTER—VIII

MISCELLANEOUS OCCUPATIONS

An account of the principal sectors of economy of the district in which the majority of the working population are engaged has been given in other chapters. The economic activity of the district is not confined only to those categories of workers ; the spectrum is wide enough to include a large section of the people engaged in various occupations such as public administration, professions like law, medicine, education, religion and fine arts, domestic service, and certain other occupations catering to the various needs of urban society. The last categories of workers include barbers, tailors, launderers milk-men, hoteliers, rickshaw pullers, and hawkers. With growing affluence in the urban areas, the demand for people engaged in the said professions and services is steadily increasing.

(a) Public administration including local and municipal services :

The number of public sector employees in the district on the 31st March, 1963 was 27,591 constituting 14.2% of the total public sector employees in the State. Their number further rose to 32,379 on the 31st March, 1965 and constituted 14.3 per cent of the total public sector employees in the State but in the subsequent year ending on the 31st March, 1966, their total strength decreased to 30,952 persons. Their percentage also fell from 14.3% to 13.5%. These public sector employees in the district include employees of the Railways, other Central Government establishments, State Government, quasi-Government bodies and local bodies. They also include casual labourers employed by the Government and semi-government agencies from time to time.[1]

The number of State Government employees (which includes employees of semi-Government institutions like State Electricity Board, Khadi and Village Industries Board, Basic Education Board and other institutions receiving State Government financial aids) in the district on the 31st March, 1965 was 6,955 of whom 6,757 were males and 198 females. This constituted about 8.8% of the total State Government employees in the district and the expenditure incurred on these employees in the district amounted to Rs. 1,51,70,000/-. Out of 6955 State Government employees in the district, only 343 were gazetted officers of whom 82 were permanent and 261 temporary. Non-Gazetted employees (excluding Grade IV) were in the majority and there were 3,786 employees of this category of which 1,046 were permanent and 2,740 temporary. There were 2,826 Grade IV employees in the district. 1,068

1. *Economic Survey of Assam*, 1963 and 1966 ; Deptt. of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam. p. 22 and 33 respectively.

of them were permanent and the remaining 1,758 were temporary. A further classification of the State Government employees in the district according to Scheduled Tribes(Hills.) Scheduled Tribes (Plains,) Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes is given in the table below.[2]

	Gazetted			Non-Gazetted			Grade IV			Grand Total
	P	T	Total	P	T	Total	P	T	Total	
Scheduled Tribe (Hills)	1	4	5	16	24	40	32	25	57	102
Scheduled Tribe (Plains)	5	7	12	168	287	456	139	181	320	798
Scheduled Caste	5	16	21	87	169	256	88	172	260	537
Backward Classes	10	33	43	342	769	1111	321	601	922	2076

P = Permanent and T = Temporary.

The number of persons employed in public services has been continually on the increase owing to the steady expansion of Government activities under the Five Year Plans. The avenues of employment in the public sector in the district have expanded considerably, mainly due to the establishment of new industrial undertakings such as the Fertilizer Plant and the Thermal Plant at Namrup and the Industrial Estate at Tinsukia. The Town committees and Development Blocks also provided employment to many people. It may also be mentioned that the casual labourers under the P. W. D. and Forest departments together with the factory workers of the public sector play no insignificant part in the economic life of the district.

So far as public employees are concerned, only a small section belongs to the higher income group. They are District, Divisional or Zonal Heads, Judges, and Heads of Higher Educational Institutions, both technical and non-technical. As in other districts, the majority of persons employed in public service belongs to the middle or lower income groups. This is evident from the following statement prepared on the basis of the *Census of the State Government Employees*. This classifies the employees serving in this district as on 31.3.65, on the basis of their total emoluments.

2. *Census of Assam Government Employees as on 31st March, 1965* ; Department of Economics and Statistics, Government of Assam, Shillong, pp. 10, 11, 12, 26 and 27.

Emolument Group (monthly)	Number of employees in the district.
1. Below Rs. 100/- ..	1,807
2. Rs. 100/- and above but below Rs. 250/-	4,399
3. Rs. 250/- and above but below Rs. 500/-	640
4. Rs. 500/- and above but below Rs. 750/-	66
5. Rs. 750/- and above but below Rs. 1000/-	23
6. Rs. 1000/- and above but below Rs. 1500/-	18
7. Rs. 1500/- and above but below Rs. 2000/-	2
8. Rs. 2000/- and above but below Rs. 3000/-	—
9. Rs. 3000/- and above	—
Total ..	6,955

The special amenities provided to the State Government employees are more or less the same in all the districts of Assam. These include such benefits as pension, earned leave, study leave, advances of various types on easy terms, housing accommodation, free medical treatment of employees and their families. The rules regarding pension and gratuity have been liberalised so as to extend the benefit of pension to the employees having only a short tenure of service at their credit. Government quarters are provided to certain categories of employees serving in departments like the P. W. D. and the Community Development Blocks. In addition to them, Government doctors, teachers of the Medical College, some officials like the Deputy Commissioner, Superintendent of Police, Judges and Magistrates, are also provided with residential quarters.

Even then the problem of accommodation of the Government employees is becoming acute in certain towns of the district. House-building advances provided by the Government to the employees for construction of their own houses in the district have benefited only a very small number. Like other districts of Assam, Dibrugarh and Lakhimpur have also associations of Government employees such as the All Assam Ministerial Officer's Association, Assam Civil Service (I) Association, Assam Civil Service (II) Association, All Assam Subordinate Engineers Association, Assam Judicial Service Association, and the Grade IV Employees Association. In the municipalities of Dibrugarh and Tinsukia there are employees' organisations. Other all-Assam Associations of the Government employees have branches at Dibrugarh.

The Central Government employees, employees of Corporations like the Life Insurance Corporation of India, employees of the State Bank of

India, the Railways enjoy various types of benefits in the shape of overtime allowance, travel facilities, leave benefits etc. A uniform pattern of these benefits covering all the Central Government employees, employees of nationalised banks and other Central Govenment underatakings is yet to be evolved.

(b) **Other professions** :

Teachers :—In 1961 there were in the undivided Lakhimpur district 3318 teachers of whom 2845 were males and only 473 were females. Sixty eight teachers served in colleges, 425 in Secondary Schools and 2125 were teachers of Middle and Primary Schools. There were only 9 women teachers in Colleges, 96 in Secondary Schools and 265 in Middle and Primary Schools. With the increase in the number of educational institutions the number of teachers has also gone up during the last few years.

Doctors : In the undivided district there were in 1964, 48 doctors employed in State hospitals and State dispensaries. These doctors worked under the direct control and supervision of the Civil Surgeon, Lakhimpur ; there were also other physicians and specialists in the Assam Medical College, Dibrugarh. In the hospitals of the companies like the Assam Oil Company, Assam Railway and Trading Company, there are doctors, nurses and other medical staff. Moreover in the tea plantations of the district there were 15 doctors, 31 compounders, 81 nurses, 37 midwives and 46 health assistants in 1962. In 1961 there were 630 physicians, surgeons and dentists in the undivided Lakhimpur district. Usually doctors engaged in private practices charge from Rs. 5/- to Rs. 10/- for visiting a patient at the latter's residence. However, much higher fee is charged by the specialists or by the doctors who undertake long journeys to visit patients. Except those who are entitled to free medical facilities either from the Government or from the Companies, all others have to pay fees to the visiting doctors.

Lawyers : In the Dibrugarh Court, there were 64 advocates, 22 pleaders, while in the court at North Lakhimpur there were only 27 pleaders in 1965. A Law College has been established at Dibrugarh under the Dibrugarh University. In the undivided district, there were only two Bar Associations, one at Dibrugarh and the other at North Lakhimpur.

Journalists : In 1965 the number of working journalists in the undivided Lakhimpur District was about 25. They were designated as Staff Correspondents and Editors. Out of these twenty five journalists, there were only four journalists in the North Lakhimpur Sub-division. The members of the Lakhimpur District Journalists' Association are also members of the Assam Journalists' Association. The profession has attracted more persons in the last few years.

(c) **Domestic and personal services :**

Domestic Servants :—Most of the well-to-do families of the district, specially the tea planters, rich farmers, businessmen and Government officers employ domestic servants, of either sex. It is found that the number of domestic servants varies from two to four in rich families. The middle-class families generally employ one domestic servant. Most of the domestic servants work as full-time employees. According to the 1951 Census, in the district there were about 3,770 domestic servants of whom 1,421 were in the rural areas and 2,349 in urban areas. The domestic servants have no uniform rates of wages in the district. However, they draw between Rs. 20/- to Rs. 50/- as pay per month besides free food and lodging. Expert cooks and servants employed in hotels and restaurants get higher wages but strictly speaking they do not come under the category of domestic servants.

Barbers : Barbers, as a professional group are found specially in the town areas of the district. Formerly barbers used to visit the houses of their customers both in towns and rural areas, and they were paid both in cash and kind. In some cases they accepted clothes and paddy when they worked in the villages but such cases are now no longer common. Saloons have now been set up mostly in urban areas of the district. It has been noticed that in most of the saloons, specially in the bigger ones, the owners employ paid barbers most of whom are up-country men. In the urban areas like Dibrugarh, Tinsukia and North Lakhimpur, the charge for a hair cut is 75 p. to Re. 1.00 and for a shave it varies from, 25 paise to 50 paise. But in rural areas the charges for hair-cut vary from 37 paise to 50 paise. According to the 1951 Census, there were about 110 barbers and shops in different parts of the district. The 1961 Census shows that the number of barbers and hairdressers rose to 1354 within a span of ten years.

Washermen : The area of activity of washermen is mostly confined to the towns. According to the Secretary, District Harijan Sevak Sangha Dibrugarh there were about 1,650 washermen in the district (Dibrugarh-700, Digboi-300, Tinsukia-150, and other places approximately 500), in 1965. The charges for washing clothes vary from 25 paise to 30 paise per piece.

Cobblers : According to the Census of 1961, there were 3,540 cobblers in the district ; of whom 1,967 were males and 1,573 females. Some well-to-do cobblers have also opened small shops where they manufacture foot-wears, while others carry on their business on the road sides in the towns.

Hoteliers : Hotels and restaurants provide employment to a good number of people in the district. The 1961 Census revealed that about

437 persons were employed in the hotels and restaurants in the district. Most of the hotels and restaurants in the district are found in the busy areas of Dibrugarh and Tinsukia. Expert cooks and servants get good salaries in the big hotels and restaurants. In addition to their emoluments, the employees also enjoy free food and lodging.

Tailors : Most of the reputed tailoring firms are located only in the important towns of the district. With the rise of the standard of living, there has been an increase in the variety of sartorial designs and consequently, the number of tailoring firms has also gone up. Owners of these firms employ workers to assist them. The difference between the tailoring charges prevailing in urban and rural areas in the district is very wide. Stitching charge is much higher in towns than in villages. In 1964-65, the stitching charge of cotton trousers was Rs. 6/- and warm trousers Rs. 10/- while the stitching charge for a warm coat was Rs. 40/-. There is however, no uniformity of rates charged by different tailors in different towns. Another important aspect of tailoring in the district is that a large section of the tailors sell their ready-made clothes in the garden *hats* and other rural *hats* of the district.

Rickshaw pullers : Rickshaw pullers also form an important occupational group mostly in the urban areas of the district. Now-a-days, along with the increase of various industrial and commercial activities, the number of rickshaw pullers is also increasing day by day and the rates charged by the rickshaw pullers generally vary from town to town. More than 5,000 rickshaws were registered under various town committees and municipalities of the undivided Lakhimpur district in 1965.

The general economic condition : The general economic condition of those who are engaged in manual labour is believed to be just above subsistence level. Cobblers, barbers, washermen and persons belonging to allied occupational groups earn just enough to keep their families alive. Very few of them have got permanent dwelling houses. The State Government, many social service organisations and municipalities have taken up various schemes for the upliftment of these people. The majority of these people reside temporarily in the district and go back to their own villages in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh after spending a few years in different parts of Assam.

According to the census of 1961, the different categories of population other than those engaged in cultivation have been placed under ten broad divisions, as below :-

1. Professional, Technical and related workers-6,045 persons.
2. Administrative, Executive and Managerial workers-2,365 persons.
3. Clerical and related workers-7,448 persons.
4. Sales workers-27,091 persons.
5. Farmers, Fishermen, hunters, loggers and related workers-1,75,128 persons.
6. Miners, quarrymen and related workers-2,381 persons.
7. Workers in transport and communications-12,789 persons.
8. Craftsmen, production process workers-63,258 persons.
9. Service, sport and recreation workers-24,442 persons.
10. Workers not classified by occupations-2,694 persons. There are many sub-groups under each division which are shown in the following table :-

Table showing the number of population under Miscellaneous Occupations as in 1961 Census. Lakhimpur District.

Division		Occupational Distribution Male	Female	Total
1. Professional, Technical and Related Workers. In all areas of the District :-	(a) Architects, Engineers and Surveyors.	321	—	321
Male— 5,233	(b) Chemists, Physicists, Geologists & other Physical scientists.	65	1	66
Female— 812	(c) Biologists, Veterinarians, Agronomists & related Scientists.	24	1	25
Total— 6,045				
Urban areas only :—	(d) Physicians, Surgeons and Dentists.	605	25	630
Male— 2,379	(e) Nurses, Pharmacists and other Medical and Health Technicians.	374	224	598
Female— 265				
Total— 2,644	(f) Teachers	2,845	473	3,318
	(g) Jurists.	148	—	148
	(h) Social Scientists & related Workers	140	41	181
	(i) Artists, writers and related workers.	322	4	326
	(j) Draughtsmen, Science and Engineering Technicians (N. E. C.)	82	1	83
	(k) Other Professional, Technical & related workers	307	42	349
2. Administrative, Executive & Managerial workers. In all areas of the District :-	(a) Administrators and Executive officials (central Govt.)	129	1	130
	(b) Administrators and Executive officials (State Govt.)	353	4	357
Male— 2,347				
Female 18	(c) Directors, Managers and working proprietors, others.	1,326	4	1,330
Total— 2,365				

Division		Occupational Distribution Male	Female	Total
Urban areas only :—				
Male— 1,625				
Female— 5				
Total— 1,630				
3. Clerical & related workers.	(a) Book-Keepers and Cashiers	798	2	800
In all areas of the District :—	(b) Stenographers and Typists	346	17	363
Male— 7,383	(c) Office Machine operators	16	—	16
Female— 65	(d) Clerical workers, miscellaneous	4,566	46	4,616
Total— 7,448	(e) Unskilled office workers	1,657	—	16,57
Urban areas only :—				
Male— 5,073				
Female— 59				
Total— 5,132				
4. Sale workers. In all areas.	(a) Working proprietors, wholesale & retail trade.	10,973	232	11,205
of the District :—	(b) Commercial travellers & manufacturers, agents.	253	3	256
Male— 26,280				
Female— 811				
Total— 27,091				
Urban areas only :—	(c) Insurance, Real Estates & Security Salesmen etc.	243	1	244
Male— 10,987	(d) Salesmen, shop Asstts. & related workers.	14,810	575	15,385
Female— 156	(e) Money lenders and pawn Brokers.	1	—	1
Total— 11,143				
5. Farmers Fishermen, Hunters	(a) Farmers and Farm Managers.	338	149	487
Loggers and related workers.	(b) Farm Workers.	92,491	80,603	173,094
In all areas of the District :—	(c) Hunters and related Workers.	98	—	98
Male— 94,376	(d) Fishermen and related workers.	1,251	—	1,251
Female— 80,752	(e) Loggers and other Forestry workers.	218	—	218
Total— 175,128				

Division		Occupational Distribution Male	Female	Total
Urban areas only :—				
Male— 667				
Female— 423				
Total— 1,090				
6. Miners, Quarrymen & related workers. In all areas of	(a) Miners, and Quarrymen.	2,265	—	2,265
the District :—	(b) Well Drillers & related workers.	104	—	104
Male— 2,380	(c) Miners, Quarrymen & related. Workers, N.E.C.	11	1	12
Female— 1				
Total— 2,381				
Urban areas only :—				
Male— 114				
Female— —				
Total— 114				
7. Workers in Transport & Communication. In all areas	(a) Deck workers, Engineer Officers and Pilots, ship.	2	—	2
of the District :—	(b) Crews and Boat-men.	922	—	922
	(c) Aircraft Pilots, Navigators and Flight Engineers.	45	—	45
Male— 12,741				
Female— 48	(d) Drivers and Firemen, Railway Engine.	148	—	148
Total— 12,789	(e) Drivers, Road Transport.	5,603	—	5,603
	(f) Conductors, Guards and Brakesmen:—Railway.	143	—	143
Urban areas only :—	(g) Inspectors and allied workers :— Transport.	500	—	500
Male— 6,523	(h) Telephone, Telegraph and related Tele Communication			
Female— 13	operators.	420	24	444
Total— 6,536				

Division		Occupational Distribution Male	Female	Total
	(i) Postmen and Messengers.	501	–	501
	(j) Workers In Transport and Communications N.E.C.	4,451	24	4,487
8. Craftsmen, production process workers and labourers N.E.C.	(a) Spinners, Weavers, Knitters, Dyers and related workers.	1,101	8,624	9,725
In all areas of the District :—	(b) Tailors, Cutters and related workers.	2,303	877	3,180
Male— 52,086				
Female— 11,172	(c) Leather Cutters, Sewers & related workers.	456	2	458
Total— 63,258				
Urban areas only :—	(d) Furnacemen, Rollers, Drawers, Moulders & related metal-making workers.	2,200	2	2,202
Male— 18,696				
Female— 1,957	(e) Precision instrument makers, Watch makers, Jewellers and related workers.	1,392	–	1,392
Total— 20,653				
	(f) Tool-makers, Machinists, Plumbers, Welders & related workers.	3,593	–	3,593
	(g) Electricians and related Electrical & Electronics workers	933	1	934
	(h) Carpenters, Joiners and Cabinet—makers. and related workers	5,564	–	5,564
	(i) Painters and Paper Hangers.	71	–	71
	(j) Bricklayers, Plasterers and Construction workers (N. E. C.)	7,190	222	7,412
	(k) Compositors, Printers, Engravers, Book-binders & related workers.	286	—	286

Division		Occupational Distribution Male	Female	Total
	(l) Potters, Kilnmen, glass and clayformers and related workers.	1,335	27	1,362
	(m) Millers, Bakers, Brewmasters and related workers.	1,387	248	1,635
	(n) Chemical and related process workers.	1,433	–	1,433
	(o) Tobacco preparers and products makers.	67	–	67
	(p) Craftsmen and production process workers (N. E. C.)	1,194	272	1,466
	(q) Testers, Packers, Sorters and related workers.	39	–	39
	(r) Stationery, Engine Excavating & Lifting equipment operators and related workers.	460	–	460
	(s) Labourers (N. E. C.)	21,082	897	21,979
9. Service sport & recreation workers. In all areas of the District :—				
Male— 21,874	(a) Fire Fighters, Policemen, Guards and related workers.	6,934	–	6,934
Female— 2,568	(b) House keepers, Cooks, Maids and related workers.	9,683	2,346	12,029
Total— 24,442	(c) Waiters, Bartenders and related workers.	58	–	58
Urban areas only :—				
Male— 5,662	(d) Building caretakers, Cleaners and related workers.	1,593	162	1,755
Female— 823				
Total— 6,485	(e) Barbers, Hairdressers, Beauticians and related workers.	1,354	—	1,354

Division	Occupational Distribution Male	Female	Total
(f) Launderers, Drycleaners and Pressers.	717	60	777
(g) Athletes, Sportsmen and related workers.	3	—	3
(h) Photographers and related Camera operators	72	—	72
10. Workers not classifiable by occupation : in all areas of the District.			
Male— 2,286			
Female— 408			
Total 2,694			
Urban areas only :			
Male— 571			
Female— 279			
Total— 850			
(a) Workers Reporting Occupations Unidentifiable or Unclassifiable (Non-elected Political Workers)	1,398	288	1,686
(b) Workers not Reporting Occupation.	888	120	1,008

CHAPTER—IX

ECONOMIC TRENDS

General Livelihood Pattern of the District : The 1951 Census revealed that undivided Lakhimpur had the lowest percentage of agricultural population in Assam. Whereas seventy three per cent of the total population of Assam earned its livelihood from agriculture only 54.6 per cent did so in Lakhimpur district. The corresponding figures for Nowgong and Sibsagar districts stood at 85.4% and 64.5% respectively. It is interesting to note that persons engaged in cultivation of tea have not been categorised under this head.

A salient feature of the rural economy is the preponderance of cultivators who cultivate their own lands. Of the 588310 persons engaged in agriculture in the district in 1951, 526401 were cultivators of land wholly or mainly owned by them and their dependents ; 55727 persons were cultivators of land wholly or mainly unowned by them and their dependents ; 5445 persons were cultivating labourers and their dependents ; and their were 737 persons who were non-cultivating owners of land, agricultural rent receivers and their dependents. These four groups have each been subdivided into three sub-groups :—self supporting persons, earning dependents and non-earning dependents. The table below shows the number of persons under these categories :-

Agricultural classes	Self supporting persons	Earning dependents	Non-earning dependents	Total
1. Cultivators of land wholly or mainly owned by them and their dependents.	120026	115167	291208	526401
2. Cultivators of land wholly or mainly unowned by them and their dependents.	12600	11788	31339	55727
3. Cultivating labourers and their dependents	1665	1443	2337	5445
4. Non-cultivating owners of land, agricultural rent receivers and their dependents.	216	90	431	737
Total of all agricultural classes.	134507	128488	325315	588310

In 1951, total non-agricultural population formed 45.4 per cent of the population of the district. Besides persons supported by industries this group also included persons deriving their principal means of livelihood from stock raising, rearing of small animals and insects (e.g. silk worms), tea plantations, oranges and bananas, forestry and wood cutting, hunting and fishing. A large section of people was also engaged in commercial activities in the district. The number of employees who earned their livelihood from transport was 18388 and 47455 persons were engaged in other miscellaneous services. A considerable section of the total population of the district was tea garden labourers and their dependents. Most of the tea garden labourers own some plots of cultivable land. If the garden labourers were classed as agriculturists the percentage of population depending on agriculture in the district would have been more than 54.6% in 1951. Thus classification of tea garden labourers as a non-agricultural class has led to a distinct fall in the percentage of agricultural population not only in the district of Lakhimpur, but also in other tea-growing districts of Assam such as Sibsagar, Cachar and Darrang. The table below shows the details of classification of non-agricultural population in the district as per the 1951 Census.

Non-agricultural classes	Self supporting persons	Earning dependents	Non-earning dependents	Total
1. Production other than cultivation.	193661	21816	167382	382859
2. Commerce	13439	3134	24572	41145
3. Transport	6123	394	11871	18388
4. Other services and Misc. sources.	21317	2528	23610	47455
Total of non-agricultural classes.	234540	27872	227435	489847

In the 1961 Census the old classification based on livelihood was dispensed with and a new classification based on work was adopted. According to this classification, the total population has been divided into two classes : workers and non-workers. The working population has again been classified into nine categories of industrial workers.

According to the 1961 Census, the undivided district of Lakhimpur had a population of 1563842 of which more than half (810092) of the population constituted the non-workers. The large percentage of non-working population in the district indicates the strains on the

district economy and the extent to which human reosurces in the district still remain unutilised. The burden of supporting the larger section of the population is on the small section of people who are earning members of society. Of the working population of 753750 persons about 55.68% are cultivators. If the figure of agricultural labourers of 10407 is added to this, the percentage of workers engaged in agriculture would be slightly higher. Of the remaining workers, 179575 were engaged in mining, quarrying, live-stock, forestry, fishing, hunting and plantations, orchards and allied activities ; 29036 in trade and commerce ; 25217 in manufacture other than house-hold industry and 13213 in other miscellaneous services. The table below shows the workers—male and female—in the undivided Lakhimpur district classified into nine industrial categories.[1]

Classification	Total of district		
	Male	Female	Total
1	2	3	4
1. Total population in the district	853879	709963	1563842
2. Total workers :—	464859	288891	753750
(1) Working as cultivator	229915	189787	419702
(2) Working as agricultural labourer	7958	2449	10407
(3) Working in Mining, quarrying, Live-stock, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, Plantation, orchards and allied activities.	98712	80863	179575
(4) Working in household Industry.	2431	9149	11580
(5) Working in Manufacturing other than household Industry.	24069	1148	25217
(6) Working in construction	11589	246	11735
(7) Working in Trade & Commerce.	28212	824	29036
(8) Working in Transport, Storage & Communication.	13161	120	13281
(9) Working in other services.	48912	4305	53217
3. Non-workers	389020	421072	810092

The percentage of workers declined sharply in 1971 when the undivided district had only 29.2 percent of working population as compared to 48.2 per cent in 1961. The decline was more marked in case of the female workers, who now constitute only 9.3 per cent of the total female population as against 40.7 per cent in 1961. The percentage of the male working population also has gone down

1. *Census of India* 1961, *Assam, District Census Hand Book, Lakhimpur*, pp. 223-224.

considerably from 54.4 per cent in 1961 to 46.4 per cent in 1971. However, "this unusual fall in the work participation rate is not due to any depletion in the working population but on account of a change in the approach to these economic questions and in the definition of worker in 1971 Census. As a matter of fact owing to this change, the comparability of the figures of work participation of the two Censuses is lost. In the last Census the percentage of the working population registered a marked increase, because, the worker status was liberally given to include even persons whose contribution to productive activity was insignificant."[2]

The 1971 Census reveals that out of the total working population of 617544 persons the undivided district had 272029 cultivators; 28830 agricultural labourers and 316685 other workers. This shows that the percentage of the cultivators to the total working population has declined from 55.7 in 1961 to 44.1 in 1971 whereas the corresponding percentage of the agricultural labourer has recorded a sharp rise from 1.4 in 1961 to 4.6 in 1971. This rise in the percentage of the agricultural labourer indicates an increase in the population of the landless cultivators in the district deriving their livelihood mainly from agriculture. However, the rise in the percentage of the workers other than those classified as cultivators and agricultural labourers is symptomatic of the economic prosperity the district has witnessed during the decade. A sharp rise in the percentage of the female workers engaged in occupation other than agriculture indicates the multiplicity of avenues of employment opened up during the plan period. The following table shows the details of the working population of the undivided Lakhimpur district as per the 1971 Census.

	Persons	Male	Female
Total population	2,118,386	1,133,080	985,306
Workers :—			
Total population	617,544	525,760	91,784
Percentage to the total population			
(a) 1971 Census	29.2	46.4	9.3
(b) 1961 ,,	48.2	54.4	40.7
Cultivators :—			
Total Cultivators	272,029	261,919	10,110
Percentage to the total working population			
(a) 1971 Census	44.1	49.8	11.0
(b) 1961 ,,	55.7	49.5	65.7

2, *Census of India* 1971, *Assam Provisional Population Totals*, p. 11.

	Persons	Male	Female
Agricultural labourers :—			
Total population	28,830	26,227	2,603
Percentage to the total working population			
(a) 1971 Census	4.6	5.0	2.9
(b) 1961 ,,	1.4	1.7	0.8
Other workers :—			
Total population	316,685	237,614	79,071
Percentage to the total working population			
(a) 1971 Census	51.3	45.2	86.1
(b) 1961 ,,	42.9	48.8	33.5

In 1960-61 when the State Income was provisionally worked out, it was estimated that the district of Lakhimpur contributed the highest share to it followed by Kamrup and Sibsagar districts.[3] Its share to the State Income stood at 17.9% or Rs. 639.8 million out of the total State Income of Rs. 3577.8 million. Of the District Income of Rs. 639.8 million, 59.6% was contributed by agricultural and allied activities including tea industry and the remaining 40.4% of the District Income was shared by other sectors as follows: Mining and Manufacturing 18.2%; Commerce, Transport and Communication 14.2%; Public services 2.4% and other services 5.6%. During the same year the per capita income for the State was Rs. 307.00 but the same for the district of Lakhimpur stood at Rs. 417.00 and was the highest per capita income among all the districts of Assam.

Viewed from the size of land holdings the bulk of the agricultural population own very small farms. The per capita holding of cultivable land is low in case of the majority of cultivators. This became evident from a survey conducted by a random sample method by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Assam.[4] It is stated in the report that out of 2430 families surveyed in 49 villages, 371 families (15.27%) were absolutely landless. Only ten families held below one *bigha* of land and the holdings of the remaining families varied widely in size ranging from one *bigha* to more than one hundred *bighas*. An interesting feature of the rural economy as revealed by this survey is that 63% of the families held lands

3. *Economic Survey of Assam*, 1963-Deptt. of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam, Shillong; p. 31.

4, *A Survey of the Rural Economic Conditions in Lakhimpur*, 1954 Department of Economics and Statistics, Assam, Shillong; pp. 31-32.

of size less than the average size of holding which was found to be 14.38 *bighas*. 393 families roughly constituting 16.17% of the total farmers held lands between ten to fifteen *bighas*. The group of cultivators holding lands between ten to thirty *bighas* consisted of 982 persons or 40.41%. About 12.51% of the total population covered by the survey held thirty *bighas* of land or more. If the holdings of sizes upto ten *bighas* are classified as small, between ten to thirty *bighas* as medium and thirty *bighas* and above as large farms then the proportion of farmers of each group will come to 47.08%, 40.4% and 12.5% respectively. The area covered by each of the three holding groups was as follows : small holdings 11.41%, medium holdings 48.59% and large holdings 40% of the village land. The average size of holdings per family was 3.48 *bighas* in small holding group, 17.29 *bighas* in medium holding group and 45.97 *bighas* in large holding group. The highest proportion of families holding land seemed to concentrate between the size of 5-20 bighas accounting for about 47% of families and as such this size group was considered as the model holding group in the sample.

The causes of fragmentation and subdivision of land holdings are not far to seek. The growing pressure of population on land coupled with the laws of inheritance has led to the diminution in the size of farms. Most of these are tiny pieces which are unsuited to improved techniques of agriculture. Indebtedness of the cultivators and other allied factors cause frequent transfer of ownership of land of the cultivators of the lowest income group. With the rapid rise in the price level scores of farmers have been compelled to sell or mortgage parts of their land holdings to supplement their meagre incomes. Cooperative Farming Societies could have stemmed the tide of continuous fragmentation and subdivision of land holdings but this has not made much headway as yet. In 1960-61 there were only 19 Farming Cooperative Societies comprising 507 members. In June 1967 there were two Joint Farming Cooperative Societies and thirty Collective Farming Co-operative Societies in the undivided Lakhimpur district, with total membership of fifty five persons and 943 persons respectively. The total area covered by these two types of societies was very small ; the former had only 110 acres of land as against 500 acres occupied by the latter. Uneconomic holdings have deterred the growth and development of agriculture in several ways. The Assam Consolidation of Holdings Act' was enacted in 1961 for consolidation and prevention of fragmentation of agricultural holdings in the plains districts of Assam. Implementation of this Act has been kept in abeyance since June 1969.

Price trends : The price level has been rising almost every year. There has been steep rise in prices of all essential commodities during the last few years. The prices of important commodities during the period from 1863 to 1902 as recorded in the old Gazetteer of Lakhimpur did

not show much of spurts and jolts. The relevant passage is reproduced below.

"The Statement in the margin shows the average price of rice in each of the four decades ending with 1902. It is many years since the cultivators of Lakhimpur produced enough grain to feed the immigrant population and the price of rice depends on the price at which it can be imported from outside. During the last forty years, it has shown a general tendency to appreciation but this tendency is not so marked as in other districts, for the simple reason that even forty years ago rice in Lakhimpur was far from cheap. For the same reason the market keeps extremely steady and during that period there was only a difference of *seers* between top and bottom prices, as compared with a difference of 29 *seers* in Sylhet. Salt has been fairly steady at 8 *seers* for the rupee which is considerably cheaper than it was in the sixties, when only 6 *seers* could be purchased for that sum but in 1903 the price fell to 10 *seers* for the rupee."[5]

Average	Seers per rupee
1863-1872	14.2
1873-1882	11.1
1883-1892	12.7
1893-1902	10.7

The following table also shows the prices of food staples in *seers* obtainable per rupee at selected markets of the district in the period between 1880 and 1905.[6]

5. B. C. Allen—*Assam District Gazetteers, Lakhimpur* 1905, p. 216.
6. *Ibid.* Table 10, p. 18.

		Dibrugarh		North Lakhimpur			
		Common rice	Salt	*Matikalai*	Common rice	Salt	*Matikalai*
1880	2nd week of February	10	6	11	—	—	—
	2nd week of August	10	6	16	—	—	—
1890	2nd week of February	13	8	16	14	8	13
	2nd week of August	12	8	14	12	8	13
1900	2nd week of February	12	8	14	13	8	14
	2nd week of August	11	9	11½	10	8	10
1901	2nd week of February	10	8	10	10	8	14
	2nd week of August	9	8	12	7	8	8
1902	2nd week of February	11½	8	13	13	8	14
	2nd week of August	10½	8	13	9	8	13
1903	2nd week of February	11½	8	11½	11	8	13
	2nd week of August	9½	10	12	9	9	11
1904	2nd week of February	12	10	13	13	10	13
	2nd week of August	13	10	12	12	10	13
1905	2nd week of February	14	10	14	14	10	16
	2nd week of August	—	—	—	—	—	—

The above two statements show that the average prices of important commodities in the district were quite low in 1863. But after 1863, the prices of rice in the district of Lakhimpur were to some extent higher in comparison with districts like Goalpara with 25 *seers* per rupee ; Kamrup with 23 *seers* per rupee and Sylhet and Cachar with 32 *seers* per rupee. Prices of rice, salt and *Matikalai* were fluctuating in the period between 1880 to 1905. The average price of common rice for the period from 1903 to 1912 worked out at 10 *seers* for rupee ; salt at 11 *seers* 15 *chattacks* and *Matikalai* at 10 *seers* 13 *chattacks*.[7]

But since 1912 the prices of important commodities have been on the increase in the district as in other districts of Assam. The rise in prices was very steep during both World Wars. The same trend is noticeable during the Plan period. The rise in price since the Second World War is summed up in the *Census Report*, Assam 1951, as follows.

"The outbreak of the World War led to a great rise in prices all over the country which became greater as the war went on. Prices in Assam rose even higher than elsewhere in India. The end of the war did not see any easing up of economic situation. Actually the prices rose still further and surpassed even the highest peaks reached during the war. The decade was throughout one of high inflationary prices and was, therefore on the whole a prosperous one for the agriculturists. But the condition of the latter was by no means affluent, as the prices of other non-agricultural articles soared to even higher levels while they had to submit to seizures and regular control of their stocks of rice and paddy."

"Supply conditions in the state gave cause for concern. The villager was happy for the high prices that his produce fetched, but for others it was a problem to get the food supplies. The problem of obtaining clothes, fuel and kerosene and other necessities engrossed every one's attention."

"At the beginning of the decade various control orders were instrumental in reducing prices, but they also had the effect of driving supplies underground and the problem of obtaining supplies at control prices became more acute. Shortage of rice in the market was partly due to hoarding but a good deal of grain undoubtedly was consumed by the producer himself owing to increased prosperity. The cultivator met his needs by disposing of only a small quantity of grain in the market (which brought him sufficient money) and consuming or hoarding the rest. This besides other factors made, the deficit of food grains real, especially at the end of the War. The rationing was introduced in

7. *Supplement to the Assam District Gazetteers Lakhimpur*, Vol. VIII.

most of the towns regarding rice, kerosene oil, cloth, sugar, mustard oil, and *dhal*. Sugar, cloth and kerosene oil rationing was later on extended to rural areas also. They had their inevitable repercussions in the form of increased black marketing, profiteering and hoarding, depending upon the efficiency of the district authority to enforce the control orders."[8]

A salient feature in the economy of Assam as in the other States of India, has been the increase of prices during the post-war period. The impact of deficit financing and some other measures on the prices of essential commodities was conspicuous during the Second Five Year Plan and a continuous rise in prices was noticeable all over India. "The index of whole-sale prices for India (base 1952-53 = 100) rose by 34.2 per cent, from 91.6 in 1955 to 122.9 in 1960. During the same period, the wholesale price index for Assam (Base 1953 = 100) increased by 26.4 per cent from 103.8 in 1955 to 131.2 in 1960. Over the Third Five Year Plan, the price situation deteriorated further, in Assam as well as in India. In Assam, the index of wholesale prices which stood at 131.2 in 1960 shot up to 176.5 in 1965– a rise of 34.5 per cent. Over the same period the wholesale prices in India registered a rise of 31.2 per cent, from 122.9 in 1960 to 161.3 in 1965."

"Compared to 1965, the index of wholesale prices in the year 1966, spurted up by 13.5 per cent in India, and by 20.1 per cent in Assam. In case of India it was mainly the shortfall in agricultural production which wrought havoc with prices. In Assam, rise in the prices of cereals consequent to the change in the policy of paddy procurement and sympathetic rise in the prices of other food-items mainly accounted for the rise in prices."[9]

The years 1966 and 1967 witnessed serious shortfalls in agricultural production due to droughts in different parts of the country. As such the curve of the price index which is chiefly dominated by the food items, further rose upwards. Over these two years the wholesale price index in Assam shot up by 36.8 per cent while the wholesale price index for India registered a smaller rise of 29.0 per cent.

During 1968 there was a bumper agricultural production and this brought a welcome check to the consistently rising prices. The index of general level of prices during the year was 209.5 which was lower than the price index of the previous year by 2.1. But in Assam even this increase in agricultural production failed to arrest the rising trend

8. *Census of India*, 1951 ; *Assam. Manipur and Tripura*, p. 36.

9. *Economic Survey, Assam* 1967—Department of Economics and Statistics, Assam Shillong. p. 65.

of prices. The only redeeming feature of the price situation was that the index this year recorded a smaller rise of 6.6 per cent against 16.7 in the previous year.

In 1969 the level of agricultural production in the country reached an all-time high mark though there was a slight setback in Assam. But because of the general buoyancy in the economy of the country, after the recession there was a moderate rise of 4.6 per cent in the index of wholesale prices during the year. In Assam inspite of a slight setback in agriculture, the index of the wholesale prices reversed its upward trend after more than a decade. This fall is mainly attributed to the adequate stock position that had been built up during the previous years. "The seasonal variations during the year exhibited the familiar pattern of the previous years though on a lower plateau. The index reached the year's peak of 251.1 in July, then progressively declined to 226.2 in November but again recorded a very small rise to 228.9 in December."[10]

10. *Economic Survey, Assam*, 1969, Department of Economics and Statistics Assam, Shillong pp. 59—60.

The following table shows the wholesale prices of important commodities in the district in the period 1961-63.[11]

Month	Year	Rice (common) per md. (Rs.)	Sugar per md. (Rs.)	Mustard oil per md. (Rs.)	*Masur dal* per md. (Rs.)	Potato per md. (Rs.)	*Gur* per md. (Rs.)
January	1961	20.75	44.00	100.00	23.00	12.50	15.50
February	"	20.00	47.50	98.00	22.50	11.00	19.00
March	"	20.00	45.00	102.00	23.50	16.50	15.00
April	"	20.00	42.83	94.00	23.00	17.00	16.00
May	"	22.25	43.00	86.00	21.25	20.00	15.50
June	"	22.50	43.50	89.00	22.25	20.00	14.00
July	"	23.00	43.00	89.00	22.00	20.00	15.00
August	"	23.75	42.25	88.00	21.00	22.00	17.50
September	"	24.00	41.75	84.00	20.50	25.00	18.00
October	"	24.00	43.50	83.50	21.00	28.00	19.00
November	"	24.50	45.00	90.00	23.50	29.00	20.00
December	"	24.50	42.00	90.00	23.50	22.00	22.50
January	1962	22.50	41.75	90.00	24.50	15.00	19.00
February	"	21.00	43.00	93.50	26.00	15.00	18.00
March	"	21.50	41.00	90.00	25.50	17.00	17.50
April	"	22.50	41.00	90.00	25.00	17.00	17.50
May	"	23.00	42.50	88.50	24.50	16.50	17.50
June	"	24.00	42.50	88.00	23.00	15.50	16.00
July	"	25.00	42.75	89.00	24.25	21.00	19.00

11. *District Statistical Abstract, Lakhimpur District*, 1963. pp. 91—92.

Month	Year	Rice (common) per md. (Rs.)	Sugar per md. (Rs.)	Mustard oil per md. (Rs.)	*Masur dal* per md. (Rs.)	Potato per md. (Rs.)	*Gur* per md. (Rs.)
August	1962	24.00	42.75	96.00	26.50	20.50	19.00
September	"	26.00	43.00	95.00	27.00	19.00	18.00
October	"	24.00	44.00	95.00	29.00	20.00	19.00
November	"	26.00	45.00	100.00	30.25	22.00	19.00
December	"	24.00	45.00	97.00	31.00	21.50	19.50
January	1963	22.62	44.00	94.00	29.75	16.00	20.00
February	"	23.00	45.00	92.00	31.00	18.00	21.00
March	"	24.00	46.00	93.00	30.75	17.00	21.50
April	"	25.75	47.00	91.00	29.60	19.00	24.00
May	"	28.00	47.50	93.00	31.00	19.62	28.00
June	"	28.62	47.50	90.00	27.50	17.00	31.00
July	"	30.00	49.00	91.00	28.25	18.50	36.00
August	"	30.75	45.62	89.00	28.25	21.00	36.00
September	"	30.75	46.00	88.95	27.75	—	—
October	"	28.00	46.00	89.00	28.50	—	—
November	"	28.00	47.00	86.11	29.00	—	—
December	"	28.00	47.00	86.11	29.00	—	—

Consumer Price Index : The consumer price index number relating to the working class for three centres of Assam—Gauhati, Silchar and Tinsukia,—is compiled by the Labour Bureau, Government of India. Prior to 1966, two more centres in Assam, Digboi and Rangapara, were also included in the compilation. The curve of consumer price index number for the working class worked out on the basis of prices prevailing at Tinsukia and Digboi in the undivided district of Lakhimpur assumed a steady rise from 1960 to 1965. But thereafter during 1966 and 1967 a steep rise was noticeable. At Tinsukia centre the consumer price index number rose from 159 points in 1965 to 189 points in 1966 and again to 249 points in 1967 showing a differential rise of thirty points and sixty points respectively. During the next year there was only a moderate rise of six points. Over the period 1960-68 the consumer price index numbers for working class for three centres of Assam rose by 116 per cent at Gauhati, 109 per cent at Silchar and 116 per cent at Tinsukia. During 1969 however, in conformity with the general price level the index for the three places declined respectively by 11 per cent, 7 per cent and 11 per cent. The following table shows the consumer price index number for the working class at Tinsukia and Digboi.[12]

Year	Tinsukia (base 1949 = 100)	Digboi (base 1960 = 100)
1960	118	100
1961	118	104
1962	119	107
1963	126	112
1964	147	122
1965	159	135
1966	189	153
1967	249	N.A.
1968	255	N.A.
1969	228	N.A.

Prices of selected commodities : The variation of prices in the case of a few selected commodities is briefly reviewed below :

Rice and Paddy : The average wholesale price of medium quality open market rice in 1960 was Rs. 60.63 per quintal. It rose to Rs. 62.71 in 1961 and to Rs. 68.64 in 1962. In the first few months of 1963 the rise was even steeper and touched Rs. 76.62 in June but the price lumped to Rs. 71.55 at the end of December. The price further came

12. *Economic Survey of Assam* 1965 and 1969, Department of Economics and Statistics, Govt- of Assam, Shillong, pages 37 and 63 respectively.

down to Rs. 69.08 in January, 1964 but rose to Rs. 77.32 in June and remaining at this level for the next few months again receded to, Rs. 74.72 in December. Over the years 1965 and 1966, the prices of different varieties of rice moved further upwards. The price of medium quality rice which stood at Rs. 72.66 per quintal in January 1965, rose to Rs. 158.91 per quintal in October, 1966. The price came down to Rs. 128.22 in February 1967. Since then the prices of rice and paddy have been rising gradually, except for a slight fall in 1969.

The wholesale prices of coarse rice per quintal during the first three weeks of November, 1971 at Dibrugarh and Tinsukia terminal markets varied from Rs. 130/- to Rs. 137/- and from Rs. 130/-. to Rs. 142/- The price of the controlled variety of coarse rice is much less and ranges around Rs. 100 per quintal almost every where.

Wheat and wheat products : Wheat and wheat products are being increasingly used to supplement rice. The output of wheat in Assam, hewever, is negligible and wheat is imported under the regular quota besides *adhoc* quotas as and when required. As *atta* is a controlled commodity, there is little scope for any wide variation in its retail price.

Pulses : The production of gram and pulses in Assam was of the order of only 36 thousand tonnes annually. Assam is also a net importer of gram and pulses bringing in annually 30 to 35 thousand tonnes of pulses and a substantial quantity of gram. Of the varieties of pulses consumed in Assam, *masur* can be taken as the most representative. The price of *masur* fluctuated frequently over the past few years but on an average the wholesale price fell from Rs. 74.69 per quintal in 1959 to Rs. 64.92 in 1960, Rs. 62.11 in 1961 and again went up to Rs. 82.19 in 1963.

In January, 1964 the price per quintal was Rs. 82.30 and since then it rose steeply and reached Rs. 136.42 by December. During January, 1965 the price rose still further to Rs. 147.08 but came down to Rs. 119.43 in April, then rose to Rs. 134.70 in September, only to come down to Rs. 127.69 in November. In March 1966, the price declined further to Rs. 104.23. During the months that followed the price of lentil rose till it shot up to Rs. 127.91 in February, 1967. In November, 1971 the prevailing wholesale price of *Masur* per quintal at Dibrugarh and Tinsukia markets fluctuated from Rs. 200 to Rs. 202 and Rs. 187 to Rs. 205 respectively.

Edible oils : Assam produces about 12 thousand tonnes of mustard oil from the mills, in addition to a certain quantity produced by the *ghannies*. No reliable estimate of *ghanni* production is available, but it is believed that production from the *ghannis* is not very significant.

Assam also imports about 20 thousand tonnes of edible oils annually. The most common oil used in the State is mustard oil. The price of mustard oil rose steeply over the past few years. The average wholesale price per quintal was Rs. 204.50 in 1959, Rs. 228.84 in 1960, Rs. 253.90 in 1961 and Rs. 269.61 in 1962. In January, 1963, the price rose to Rs. 279 ; but thereafter it started receding and settled down around Rs. 245 during November and December. The price further receded to Rs. 240.69 in January, 1964 only to rise again at an alarming rate throughout the year and rose to Rs. 402.51 by December. The price still rose to Rs. 439.98 in January, 1965, then gradually declined to Rs. 346.73 in June but started to rise again reaching Rs. 379.96 in November. In January 1966 the price again declined to Rs. 358.41 and then gradually rose to Rs. 434.12 in February 1967. During the 1st week of November, 1971 it reached the all time high level of Rs. 540 (at Tinsukia) but thereafter there was a slight fall during the rest of the month.

Sugar : Assam produces about 6 to 9 thousand tonnes of sugar against its annual requirement of 70-80 thousand tonnes. Practically the whole requirement is met by imports from other States. In Assam there was always the tendency for the price to go upward at the slightest opportunity even though the scarcity occurred for a very short period. The average price per quintal of sugar was Rs. 117.50 in 1961 and Rs. 118.50 in 1962. Right from the beginning of 1963, the price started rising and reached the level of Rs. 128 in May and after a slight fall again rose to Rs. 129.45 at the end of December, 1963. The cost of sugar was Rs. 128.61 in January, 1964 but started rising gradually and reached the level of Rs. 139.26 by December. During 1965 the price remained more or less steady around Rs. 138. Since February, 1967 the price of sugar has risen further due to the enhancement of the cane price and consequent increase in the ex-factory value of sugar. The price prevailing in February, 1967 was Rs. 146.31 per quintal. Now sugar is a partially controlled commodity. There has not been much change in the price of controlled sugar which has settled down around Rs. 200 per quintal. Sugar sells at nearly double that price in the open market.

Kerosene : Assam exports substantial quantities of kerosene annually. The price per tin of 18½ litres at depot site was around Rs. 7 throughout the period from 1959 to 1962. But from March, 1963 the prices went up due to the increase in the Union Excise Duties and the State Sales-Tax. Prices ranged between Rs. 10.39 to Rs. 10.80 in different urban centres till the month of May. Thereafter, prices came down slightly because of some concessions granted by the Central Government in the Excise Duties. Its price was Rs. 8.89 per tin in January, 1964 but rose gradually and was around Rs. 10.27 during the last quarter of the year. In 1965 also the same price prevailed for the first few months and it was Rs. 10.09 for the remaining months. In September, 1966, the price rose to Rs. 11.99 and this trend persisted till March, 1967. Since then Kerosene became dearer consequent upon the increase in Excise Duty, and by 1972, it was sold at the rate of seventy paise or so per litre, in the retail shops.

Jute : The trend of jute prices is marked by fluctuations. On the average, the price per bale rose to Rs. 82.62 in 1959, Rs. 152.38 in 1960 and Rs. 181.20 in 1961. In 1962 it recorded a sharp decline and the average price was Rs. 129.42 per bale and during the last few months in the year, following a temporary dislocation of river transport by which jute was mainly transported, distress sales at such low prices as Rs. 21.00 to Rs. 26.00 per quintal were reported. In 1963 the highest price recorded was Rs. 145 per bale in the first fortnight of June. It came down to Rs. 123.50 in the first fortnight of August and again recovered to Rs. 130.86 in the first fortnight of September. But thereafter the price once again began to recede and reached the level of Rs. 117.68 at the end of December. The price registered an increase to Rs. 121.67 in January, 1964 and continued rising throughout the year and reached the level of Rs. 154.57 by December. In 1965, the prices moved further upwards and recorded in June Rs. 194.72 which declined to Rs. 136.86 in November, but again rose to Rs. 201.46 in December. In 1966 the rising trend persisted and the price registered in the month of July, was Rs. 287.83 per bale. Since then a decline is noticeable and the price in February, 1967 was Rs. 229.53 per bale. Import of jute from Bangla Desh since its liberation in 1971 has set a downward trend in jute prices. The Jute Corporation of India ensures purchase of Jute at bottom price "and to give incentive to the growers offers "commercial price." The price support operation by the Corporation is meant for giving proper price to the producers. The market price is generally higher than the bottom price. The Corporation purchased Assam bottom jute at Rs. 128 per quintal against its floor price of Rs. 100 per quintal in 1972.

Building materials : The demand for building materials in Assam has been increasing at a fast rate. Though the price of building materials has been increasing, the level remained stable for fairly long periods before another rise or fall could take place. The average price per cubic metre of *sal* (log) category was around Rs. 339 (or Rs. 9.39 per cft.) and that of plank of *bonsum* category around Rs. 344 (or Rs. 9.75 per cft.) in 1966. In 1971 the average price was around Rs. 12 per cft for *sal* and Rs. 12.50 per cft. for *bonsum*.

The price of bricks rose from Rs. 80 per 1000 slabs in 1959 to Rs. 96 in 1961 and Rs. 113 in 1962. Brick burning being a seasonal enterprise, fluctuations in prices within the year are quite common. In the month of March, 1963 the price rose to Rs. 120 and remained at this level till the month of September, 1963 ; but thereafter the prices came down slightly and settled at Rs. 105 by December, 1963. The price further decreased to Rs. 100 in January, 1964 and remained at this level upto June and then rose to Rs. 110 in July and stabilised at the same level till December. The same price prevailed during the first 9 months of 1965, but the price rose to Rs. 130 during the months of October and November. By 1971, a further increase was registered and the price rose to about Rs. 150 per 1,000 slabs.

The price of locally available materials has risen rather moderately and supply has also risen to catch up with increased demands. In the case of imported materials like cement, iron sheets and steel rods, the price is fixed and distribution is controlled. Judged from the rush for permits for purchase of these commodities, the supply seems to be far inadequate and this lets in speculative forces.[13]

Wages : Most of the day-labourers are paid in cash ; but in rural areas payment in kind is not uncommon. Great variations have been noticed in respect of the wages of labourers during the last few years. As stated earlier the inflationary trend generated by the Second World War caused a chain reaction in the entire district economy and affected a sharp rise in wages of different categories of labourers. From the records available we find that wages of the labourers in the past were very low. It has been observed by B. C. Allen ; "The rate of wages usually demanded i. e. six annas *per diem* does not command even a limited supply of regular labourer. The general rate of wages seems to be from six to eight annas *per diem*, though in North-Lakhimpur, and in the mauzas on either side of the railway line, between Rohmoria and Rangagora, the rate is lower and an unskilled labourer can be obtained for four or five annas a day. Servants are not generally hired by the month, but when they are, receive from Rs. 3 to Rs. 7 in cash in addition to their food. In the south of the district Nagas will sometimes undertake to work for hire. Elsewhere the labouring classes are recruited from the immigrants or from the Assamese impoverished by the abuse of opium. The wages of carpenters are said to range from 10 annas to 2 Rupees a day, masons get from 8 annas to one rupee, while blacksmiths are paid from 10 annas to Rs. 1-8-0."[14]

13. *Economic Survey of Assam*, 1966. Deptt. of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam, Shillong, pp. 36-40.

14. B. C. Allen, *Assam Gazetteers, Lakhimpur* 1905 : pp. 215-16.

Since then there has been considerable increase in the wages of labourers in all sectors of production. The daily wages in the rural areas for skilled labourers like carpenters and blacksmiths which fluctuated around Rs. 4 and Rs. 3.50 respectively in 1956 increased to Rs. 6.75 and Rs. 6.12 in 1959. So is the case with other non-skilled labourers in the rural areas. The daily wages of the field labourers, other agricultural labourers and herdsmen have almost doubled during the same period. In recent times there have been further spurts in wages. The minimum daily wage of a labourer is Rs. 5.00 ; the carpenters and masons earn Rs. 12.00 and Rs. 9.00 a day respectively.

For fixing the rates of daily wages of the labourers in the tea plantations Assam Valley was divided into three zones—A,B and C. The undivided district of Lakhimpur came under the purview of two Zones viz. Dibrugarh Subdivision (present Dibrugarh district) along with the district of Sibsagar constituted zone A and North Lakhimpur Subdivision (present Lakhimpur district) along with the Darrang district constituted Zone B. The prevailing rates of daily wages on 1.12.1959 in Zones A and B for men, women and children respectively were Rs. 1.89, Rs. 1.76, Re. 0.91, and Rs. 1.82, Rs. 1.72 and Re. 0.88. On 27.6.62. a general interim increase of 8 p, 7 p, and 4 paise for men, women and children respectively was granted for the three Zones in the Assam Valley. From 1966 onwards, the daily wages for plantation workers were increased ; but it was linked with the tea plantation area. Each Zone was divided into two categories :— (1) tea plantations of 150 acres and above and (2) other tea plantations. Further increase in wages was effected on 1.4.68 and on 1.1.70. The rates of daily wages on 1.1.70 in the present Dibrugarh district in the two categories of tea plantations for men, women and children respectively were Rs. 2.57, Rs. 2.40, Rs. 1.25 and Rs. 2.54, Rs. 2.34 and Rs. 1.24. From September 1970 there has been further increase in daily wages by 42 paise and 21 paise for the daily rated workers and children. This rise is distributed over a period of four years in four instalments as shown below :—

Categories of workers	Dates providing for increase in the daily wages.			
	1.1.70	1.1.71	1.1.72	1.1.73
Adult	6 paise	15 paise	14 paise	7 paise
Children	3 ,,	8 ,,	7 ,,	3 ,,

These rates of daily wages for the workers in tea plantations were exclusive of the foodgrains which were supplied to the workers at concessional rates of Rs. 20 per maund (or Rs. 53.38 per quintal) in Zone A and Rs. 17.50 per maund (or Rs. 46.89 per quintal) in Zone B.[15]

15. Compiled from *Tea Statistics* of 1961, 1962, 1968, 1970 and 1971.

The minimum wages have also been fixed in respect of some industries. "In this State minimum wages were first fixed in the year 1952, in respect of workers in tea plantations, public motor transport and rice and oil mills. In 1954, minimum wages were fixed for workers under the P. W. D. (road construction, building operation, stone breaking and stone crushing) and for the workers under local authorities in 1958 and for the agricultural workers in the rest of Assam in 1959."

The minimum wages for workers under the P. W. D. were revised in 1964 and the benefits were also extended to workers engaged in maintenance of roads and building operations. The revised rate fixed for P.W.D. workers was Rs. 3.25 per day for unskilled workers. For workers engaged in steamerghats the minimum wages were fixed in 1965 and the rate fixed for unskilled workers was Rs. 85 per month. In 1966, the minimum wages for workers in engineering and ply-wood industries were fixed at Rs. 3.25 per day for unskilled workers. The Minimum Wages Act was extended to *bidi*-making industry in 1966 and the rate was fixed at Rs. 2.75 per 1,000 *bidis*. Further, this Act was extended to the jute baling industry in 1967 and the wages fixed were Rs. 85 per month for unskilled workers. Revision of the minimum wages for workers in rice and oil mills and under local authorities is under consideration of the Government."[16] The following two tables show the trend in average daily wages in rural areas of Assam and in the tea plantations of the undivided district of Lakhimpur.

The table below shows the trends in average daily Wages in rural areas of Assam since 1956.

Year	As per day per worker (in Rupees)				
	Carpenters	Blacksmiths	Field Labourers	Other agricultural Labourers Men	Women
1	2	3	4	5	6
1956	4.20	3.50	2.42	2.36	1.75
1957	4.24	3.54	2.41	2.40	1.90
1958	4.30	3.33	2.27	2.32	1.88
1959	4.40	3.70	2.32	2.29	1.84
1960	4.38	3.73	2.29	2.32	1.73
1961	4.34	3.53	2.58	2.38	1.83
1962	4.63	3.94	2.52	2.44	2.17
1963	4.83	4.00	2.71	2.58	2.16

16. *Economic Survey of Assam*, 1969 ; Deptt. of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam, Shillong. pp. 73-74.

Year	As per day per worker (in Rupees)				
	Carpenters	Blacksmiths	Field Labourers	Other Agricultural Labourers Men	Women
1	2	3	4	5	6
1964	4.74	3.92	2.54	2.40	2.48
1965	5.70	6.45	3.00	3.01	2.58
1966	5.28	5.19	3.22	3.33	1.94
1967	5.75	6.23	3.30	3.49	2.47
1968	6.27	5.67	3.39	3.29	2.19
1969	6.75	6.12	3.72	3.73	3.02
January	6.00	5.75	3.81	3.33	2.67
February	6.80	6.25	3.97	3.81	2.84
March	6.75	5.95	3.38	3.63	2.90
April	6.88	6.25	3.61	3.71	2.92
May	6.64	6.00	3.50	3.93	3.00
June	7.13	6.20	3.56	3.71	3.12
July	7.08	6.75	4.15	4.20	3.17
August	7.16	6.25	3.92	3.75	3.50
September	6.25	5.75	3.69	3.69	3.00
October	6.60	5.93	3.72	3.61	3.17
November	6.57	6.17	3.73	3.75	3.33
December	7.13	6.17	3.64	3.69	2.62

Minimum rates of daily wages for Plantation Labour in the undivided Lakhimpur district*

Date	Name of the Sub-division	Basic Wage			D.A.			Total			Concessional Food grains
		Men	Women	Children	Men	Women	Children	Men	Women	Children	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1.12.1959 to 27.6.62	Dibrugarh Sub-division	1.52	1.45	0.75	0.37	0.31	0.16	1.89	1.76	0.91	
	North Lakhimpur Sub-division	1.45	1.39	0.72	0.37	0.31	0.16	1.82	1.70	0.88	
		A general Interim increase of 8p. 7p. and 4 paise for man, woman and children respectively was granted with effect from 27.6.62 for Assam Valley and West Bengal.									
1.1.66 to 31.3.66	**Dibrugarh Sub-division**										
	(i) Tea plantations of 150 acres and above	2.23	2.05	1.08	—	—	—	2.23	2.05	1.08	In Zone A which comprised Dibrugarh Subdivision and Sibsagar district food grains are supplied at the rate of Rs. 20/- per md. Zone B which comprised Darrang district and North Lakhimpur Subdivision food grains are supplied at the rate of Rs. 17.00 per md.
	(ii) Other tea plantations	2.20	2.02	1.07	—	—	—	2.20	2.02	1.07	
	North Lakhimpur Subdivision										
	(i) Tea plantations of 150 acres and above.	2.16	1.99	1.05	—	—	—	2.16	1.99	1.05	
	(ii) Other tea plantations.	2.13	1.96	1.04	—	—	—	2.13	1.96	1.04	
1.4.66	**Dibrugarh Sub-division**										
	(i) Tea plantations of 150 acres and above.	2.25	2.07	1.09	—	—	—	2.25	2.07	1.09	
	(ii) Other tea plantations	2.22	2.04	1.08	—	—	—	2.22	2.04	1.08	
	North Lakhimpur Subdivision										
	(i) Tea plantations of 150 acres and above	2.18	2.01	1.06	—	—	—	2.18	2.01	1.06	
	(ii) Other tea plantations.	2.15	1.98	1.05	—	—	—	2.15	1.98	1.05	
1.4.68	**Dibrugarh Sub-division**										
	(i) Tea plantations of 150 acres and above.	2.25	2.07	1.09	0.12	0.12	0.06	2.37	2.19	1.15	
	(ii) Other tea plantations.	2.22	2.04	1.08	0.12	0.12	0.06	2.34	2.16	1.14	
	North Lakhimpur Subdivision										
	(i) Tea plantations of 150 acres and above.	2.18	2.01	1.06	0.12	0.12	0.06	2.30	2.13	1.12	
	(ii) Other tea plantations	2.15	1.98	1.05	0.12	0.12	0.06	2.27	2.10	1.11	
1.1.70	**Dibrugarh Sub-division**										
	(i) Tea plantations of 150 acres and above.	2.46	2.28	1.19	0.18	0.18	0.09	2.64	2.46	1.28	
	(ii) Other tea plantations	2.43	2.25	1.18	0.18	0.18	0.09	2.61	2.43	1.27	
	North Lakhimpur Sub-division										
	(i) Tea plantations of 150 acres and above.	2.39	2.22	1.16	0.18	0.18	0.09	2.57	2.40	1.25	
	(ii) Other tea plantations	2.36	2.19	1.15	0.18	0.18	0.09	2.54	2.34	1.24	

* There has been further rise of wages at the rate of 42 paise and 21 paise in case of adults and children since 1970, as shown in preceding paragraphs.

Salaries of the State Government employees : The salary of the State Government employees is an important factor of the district economy. The present administrative machinery is a legacy of the British administration. In the early years of the British administration, this machinery was a tiny structure which gradually grew up with the passage of time. This growth resulted in demands for enhanced pay, better living conditions and more amenities. The inflationary trend has accentuated the miseries of the low paid employees and consequently the movement for increase in pay gained momentum during the last few decades. In fact, till 1920 there was no general revision of the pay structure. The employees of the Provincial Government were in receipt of pay at the rates of graded pay as in Bengal. With the sudden spurt in prices of consumer goods, during the post-world War period, the need for upward revision of the pay structure was keenly felt. Accordingly, the time scale of pay was introduced in 1920 ; the grain compensation and War allowances granted during the War years were merged with pay. The overall impact of this revision was a rise of 20 per cent of pay of the members of the ministerial and subordinate services.

There were some more upward revision of pay scales of certain categories of ministerial officers in 1928. Some further revisions came into effect in 1932 when the economic depression precipitated the financial crisis of the Government. The inflationary trend in prices of consumer goods during the Second World War was an important factor that had to be taken into account by the Government, to ameliorate the condition of the low paid Government employees. Accordingly Dearness Allowance at percentage rates together with free ration, rice concession and an allowance at the rate of Rs. 4/- to the employees drawing pay upto Rs. 150/- were sanctioned.

During the post Independence period the first Pay Committee was set up by the State Government in 1947. On the basis of the recommendations of this Committee, the Government employees were divided into four categories ; the maximum pay was fixed at Rs. 1,500/- and the minimum at Rs. 70/-. The war-time interim relief of Rs. 4/- was merged with pay. These measures were followed by some more enhancements in pay in 1954 and 1955.

The Second Pay Committee was set up in 1955. The Committee recommended lowering the minimum pay for the lowest paid employees at Rs. 28/- per month together with Rs. 30.50 per month as dearness and other allowances. For the benefit of existing employees advance increments subject to a minimum of Rs. 5/- were recommended. However, maximum pay at Rs. 1500 was retained. The ratio of income at the lowest level to the highest level (minus taxes) was 1:23. This Committee also rationalised the pay structure by reducing the number of scales from 264 to 62 only. The Dearness Allowance of the Government employees drawing pay not exceeding Rs. 100/- was enhanced in 1957.

Following further deterioration when the economic condition of the low paid Government employees reached such a stage that their enhanced pay could hardly offset the steep rise in prices the Government of Assam set up the Third Pay Committee in 1962. On the basis of the interim report of this Committee, an interim relief at the rate of Rs. 7.50 in plains districts was sanctioned for those employees whose pay did not exceed Rs. 250 per month.

The Pay Committee took into consideration the recommendations of the Central Pay Commission released in August, 1959 as well as the revision of pay scales in other States of India during the few preceding years. The Committee also took note of the trend in supply of technical and non-technical personnel, job availability, competition from private sector in securing proper personnel, consideration of age groups covering 25 years of service, jobs requiring post-graduate degree as well as high emoluments provided by the private sector.

The Pay Committee recommended minimum pay being fixed at Rs. 80 and the maximum at Rs. 1,800 per month. The Committee recommended two categories of pay scales, (a) 17 Primary and (b) 16 Secondary Scales. The Primary Scales are applicable to posts which are filled by direct recruitment and the Secondary Scales are generally applicable to promotion-posts. These 33 scales of pay of State Government employees have been distributed as follows :— (1) for class IV employees 3 scales, (2) for Class III employees 19 scales and (3) for the rest eleven scales. This meant a reduction of twenty nine numbers of pay scales. The classification of different services are as follows :—

Class I Service All Gazetted posts on the new time scales, the maximum of which are Rs. 1,000 and above.

Class II Service All other Gazetted posts on the new time scales, the maximum of which are Rs. 700. and above but do not exceed Rs. 999.

Class III Service All other services or posts, Gazetted or non-gazetted except those classified as Class IV Service.

Class IV Service All other posts in the new time scale, the maximum of which are Rs. 140 or below.

The other major recommendations of the Committee include merger of the Dearness Allowance with pay. The implementation of the recommendations of this Committee, however, brought to light many anomalies. A one man commission was appointed in 1967 to enquire

about these anomalies and to suggest some measures. The recommendations of this Commission brought about some more relief to the Government employees. In 1967 the Dearness Allowance was reintroduced. The Dearness Allowance has been further enhanced during the last few years in consideration of the rapid rise in prices.

The Census of Assam Government Employees conducted by the Department of Economics and Statistics reveals that there were 7,645 Assam Government employees in Lakhimpur district on the 31st March, 1966. The State Government expenditure for pay and allowances to the employees during the year 1965-66 was estimated at Rs. 19.03 crores. The average annual emolument of the employees was Rs. 2,282/- only. On this estimate the total expenditure of the State Government as pay and allowances of the employees posted at Lakhimpur District came to Rs. 1.74 crores approximately. This expenditure has gone up considerably following the payment of dearness allowance since 1967. Another revision of pay structure of the State Government employees will be given effect from 1.1.73 as per recommendations of the last Pay Commission appointed in 1972.

Standard of Living :

A brief reference about the standard of living of the people of Upper Assam prevailing some six decades ago can be had from Gait's History of Assam. "The Standard of living" says Mr. Edward Gait "was generally higher in Upper Assam than in Lower Assam. In the former area silk was used by almost everybody and gold ornaments were found in most of the houses. In Lower Assam most people used cotton cloths and silver ornaments. Fertility of the soil made it easy for an Assamese villager to produce his necessities in plenty."[17]

But according to the old Gazetteer the standard of comfort of the Assamese people was not very high. There was also no accumulation of wealth, and few amongst the Assamese could be described as even moderately well-to-do. The local revenue officials admitted that there was very little indebtedness in the Sadar Sub-division of the district.

However, an idea of the standard of living in recent times can be obtained from the data on household consumption expenditure of the people. Such household consumption expenditure data are collected in the National Sample Survey. "The monthly per capita expenditure in the rural areas of Assam works out at Rs. 22.42 according to the National Sample Survey-State Survey-14th to 16th rounds (1958-59 to 1960-61). The percentage of the expenditure on food items was 71.3,

17. E. A. Gait ; *History of Assam* 1957, p. 265-66.

on clothing 9.2, on fuel and light 5.3, and on the rest 14.2."[18] But such figures do not indicate the position of the whole district.

As regards articles of consumption and expenditure of families in the district of Lakhimpur a brief reference was made in the *Survey of Rural Economic Conditions of Lakhimpur* published by the Department of Economics and Statistics in 1954.

The table below shows the broad pattern of the average family budget in the Lakhimpur sample. The component annual expenditures on food, clothing and other items of consumption which determine the standard of living of the rural families are depicted separately.

Items of expenditure	Value of items obtained in kind (Rs)	Cash expenditure (Rs)	Total Expenditure (Rs.)	P. C. to total of col. (4)
1	2	3	4	5
A. Food				
Rice	477.77	82.82	560.59	52.47
Pulses	3.45	17.82	21.27	1.99
Potato and vegetables	9.06	15.82	24.88	2.33
Fish and meat	12.06	12.87	24.93	2.33
Salt and spices	0.11	20.44	20.55	1.92
Mustard Oil	4.09	25.88	29.97	2.80
Sugar and Gur	2.14	17.81	19.95	1.87
Milk and Milk products	12.84	6.90	19.74	1.85
Total :—	521.52	200.36	721.88	67.57
B. Clothing	4.06	84.13	88.19	8.25
C. Fuel and lighting etc.	13.57	17.29	30.86	2.89
D. Tea, Tobacco and drugs :—				
Tea	—	19.12	19.12	1.79
Betelnut	6.21	13.04	19.25	1.83
Tobacco	1.87	22.95	24.82	2.32
Liquor	10.21	3.95	14.16	1.33
Total :—	18.29	59.06	77.35	7.24

18. *Economic Survey of Assam*, 1965, Deptt. of Economics and Statistics Govt. of Assam, Shillong p. 52.

Items of expenditure	Value of items obtained in kind (Rs)	Cash expenditure (Rs)	Total Expenditure (Rs)	P. C. to total of col, (4)
1	2	3	4	5
E. Miscellaneous :—				
Wages	—	11.81	11.81	1.11
Interest	—	5.27	5.27	0.49
Repairing of homestead.	—	17.93	17.93	1.68
Education	—	15.90	15.90	1.49
Medical	—	8.99	8.99	0.84
Marriage Ceremony etc.	0.21	32.71	32.92	3.08
Travelling	—	9.93	9.93	0.93
Litigation	—	3.79	3.79	0.35
Ornaments	—	9.45	9.45	0.88
Others	0.89	33.22	34.11	3.19
Total :—	1.10	149.00	150.10	14.05
Grand Total :—	558.54	509.84	1,068.38	100.00

The following observations are quoted here from the Economic Survey : "The items of consumption and the quantities consumed naturally varied from family to family, but these have been reduced to a common measure in terms of money. In fact, the average pattern for all families reflected the composite effects of several factors-income, community group, occupation, region and family size. In fixing the prices, the local average retail prices, had been taken into account and the imputed money-value of the consumption of articles produced at home or in the farm as well as those received as wages in kind had been included in the family expenditure as in the case of the income. It will be seen that of the total average expenditures on food as much as 72 percent was accounted for by food articles obtained in kind either from the farm or as wages in kind. On the other hand, the value of home made clothing was a comparatively minor item. It accounted for even less than 5 per cent only of the total expenditure of the family incurred on clothing items. This suggests that the practice of home spinning and weaving in rural homes was gradually dying out. The reasons may be the villagers increasing preference for mill-made cloth, the scarcity of mill yarn for weaving purposes, and the growing apathy of the women folk for engaging themselves in spinning and weaving work during spare hours."

"Much more significant than the overall expenditure is its proportionate distribution among the various consumption groups which provide the weights for the construction of the cost of living index. Of the total expenditure, 67.6 per cent was incurred on food, 8.3 per cent on clothing, 2.9 per cent on fuel and light, 7.3 per cent on tea, tobacco and drugs, 14.0 per cent on the miscellaneous group items which included education, medicine, travelling litigation, marriage and ceremonies, etc. Of the average annual expenditure on food, rice accounted for about 78 per cent while the expenditure incurred on pulses, fish and meat, edible oil, milk and milk products, all together constituted only 22 per cent. The analysis clearly shows that the diet of the average rural family was conspicuous by its nutritive deficiency. Consumption of tobacco, betelnut and liquor was higher compared with that of fish and meat. Also the traditional emphasis on social and religious obligations in the budget of the average rural family is reflected by the high proportion of expenditure incurred on marriage, sradhas and religious ceremonies under the miscellaneous group of items. Generally speaking, the comparatively high percentage of expenditure on food and low percentage on other items, like clothing, houses and repairs, education, indicates a low standard of living in the average rural family."[19]

General Level of Employment :

The detailed analysis of the livelihood pattern as reflected in the decennial census, shows the participation rate of the working population of the undivided district as well as that of the working population engaged in different sectors of production. Total employment in the registered factories in the undivided district of Lakhimpur as per the *Annual Survey of Industries*, 1960 stood at 35046 persons. Of this labour force, 25287 were employed in tea manufacturing ; 1774 in plywood ; 966 in saw mills ; 688 in manufacturing of tea machinery ; 316 in rice mills ; 159 in generation, transmission and distribution of electric energy ; 186 in repairs of motor vehicles and 109 in iron and steel casting and forging, manufacture of metal products. The rest of the labour force found employment in flour mills, manufacture of edible oils, printing presses and other general engineering industries.[20] The tea industry as a whole is the largest employer of the labour force in the district. In 1959 the daily average number of workers employed was 175686 and this declined to 167186 in 1960. The labour force in tea industry of this district further declined from 170475 in 1965 to 165081, 154704 and 151607 in 1967, 1968 and 1969 respectively. This

19. *A Survey of Rural Economic Conditions in Lakhimpur* 1954 ; Department of Economics and Stalistics, Govt. of Assam, Shillong. pp. 75-76.

20. *Annual Survey of Industries* 1960 *Assam*, Deptt. of Economics & Statistics Govt. of Assam. pp. 14-104.

declining trend of employment in tea industry is mainly attributed to the rationalisation measures adopted by the industry. However, the year 1970 saw some improvement and the figures of employment in the tea industry again rose to 160990.[21]

A rapid survey on employment in tea industry in Assam carried out by the Department of Economics and Statistics in 1966 placed the number of employed at more than one lakh persons. To deal with the unemployed persons of the plantation labour class, a special employment exchange for plantation labour is now functioning at Dibrugarh in addition to the three special units, in the districts of Sibsagar, Darrang and Cachar.

The public sector has been able to absorb an increasing number of workers. According to Employment Market Surveys conducted by the Directorate of Employment Exchanges Assam, the employment in the public sector in the undivided district of Lakhimpur increased from 27591 workers in 1963 to 30952 in 1966. The employment in the public sector in the districts further increased to 31650(13.2%) ; 33640(13.8%) and 36497(14.4%) in 1967, 1968 and 1969 respectively. Employment in the public sector includes those in railways, other Central Government establishments, State Government, quasi-Government and Local-Bodies.

Unemployment in Assam is one of the most chronic and complex problems which have engaged the attention of the planners since 1951. The growth rate of the labour force in Assam has always been very high due to high growth rate of population, influx of migrants and displaced persons. The expansion of education coupled with the general economic backwardness of the State has added further dimensions to the problem. The additional employment generated during the four successesive Five Year Plans has not wiped out the backlog accumulated over the years nor has it kept pace with the rise in the number of unemployed persons. As a result, the employment gap has become wider at the end of each Five Year Plan period. The increase was 145 per cent in the live register of the employment exchanges in Assam as against only 58.2 per cent in India as a whole.[22] The problem assumed serious proportions towards the end of the Third Five Year Plan when even the technical personnel joined the long row of the unemployed.

The generation of employment during the First and Second Plans was of the order of 1.96 lakhs of which merely 0.4 lakh persons were employed during the First Plan. The Third Five Year Plan started with an estimated backlog of 1.17 lakhs of unemployed. The new entrants to the labour market were estimated at 5.89 lakhs swelling the number of job seekers to 7.06 lakhs during the Plan period. As against this, the estimated employment potential of the Third Five Year Plan ended

21. Compiled from *Tea Statistics of* 1961, 1962, 1968 and 1970.
22. *Fourth Five Year Plan of Assam* (Proposals) Govt. of Assam, Planning & Development Deptt. p. 29.

with an estimated backlog of 3.22 lakhs of unemployed persons."[23] The position has deteriorated further during the period of adhoc plans and the backlog will be much greater at the end of the Fourth Five Year Plan.

Employment Exchanges : The main function of the Employment Exchange is to assist the employment seekers to secure suitable employment and employers to obtain suitable workmen. The service offered is free to employers and employment seekers. Those who notify vacancies are free to select and appoint whomsoever they select and the persons registered are free to accept jobs of their choice.

In the undivided district of Lakhimpur there were five Employment Exchanges each under the immediate charge of one Assistant Employment Officer. These Exchanges were the District Employment Exchange, Dibrugarh, the District Employment Exchange, Digboi ; the District Employment Exchange, Tinsukia ; the District Employment Exchange, North Lakhimpur and one Project Employment Exchange at Namrup. The Project Employment Exchange at Namrup has been functioning since 1964. There is also one special Employment Exchange for plantation labour at Dibrugarh. It was established in March 1963 with an Employment Officer and other staff. The jurisdiction of this officer is over the entire State of Assam. His main duty is to mobilise the available man power from among the tea garden workers of Assam. The Assistant Employment Officers mentioned above work under the guidance of the Divisional Employment Officer, Tezpur.

The scheme for "Vocational guidance and employment counselling" was launched during the 2nd Five Year Plan. Under this scheme a State Vocational Guidance Unit in the State Directorate and six field units attached to the Employment Exchanges are functioning. There is one such unit at Dibrugarh.

As a part of the expansion programme of the Employment Service in Assam, a University Employment Bureau has been set up at the Gauhati University. To give effective employment assistance to the rural people eight Employment Informations and Assistance Bureaus were established in different development Blocks of Assam. There are two such centres in the district of Lakhimpur, one at Nowboicha Development Block and the other at Tengakhat Development Block.

Community Development : Community Development forms an important part of the national planning of the country. The basic aim of the community Development movement is to evoke popular initiative in the field of development so that people themselves assume

23. *Economic Survey of Assam* 1969. Department of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam, Shillong pp. 73-81.

responsibilities for planned development of the areas and carry out implementation of the plan schemes. The movement was designed to usher in an era of plenty and prosperity in the rural areas. With the object of all round improvement of rural conditions 55 Community Development Projects were started in India in October, 1952. Each of these covered large areas. Assam had two such projects viz., the Cachar and Darrang Community Projects. In 1953, the National Extension Service was introduced in smaller Blocks which were subsequently converted to Community Development Blocks in Assam. Each Block was to pass through three distinct stages viz., Pre-Extension stage, Stage I and Stage II of intensive development and then it reached the Post Stage II when development activities were normalised. The principal spheres of activity of the Community Development Programme were confined to (1) Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, (2) Co-operation, (3) Health and Rural Sanitation, (4) Education, (5) Social Education, (6) Rural Arts, Crafts and Industries, (7) Communication etc. Agriculture being the common occupation of our rural population it has always been accorded priority in the Community Devlopment Programme.

The Community Development movement in the district was started in 1953 when three Community Development Blocks were opened at Tengakhat, Naoboicha and Bihpuria. At the beginning of the Second Five Year Plan four more Blocks were started in the Pre-Extension stage. These were Jaipur and Dhemaji Development Blocks inaugurated in October, 1956 and Murkongsellek (Tribal Development Block) and Panitola Development Blocks opened in April 1957 and May 1957 respectively. In the meantime the Panchayat Act of 1959 was passed. This Act envisaged that the Anchalik Panchayats to be newly formed under it would be made co-terminus with the Community Development Blocks. Accordingly seventeen Anchalik Panchayats were formed in 1960 in the undivided Lakhimpur district and of these seven became co-terminus with the existing seven Community Development Blocks. The rest of these Anchalik Panchayats functioned as Shadow Blocks until covered by the Community Development Programme.

In 1961 three more Anchalik Panchayats viz., Lakhimpur, Khowang and Bordoloni were covered by the Community Development Programme raising the number of Blocks coterminus with Anchalik Panchayats to ten. The remaining seven Anchalik Panchayats were converted to Community Development Blocks cum Anchalik Panchayats during the early part of the Third Five Year Plan raising the total number to seventeen. Thus the Community Development Programme covered 2575 villages with a population of about 9,40,000 of the undivided district. The process of normalisation of the Blocks in the district began by the end of the Third Plan and the number of normalised Blocks stood at nine during 1971-72. It is expected that the remaining eight Blocks will soon complete stage II of intensive development and become normalised.

The following statement shows some of the particulars of the Blocks in the district.[24]

Name of the Block	Category as on * 1971-72	Date of allotment	No. of villages	Population in (thousands)	Area in Sq. miles.
1. Bihpuria P. S.	Post Stage II	Oct. 1953	110	44	150.36
2. Naoboicha P. S.	Post Stage II	Oct. 1953	146	46	247.62
3. Tengakhat P. S.	Post Stage II	Oct. 1953	204	82	264.70
4. Jaipur	Post Stage II	Oct. 1956	297	101	181.90
5. Dhemaji	Post Stage II	Oct. 1956	317	43	563.44
6. Murkongsellek (T.D.)	Post Stage II	Oct. 1957	145	31	1,221.00
7. Panitola	Post Stage II	April. 1957	105	80	227.63
8. Margherita	Post Stage II	Oct. 1960	119	57	397.32
9. Lakhimpur	Stage II	April, 1961	154	49	322.38
10. Khowang	Stage II	Apr/Oct. 1961	248	66	156.00
11. Laboal	Stage II	N. A.	107	81	269.70
12. Kakapathar	Stage II	N. A.	151	77	400.61
13. Bordoloni	Stage II	Apr/Oct. 1961	100	29	288.19
14. Dhakuakhana	Stage II	N. A.	92	34	185.58
15. Hapjan	Stage II	N. A.	139	117	206.77
16. Borborooah	Stage II	N. A.	141	55	157.35
17. Narayanpur	Post Stage II	N. A.	N. A.	N. A.	137.60

* Stage indicated is taken from *Community Development Programme in Assam*, 1971-72, published by the Department of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam, Shillong.

24. *Census of India* 1961 : *District Census Hand Book, Lakhimpur*, pp.540-41.

Now the Block is regarded as the unit of development and planning. Besides the developmental schemes orginally attributed to the Community Development projects, Block level programmes of different development departments are also executed by the Block agency. Officers of different development departments posted at the Block handle both types of programmes, under the leadership of the Block Development Officer and under the control and guidance of the Anchalik Panchayat. In each Block there are Extension Officers of all Development departments, such as Extension Officer (Agriculture), Extension Officer (Panchayat), Extension Officer (Veterinary), Extension Officer (Industries), Social Education Officer, Assistant Co-operative Officer and others. These deparmental officers are subject to the administrative control of the respective District Officers of the Department concerned but nevertheless the Block Development Officer is their immediate superior. The Deputy Commissioner is the Chief Controlling Officer for all the officers who are posted to a particular Block. The Block Development Officer is regarded as the captain of the team, comprising all departmental officers. For the proper implementation and improvement of the various schemes in the district the Deputy Commissioner inspects the Blocks and guides the implementation of various developmental schemes. There is also one Zonal Assistant Development Commissioner at Dibrugarh who inspects the Blocks of the district.

At the village level the Gram Sevak plays a crucial role as the instrument of execution of developmental schemes and as the link between the administration and the people. Prior to bifurcation of the district there were two Mahkuma Parishads at Dibrugarh and North Lakhimpur The Mahkuma Parishad is the planning body and approves the Block budgets. The Planning Officer functions as its Secretary.

To review the progress of the works and also to find out ways and means of different problems of various development departments in the undivided district two Sub-divisional Development Committees were formed, one at North Lakhimpur and the other at Dibrugarh. Matters of all development departments in the perspective of Community Development are discussed thread bare by the Committees. All the District and Sub-divisional officers are members of Development Committees at district and Sub-divisional Headquarters respectively. The Sub-divisional Planning Officer is the Secretary of the respective Committees. The Deputy Commissioners of Dibrugarh and Lakhimpur function as Chairmen of these Committees in their respective districts.

The average expenditure per Block (excluding the amount spent on special programmes) was worked out at Rs. 1.46 lakhs during 1971-72

as compared to Rs. 1.52 lakhs in 1970-71, Rs. 1.98 lakhs in 1969-70, Rs. 1.70 lakhs in 1968-69 and Rs. 2.08 lakhs in 1967-68. The average expenditure per Block distributed under ten major heads of expenditure during the period is as follows :—

(Rupees in thousand)

Major Heads	1967-68	1968-69	1969-70	1970-71	1971-72
1. Block Headquarters	100.9	112.5	109.8	95.7	96.2
2. Animal Husbandry and Agriculture	32.3	19.4	20.5	12.2	16.3
3. Irrigation	20.7	5.0	17.9	7.5	9.5
4. Reclamation	8.3	7.0	10.0	2.5	1.6
5. Health and Rural sanitation	8.2	3.6	7.0	18.8	5.0
6. Education	6.5	2.2	5.2	2.2	2.8
7. Social Education	4.9	2.7	4.1	2.5	3.1
8. Communication	13.8	7.2	12.9	6.9	8.5
9. Rural Arts, Crafts and Industries	3.1	1.4	2.3	2.1	2.4
10. Housing	9.3	9.0	8.1	2.1	1.0
Total—	208.5	170.0	197.8	152.5	146.4

The total expenditure incurred by the Government in the Community Development Programme in Assam under the ten main heads of expenditure since 1952-53 to 1969-70 stands at Rs. 3418.6 lakhs. The annual total expenditure showed a short fall from Rs. 320.4 lakhs in 1969-70 to Rs. 212.0 lakhs in 1970-71 and Rs. 203.5 lakhs in 1971-72. The average people's contribution during 1969-70 stood at Rs. 1.6 thousand per Block.

The following table shows the proportion of people's contribution to Government expenditure in the execution of special programmes in some Blocks of the district during 1971-72.

Name of Blocks	Govt. expenditure (in Rupees)	People's contribution (in Rupees)
1. Panitola	3013	1319
2. Khowang	12600	3150
3. Hapjan	6367	1425
4. Murkongsellek	5470	1418
5. Lakhimpur	3258	1600

In the field of agriculture the Community Development Blocks have laid stress on scientific methods of cultivation ; distribution of improved seeds and fertilisers, use of improved implements and provision of adequate irrigation measures. More than two thousand quintals of improved paddy seeds besides other grains were distributed by the Blocks of the district during 1971-72. The area brought under package practice and intensive cultivation increased from an average of 480 hectares per Block during 1970-71 to 900 hectares per Block in 1971-72. In other spheres also the Blocks have made noteworthy contributions during the year under review. The Blocks of the district constructed about 168 kms. of new *kacha* roads and developed about 296 kms. of existing *kacha* roads. 38 literacy centres were opened during the year and these centres have made an impact on the increase of literacy in the district. In the sector of rural health and sanitation the Blocks have 7 primary Health Centres in every 10 Blocks. There were, on the average, 4 rural dispensaries and 1 Maternity Centre per Block during 1971-72. Latrines and soakage pits have been constructed in the rural areas to disseminate knowledge of sanitation among the people.

Besides these normal programmes the Blocks have also implemented special development programmes such as those pertaining to Applied Nutrition and Feeding, intensive fisheries development, local development and crash scheme for rural employment. During 1971-72 the Applied Nutrition Programme was executed in the Lakhimpur and Kakapathar Blocks.

The following statement shows the physical achievements of the Blocks in the district during 1971-72.
Physical achievements of Community Development Blocks of undivided Lakhimpur district during year ending March, 1972[25]

Activities	Names of Blocks								
	Khowang	Lakhimpur	Margherita	Dhakuakhana	Bordoloni	Barbarooah	Hapjan	Lahowal	Kakapathar
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
(1) **Seeds distributed.**									
A. Paddy (in Qtl)	3	3	124	129	120	119	82	307	71
B. Others (in Qtl)	1	240	14	177	—	43	6	85	12
C. Pulses (in Qtl)	—	2	1	1	—	—	24	18	1430
D. Oil seeds (in Kgs)	—	1000	—	1969	—	69	—	3045	—
E. Vegetables (in Pkts)	—	20	62	41	80	120	139	7	142
(2) **Fertilizers distributed.**									
F. Chemical fertilizers (in Qtl)	545	502	310	115	64	143	444	1585	369
G. Agri. demonstrations held.	29	40	35	31	5	8	35	33	3
H. Chemical pesticides distributed (in Kgs)	180	—	1224	769	40	2226	—	4791	302
I. Compost utilised (in Tonnes)	100	—	265	203	—	74	129	408	—
J. Area under package practices. (in Hectare)	558	15	1224	—	5	—	21	431	181

*25. *Community Development Programme in Assam : progress during* 1971-72 by Department of Economics & Statistics, Government of Assam.

Activities	Khowang	Lakhim-pur	Marghe-rita	Dhakua-khana	Bordo-loni	Barbarooah	Hapjan	Lahowal	Kaka-pathar
				Names of Blocks					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
(3) Co-oper. Farming.									
K. Joint Farming (Nos)	—	175	—	—	—	17	—	—	186
L. Others (Nos)	556	1070	1361	546	—	620	1961	475	138
(4) Social Education.									
M. Literacy Centres (Nos).	—	11	—	—	12	—	1	—	—
N. Adults Literates Male (Nos)	—	734	—	—	250	—	50	—	—
O. Female literates (Nos).	—	228	—	—	70	—	—	—	—
(5) Roads Constructed.									
P. New *kacha* roads constructed (Km)	—	106	—	—	—	11	4	5	2
Q. Existing *kacha* roads improved (Kms).	9	150	3	64	30	—	—	19	—
R. Culverts Constructed (Nos)	—	6	5	2	—	—	—	4	8

Activities	Narayanpur	Tengakhat	Dhemaji	Bihpuria	Panitola	Nowboisa	Murkong-sellek	Joypur
				Names of Blocks				
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
(1) Seeds distributed								
A. Paddy (in Qtl).	323	5	63	55	119	157	5	405
B. Others (in Qtl)	60	83	12	44	20	93	22	39
C. Pulses (in Qtl)	—	2	18	8	3	—	—	38
D. Oil seeds (in Kgs)	—	484	460	2	801	—	—	—
E. Vegetables (in Pkts)	620	—	520	71	201	30	8	2
(2) Fertilizers distributed								
F. Chemical fertilizers (in Qtl)	356	281	258	1650	523	117	80	589
G. Agri. Demonstrations.	61	15	55	44	13	16	14	21
H. Chemical pesticides distributed (in Kgs)	1318	493	2817	910	3693	4113	196	3229
I. Compost utilised (in Tonnes)	276	771	47	4	40	200	90	—
J. Area under package practices. (in Hectare)	491	2294	18	183	209	155	124	496
(3) Co-oper. Farming								
K. Joint Farming (Nos).	—	126	53	350	—	375	—	42
L. Others (Nos)	1612	1099	288	206	44	1425	190	296
(4) Social Education								
M. Literacy Centres (Nos).	—	—	1	2	—	11	—	—

Activities	Names of Blocks						
	Narayanpur	Tengakhat	Dhemaji	Bihpuria	Panitola	Nowboisa	Murkong-sellek	Joypur
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
N. Adult Male Literates (Nos).	–	–	100	35	–	250	–	–
O. Female Literates (Nos).	–	–	30	15	–	173	–	–
(5) **Roads Constructed**								
P. New *kacha* roads constructed (in km)	–	–	–	–	–	4	27	9
Q. Existing *kacha* roads improved (in Kms)	–	–	–	–	–	14	27	–
R. Culverts Constructed (Nos)	–	–	–	–	–	3	5	5

CHAPTER—X

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Since 1842 when the headquarters of the undivided Lakhimpur district were shifted from North Lakhimpur to Dibrugarh, the district was divided into two subdivisions ; Dibrugarh and North Lakhimpur. The salient features of administration of the district comprising these two subdivisions at the turn of this century have been summed up by B. C. Allen as follows : "Dibrugarh is under immediate charge of the Deputy Commissioner and North Lakhimpur is entrusted to an Assistant Magistrate who is almost invariably an European. The Deputy Commissioner is allowed two subordinate Magistrates and a sub-deputy collector as his immediate assistants, and a sub-deputy collector is usually posted at North Lakhimpur."[1] The primary functions of the Deputy Commissioner were maintenance of peace and tranquility, collection of revenue and administration of justice. Till 1947 there was no major structural change in the district administrative-machinery except for increase of the strength of subordinate officers and investiture of more powers with the Deputy Commissioners and his subordinates in order to enable them to stem the tide of the freedom Movement.

The concept of welfare state added a new dimension to almost all the spheres of national life of free India and the perspective of the district administration underwent a radical change. Development, supply of essential commodities, relief to the distressed, General Elections, Panchayat Elections and Municipal Elections now form part and parcel of the district administration. The entire machinery has been geared up to enable it to translate into action Government policies aimed at promoting amity, equity, progress and prosperity of the people.

A chronological account of the formation of Dhemaji subdivision and bifurcation of the district has been given in Chapter I. Till bifurcation on October 2, 1971, the undivided Lakhimpur district had three subdivisions ; Dibrugarh, North Lakhimpur and Dhemaji. Tinsukia, the second subdivision of Dibrugarh district was created on January 26, 1973. Thus both the districts now have two subdivisions each. The Deputy Commissioners of Dibrugarh and Lakhimpur are in overall charge of the respective districts both in revenue and executive spheres. The Deputy Commissioner is the pivot on which the district administration turns and is the chief representative of the Government who maintains an abiding link with the Commissioner of Plains Division and the State Government.

1. B. C. Allen, Assam District Gazetteers, Lakhimpur, (1905), p. 269.

Deputy Commissioner : The duties of a Deputy Commissioner in his capacity as a District Magistrate are mostly executive. Till the separation of judiciary in 1964, the District Magistrate tried criminal cases and heard appeals against the orders of the subordinate Magistrates. The District Magistrate or the Additional District Magistrate was required to inspect the trial register of each subordinate Magistrate at headquarters, and to supervise the Magisterial work in the district. Even after separation of the judiciary the District Magistrates exercise extensive Magisterial powers under the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Defence of India Act and Rules (during the period for which it is in force) to prevent disturbances among the people and to ensure security of the State. Any breach of public peace and tranquility may conflagrate into violent disturbances and as such the District Magistrates are fully empowered to promulgate prohibitory orders under the Code of Criminial Procedure and to take other preventive measures. For this purpose the district Police Force headed by the Superintendent of Police takes orders from him. The District Magistrate is also empowered to grant, suspend and cancel licences for fire-arms and explosives and regulate the use of microphones within specified towns. He also issues nationality certificates and has duties to perform in respect of jails and issue of passports. The District Magistrate is empowered to declare a certain area as an epidemic affected area when epidemic breaks out within the district.

The Deputy Commissioner is the head of the revenue administration o the district. He supervises through his subordinate officers collection of land revenue and local rates by the Mauzadars. Arrears of land revenue or any other dues of the Government deemed to be arrears of land revenue are realised by the Deputy Commissioner through the *Bakijai* Officers who are of the rank of Extra Assistant Commissioners. Maintenance of cadastral village maps and land records and supervision of the works of the revenue officers are two of his important functions. The Circle Officers who are to perform various duties in respect of survey and settlement of land are under the administrative control of the Deputy Commissioner. As a Revenue Court the Deputy Commissioner hears appeals against orders of subordinate revenue officers and passes orders of eviction against encroachers on lands reserved for public purposes and Government waste lands. Requision and acquisition of lands for public purposes, partition of estates, acquisition of land found in excess of the ceiling fixed by legislation, administration of relief funds placed at his disposal to help the victims of natural calamities and settlement of fisheries with the lessees are some of the important functions of the Deputy Commissioner, who also plays a significantf

role in the implementation of various land reform measures, mentioned in the chapter on Revenue Administration.

The executive functions of the Deputy Commissioner are numerous. The developmental projects embarked upon in the Community Development Blocks of the district claim personal attention of the Deputy Commissioner in more ways than one. The Block Development Officers who are also Secretaries of the Anchalik Panchayats and the Subdivisional Planning Officer who is the Secretary of the Mahkuma Parishad under the Assam Panchayat Act 1957 are under the administrative control of the Deputy Commissioner, who is also a member of the Mahkuma Parishad. Inspection of Community Development Blocks so as to ensure proper implementation of the development schemes is an important function of this officer.

The power of general supervision and inspection of the works executed by the Local Boards was vested with the Deputy Commissioner and the Chief Commissioner as early as 1915 under the Local Boards Act. These powers were exercised even after decentralisation of powers under the Assam Panchayat Act 1959. The Deputy Commissioner is also empowered to appoint and transfer *Gram sevaks* within the district.

The Municipal Act of 1876 made it obligatory on the part of the municipal boards to submit the budget estimates and the revised budget estimates to the Commissioner through the Deputy Commissioner. The final authority to suggest modifications was the Chief Commissioner whose suggestions had to be carried out. More powers were conferred on the Deputy Commissioner in 1884 when the Municipal Act was further amended and the power to return the budget was vested with the Deputy Commissioner. The final authority to approve the budget was vested with the Commissioner. The same procedure was prescribed by the Municipal Acts 1923 and 1956, the latter being still in force. The procedure for election of the Chairman of a municipal board was prescribed for the first time in 1932. This procedure still holds good. Under the rules in force the Deputy Commissioner appoints one of the members of the board to preside over the first meeting after the municipal elections. The member selected by the Deputy Commissioner conducts the meeting in which the Chairman of the municipal board is elected.

The socio-economic development programmes of the successive Five Year Plans have vastly enlarged the area of activity of the Deputy Commissioner who is the principal co-ordinating agency at the district level of officers of many departments concerned with Community Development programmes. Thus, the district officers of the Agriculture,

Veterinary, Industries and the Co-operative Departments receive general guidance from the Deputy Commissioner in implementation of various development schemes in the district.

In 1972 the State Government launched the special Rabi Crops Programme in order to increase the agricultural production and to ameliorate the economic condition of the villagers. The scheme included intensive and extensive cultivation of wheat, mustard, peas, lentils and *boro* paddy. A considerable amount was advanced to the needy cultivators for whom conditions were created enabling them to undertake mechanised and scientific cultivation with adequate help from the government. The scheme brought about a new awakening among the cultivators and yielded good returns in quantitative terms. The Deputy Commissioners were closely associated with the implementation of this scheme. The supply of essential commodities in different parts of the district is the primary concern of the supply Department of the State Government. Although a network of offices has been opened by this department in all the districts and subdivisional headquarters, the responsibility of distribution of essential commodities such as sugar, flour, *atta*, *suji*, C. I. sheet, cement etc., at fair rates lies with the Deputy Commissioner. The Subdivisional Supply Advisory Board also assists the Deputy Commissioner in discharging these duties. Although census operations are conducted by the Census Department, the Deputy Commissioner renders all possible assistance by deploying personnel under his control for this purpose. He is also to perform some statutory functions in conducting the General Elections, Panchayat Elections and Municipal Elections. In the capacity of the Chairman of the Regional Transport Authority the Deputy Commissioner exercises some control over the transport system of the district. The Circuit Houses and Dak Bungalows are managed by an officer under the supervision of the Deputy Commissioner. When rogue elephants or other wild animals cause depredations in villages the Deputy Commissioner can order for killing these animals.

Constant and intimate touch with people of all walks of life living in the district is the *summum-bonum* of efficient administration. The Deputy Commissioner being the head of the district administration has to associate himself with numerous social and cultural institutions. He is the Chairman of the governing bodies of many schools and colleges. In stimulating the cultural fervour of the people the Deputy Commissioner plays an important role through the district units of the Information and Public Relations Department and through many non-official cultural bodies.

Subdivisional Officers : The Subdivisional officer who holds charge of a subdivision is under the administrative control of the Deputy Commissioner, of the district. The ministerial and the Grade IV staff of the

office of the Subdivisional Officer belong to the amalgamated establishment of the Deputy Commissioner. As an administrative head of the subdivision he is also invested with extensive powers most of which are concurrent with those of the Deputy Commissioner. Thus the Subdivisional Officer is empowered to deal with matters relating to supply, elections, collection of revenue etc., without the immediate supervision of the Deputy Commissioner. The land acquisition and requisition cases are however, to be countersigned by the Collector. The Subdivisional Officer is the principal co-ordinating agency for the subdivisional officers of other departments engaged in implementation of development schemes.

Administrative set-up : In the undivided Lakhimpur district the Deputy Commissioner was assisted by one Additional Deputy Commissioner, one Sadar Subdivisional officer and three or four Extra Assistant Commissioners, one Assistant Commissioner in the district headquarters, and sub-deputy collectors in the Revenue Circles. There was one Subdivisional Officer at North Lakhimpur and another at Dhemaji. The Subdivisional Officers had under them Extra Assistant Commissioners and Sub-deputy Collectors. After bifurcation of the district, the strength of officers in the district headquarters under the Deputy Commissioner of Dibrugarh district was not so much affected. North Lakhimpur town became the headquarters of the Lakhimpur district after bifurcation. At present there is one Deputy Commissioner at North Lakhimpur. He is assisted by two Extra Assistant Commissioners in the district headquarters. The Subdivisional Officer, Dhemaji has only two Extra Assistant Commissioners under him at the subdivisional headquarters and one Extra Assistant Commissioner at Jonai. In addition to these officers there are Circle Officers in each Revenue Circle under the immediate administrative control of the respective subdivisional officer and Deputy Commissioner.

In order to head the monolithic organisation only the members of the Indian Administrative Service are appointed as Deputy Commissioners. The Additional Deputy Commissioner who remains in charge of the district in absence of the Deputy Commissioner, is a member of the Senior Grade of the Assam Civil Service (Class-I). The Subdivisional Officers holding charge of subdivisions are selected from among the members of the Indian Administrative Service (Junior grade) and Assam Civil Service (Class-I). The Sadar Sub-divisional officer and Extra Assistant Commissioners are members of the Assam Civil Service (Class-I) A Junior member of the Indian Administrative service who is posted at the district headquarters, on probation is designated as the Assistant Commissioner. There is one Sub-Deputy Collector in each revenue circle of Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh Districts. These officers and the

Block Development Officers belong to the Assam Civil Service (Class-II). Certain percentage of officers are promoted from time to time from Assam Civil Service (class-II) to Assam Civil Service (Class-I) Junior, from Assam Civil Service (class-I), Junior Grade to Assam Civil Service (Class-I), Senior Grade and from Assam Civil Service (Class-I), Senior grade to the Indian Administrative Service.

Branches in the office of the Deputy Commissioner : The office of the Deputy Commissioner hums with activity with streams of people pouring into it from morning till late afternoon. Important branches in the office of the Deputy Commissioner are Revenue, Nazarat, Magistracy, Election, Land Acquisition, Excise, Passport and Citizenship, Textile, Supply, Housing, Treasury and Accounts, Development, Establishment Registration and Confidential. The district units of Excise, Supply Election, and Registration which are separate wings of the State Departments function under the immediate control of the Deputy Commissioner.

The Revenue Branch is headed by a Revenue *Shirastadar* who is a senior member of the ministerial staff. In each district headquarters there is one Principal Revenue Assistant who is of the rank of an Extra Assistant Commissioner. He assists the Deputy Commissioner in the disposal of revenue matters. The Revenue Branch is sub-divided into a number of smaller branches such as Land Ceiling, *Bakijai* and land sale, *Tauzi* Encroachment, Relief, Grazing Resreves etc. The *Bakijai* branch deals with the recovery of loans and advances and various other arrear Government dues. *Tauzi* branch deals primarily with the collection of revenue through Mauzadars. The encroachment branch deals with eviction of the encroachers from Government lands, Public Reserves etc. The main function of the Relief Branch is to make necessary arrangements for relief in the event of any natural calamity occurring in any part of the district and to maintain proper accounts thereof. The Land Ceiling branch deals with the implementation of the Land Ceiling Act. The Land Acquisition branch deals with acquisition and requisition of land for public purposes. Besides these, the implementation of other land reform measures is processed through the Revenue Branch of the office of the Deputy Commissioner. The branch under the Registrar Kanungo, who is a member of the ministerial staff, maintains permanently the records of land and cadastral maps.

Another important branch of the office of the Deputy Commissioner is the Nazarat headed by a member of the ministerial staff designated as Nazir and assisted by one or two Assistant Nazirs. The Nazir is the cashier of the office of the Deputy Commissioner. The Nazir serves all

processes issued from various revenue courts through a group of peons designated as *Jarikaraks*. The other functions of the Nazir are to maintain the accounts of stores and receipts of the Circuit House and the Dak Bunglows under the Deputy Commissioner and to assist the revenue officers in execution of the orders of eviction and attachment passed by the Deputy Commissioner or some other revenue officers subordinate to him.

The Magistracy branch under the Deputy Commissioner deals with issue of arms licenses, matters relating to law and order in the district, disposal of criminal cases in the various courts of the Magistrates, matters relating to compensation under Workmen Compensation Act etc.

The Treasury not only deals with all Government bills and vouchers but also maintains a huge stock of various kinds of stamps which are distributed among various agencies. In the undivided Lakhimpur district, there was one Treasury at Dibrugarh, and two sub treasuries at North Lakhimpur and Dhemaji. The sub-Treasury at North Lakhimpur has been converted to a Treasury following the bifurcation of the district. Till a few years back the treasury was entrusted to some Magistrates who in addition to their Magisterial works had to do all the works of the treasury. At Dibrugarh and North Lakhimpur two Treasury Officers who are members of the Finance and Accounts Service of the Government of Assam have been appointed. They are responsible for day to day administration of the treasury ; but they are to act under the supervision of the concerning Deputy Commissioner who is responsible for safe custody of the cash, stamps and other valuables kept in the Treasury. The sub-Treasury is managed by one Extra Assistant Commissioner under the supervision of the Subdivisional Officer. The branches of the State Bank of India handle all receipts and payments for the treasuries at Dibrugarh, North Lakhimpur and Dhemaji.

The Additional Deputy Commissioner is the District Registrar. The Sub-Registrars are under the direct control of the Additional Deputy Commissioner. They deal with registration of documents. The Passport and Citizenship branch deals with the applications for passports and registration of citizenship.

Supply : The subdivisional Supply branch is headed by a Supply Officer not below the rank of the Superintendent of Supply. There is one Deputy Director of Supply at Dibrugarh and one Assistant Director of Supply at North Lakhimpur. The Superintendent of Supply is lower in rank than the Assistant Director of Supply whose immediate superior is the Deputy Director of Supply. A number of Inspectors and sub-

Inspectors of the Supply Department assist the Superintendent and other senior officers in carrying out their duties. The Officers of the supply branch belong to Supply Department ; but the ministerial staff of this branch belongs to the amalgamated establishment of the Deputy Commissioner. The Deputy Commissioners and the Subdivisional Officers exercise control over supply matters through the officers of the Supply Department. Under the Defence of India Rules, the Deputy Commissioner is empowered to fix prices of essential commodities and to control their distribution.

Election : The Election Branch is headed by an Election Officer of the Election Department. It is however, an important responsibility of the Deputy Commissioner to conduct elections to the State Legislative Assemblies and the House of the People assisted by the Election Officer and other officers.

Housing and Textile : The Housing branch under the Deputy Commissioner deals with applications for housing loans. One Inspector of Housing is usually attached to the Sub-deputy Collector or the Extra Assistant Commissioner entrusted with the works of this branch. The Textile branch deals with the issue of permits to textile dealers and the enforcement of the Government orders relating to sale and distribution of textile goods in the district. The Textile Inspector works under the supervision of the Deputy Commissioner or the Subdivisional Officer as the case may be.

Publicity : The offices of the District Information and Public Relations Officers are located at the district headquarters of Dibrugarh and Lakhimpur. There is one Subdivisional Information and Public Relations Officer at Dhemaji. These officers are under the admnistrative control of the parent department ; but they work under the direct supervision of the concerning Deputy Commissioner and the Subdivisional Officer. These officers play a very important role in giving publicity to various activities and policies of the Government. The District Information Centres attached to the office of the District Information and Public Relations Officer serve a very useful purpose in disseminating information among the public. Community radio sets are distributed under the Rural Broadcasting Scheme. The officers of this department organise cultural shows and hold exhibitions and film shows in different parts of the district. The audio-visual units attached to the District Information and Public Relations Officers are manned by technical personnel placed under them.

Excise : There is one Superintendent of Excise at Dibrugarh and one Deputy Superintendent of Excise at North Lakhimpur. Their functions are to enforce Excise laws and to realise Excise revenue. The Deputy Commissioners and the Subdivisional Officers exercise some statutory control over the district organisation of the Excise Department There are a number of Inspectors and Assistant Inspectors under the Superintendent of Excise in each district.

Administration of the Transferred Areas : Jonai, Tirap and Sadiya are three Transferred Areas of the undivided Lakhimpur district. The headquarters of these areas are located at Jonai, Margherita and Sapakhowa respectively. Jonai is situated within the present Lakhimpur district and the other two are situated in the present Dibrugarh district. There are two Assistant Political Officers at Tirap and Sadiya Transferred Areas and one Extra Assistant Commissioner at Jonai. The Deputy Commissioner, Dibrugarh exercises powers as the Political Officer over the two areas, of the Dibrugarh district. The Extra Assistant Commissioner posted at Jonai is under the immediate control of the Subdivisional Officer of Dhemaji. These officers hold courts and are vested with the powers of first class Magistrates and can decide both civil and criminal cases according to the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation 1945, Appeals against the orders of the Assistant Political Officers lie with the Political Officer. Except for a pleader defending a person accused of murder no pleader is allowed to appear in any case tried by the Political Officer or the Assistant Political Officer. The Political Officer is empowered to try any civil suit of any value. The pecuniary jurisdiction of the Assistant Political Officer extends upto Rs. 1000.00 Some tribal institutions, like Kebangs of Jonai Transferred area also try petty cases.

———

CHAPTER—XI

REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

(a) Land revenue administration :

History of Land Revenue Assessment : The history of land revenue administration in the undivided Lakhimpur district goes back to the days of the Ahom rule in Assam. There was no 'land tax' in Assam during the reign of the Ahom kings who considered personal service to be more important than land tax. The old system has been described by B. C. Allen as follows "The system of taxation in force under the Ahom kings was mainly one of personal service. The whole of the adult male population was divided into bodies of three men called *gots*, each individual being styled a *paik*. One *paik* out of three was always engaged on labour for the State, while so employed he was supported by the remaining members of his *got*. In return for this labour each paik was allowed 8 *bighas* of *rupit* land and the land, occupied by his house and garden, which is now called *basti*, free of revenue. Any land taken up in excess of this amount was assessed at 4 annas a *bigha*. In addition to this the villagers paid a poll-tax of one rupee for each adult *paik*.[1]

It was only after the advent of the British that some attempt was made to assess properly the amount of land revenue due from the cultivators. "The earliest land revenue report of Lakhimpur available is one submitted by Major White in January 1835, though it is really a misnomer to describe it as a land revenue report of Lakhimpur, as practically the whole of the district at that time was under Ahom rule. In Purandar Singh's territory the *paiks* paid a capitation tax of Rs. 3 a head, in return for which they were allowed to cultivate 8 *bighas* of land. The system of organised compulsory labour seems to have fallen into disuse, though probably the Raja obtained all the labour he required free of charge. In Matak the people made presents to the Bor Senapati in kind, and a certain amount of labour was at his disposal, *Paiks* migrating from the territory of Purandar Singh paid in cash instead of kind, and such migration was encouraged by the assessment of a much lower rate than that prevailing in the Raja's territory. The revenue of the Sadiyakhoa Gohain, was obtained, like that of the Matak chief, from presents and occasional forced labour. In 1853, the revenue in Upper Matak was still collected in the form of a poll-tax of Rs. 2 on every able-bodied man ; but as the population was extremely sparse the gross demand only amounted in the previous year to Rs. 3,012. In North Lakhimpur and in Lower Matak, the rates assessed were 3

1. B. C. Allen, *Assam District Gazetters, Lakhimpur*, 1905, P. 246.

annas a *bigha* for *rupit* (land fit for the growth of transplanted rice) and 2 annas a *bigha* for other land. In Sadiya and Saikhoa they were one anna a *bigha* higher. The land revenue assessment of the district in 1853 was less than half a lakh, and the amount realized from poll-tax was only some Rs. 5,000 more."[2]

Lieutenant Colonel Hopkinson the Commissioner was of the opinion that the assessment rates then prevailing were ridiculously low. He therefore proposed in 1865 that the *bigha* rates for *basti* land should be raised to Re. 1 while the rate for *rupit* and other lands should be 10 annas and 8 annas per *bigha* respectively. These rates were enforced with effect from 1868-69, without making detailed enquiries No attempt was made to estimate the comparative value of three different classes of land. The enhancement of land revenue was resented by the rayats who resigned a large portion of their lands. Consequently, the revised rates brought out an enhancement of only about 26 per cent in gross revenue in spite of the fact that these rates were nearly double of the pre-revision rates. However, land resigned was speedily retaken and the land revenue demand of 1871-72 was nearly double of the revenue of the year preceding reassessment. In the settlement of 1893-94 the threefold division of land was retained but instead of imposing the same rate on all lands of the same class throughout the district, the villages were divided into four grades and the rates assessed varied with grades of the villages. The rate of revenue per *bigha* of land in a first class village was Re. 1 and annas 6 for *basti* land, Re. 1 for *rupit* land and annas 12 for *faringati* land. The corresponding rates for a second class village were Re. 1 annas 4 for *basti* land, annas 14 for *rupit* land and annas 10 for *faringati* land. The rate of each of these classes of land of third class village was two annas less than the corresponding rate of a second class village. Similarly the lands of the fourth class village were two annas less than corresponding lands of a third class village. The mode of assessment followed in this settlement was as follows : "The villages were provisionally graded by the Director of Land Records and Agriculture, the class in which each village was placed being determined by the demand for land, and not by any intrinsic considerations of the value of the produce, the fertility of the soil, or the profits of cultivatotrn The demand for land was estimated by ascertaining the density of the population, the proportion of settled to unsettled land, and the proportion of fluctuating cultivation. These lists were sent to local officers for examination, and were modified by them in view of the fertility of soil, the facilities for bringing the produce to market, and the rents paid by sub-tenants where ascertainable. This enquiry was carried out by the

2. B, C, Allen, *Assam District Gazeteers, Lakimpur*, 1905, p. 246-247.

ordinary district staff within the space of a single cold weather, and the results obtained made no pretensions to scientific accuracy. Such accuracy was considered to be unnecessary, as it was not intended to impose anything like the maximum assessment on the land. The Government had no desire to assess up to its fair share of the value of the produce of the soil, and under these circumstances it was contended that it would be waste of time and money to have recourse to any minute and elaborate classification of soils, to crop experiments on a large scale or to a close examination of all the elements that affect the net profits of the cultivator. The theory on which the settlement was based, was that the worst lands were capable of bearing the assessment imposed and that Government alone was a loser by its inequalities.[3]

The next settlement took place in 1908-12. This was carried out mainly by Mr. Milne, I. C. S. and Mr. S. N. Mackenzi, I. C. S. A further simplification of classification was effected in this district; all distinctions of land based on difference of soil were abolished. There were six classes—*bari* and *takalabari*; *da-rupit* or *salitali* and *bam-rupit* or *lahi-tali*, *jalduba* and *faringati*. There was no area left under the fluctuating classification. The settled and classed area was 6,92,673 *bighas*; the *khiraj* revenue was enhanced from Rs. 5,29,671 to Rs. 5,89,649 or by 10.5 per cent. The settlement was for 20 years from the 1st April 1911 and the 1st April 1912 in different groups. Land taken up after settlement was liable to be reclassified in the 11th year of the resettlement period.

Land settled after the close of the regular re-settlement operation was liable to reclassification in the 11th year of the resettlement period The reclassification was carried out and gave an increase of assessment of Rs. 95,460 in Lakhimpur district in 1922-23. In the years from 1908 onward there had been a steady increase in the prices received by the cultivator for his produce and a steady increase in the demand for land. The evidence of prosperity of the people and expectation of a substantial increase of revenue led the Government to undertake resettlements on the expiry of the settlement made in 1908-12. The resettlement operation was taken up in 1928. In this settlement the rate paid for khiraj land held for special cultivation was revised. The Settlement was made for a period of 30 years from the 1st April, 1934; but the term of settlement of Buri-dihing mauza and Tirap mauzas expired on 31.3.49. The term of settlement of Dibrugarh old town and Panitola town expired exactly six years earlier. Another resettlement operation covering these two towns and two mouzas was carried out during the period 1956-61.

3. B. C. Allen, *Assam District Gazetteers Lakhimpur*, 1905, p. 249-250

The rest of the area of undivided Lakhimpur came under resettlement operation with effect from the first April 1964. This operation was in progress till 1972. The current settlement is based on soil unit system and the scheme of classification adopted for the rural areas is as follows :

Classes	Factors.
1. Bhalbari	185
2. Bari	125
3. Salitoli (Da-rupit)	130
4. Lahitoli (Bam-rupit)	100
5. Jalduba	60
6. Faringati	60
7. Bisesh Faringati	125
8. Tea	—
9. Baparar Thai	—
10. Shreni Nai	—

In the case of towns the following classifications have been adopted.

1. Special Trade Site (For Tinsukia only)
2. Trade Site—I
3. Trade Site—II
4. Trade Site—III
5. Unutilised Trade Site
6. Residential Site—I
7. Residential Site—II
8. Residential Site—III
9. Agriculture Land.

At the time of resettlement of 1928-34 the *khiraj* revenue of all established villages represented 9.84 per cent of the gross produce of the value as against 9.8 per cent in case of the fluctuating groups. The undivided Lakhimpur district witnessed the emergence of prosperous farmers, businessmen and industrialists coupled with spurt in prices of agricultural produce and growth of industries during the period from 1934 to 1964. Therefore an upward revision of the rates of assessment could easily be expected. The Settlement Officer of the undivided Lakhimpur district reports that the new rates of reassessment for Dibrugarh group and Doom Dooma group of villages have been approved by the Government of Assam. The proposed unit rate for the Doom Dooma group as a whole was 1.12 as against the existing unit rate of 1.10. The revenue will rise by 29.9 per cent, representing. 60 per cent of value of the estimated gross produce of the group. In case of Dibrugarh group of villages the proposed unit rate for the group as a

whole was 1.26 as against the old unit rate of 1.15. There will be an increase in revenue by 27.04 per cent. The following table shows the fully assessed area under ordinary cultivaton in the undivided Lakhimpur district.

Year		Area in acres
1912-13	—	2,62,129
1917-18	—	3,11,802
1922-23	—	3,00,786
1927-28	—	4,33,577
1944-45	—	5,92,260
1950-51	—	6,43,311

Assessment of town lands : Till 1897 it was not considered necessary to frame separate rules for assessment of town lands. The assessment of town land was made under the executive orders of the Chief Commissioner. Rules for the purpose were first framed in 1897 which have been revised from time to time. These rules apply to land included in any municipality or "notified area" under the Assam Municipal Act and also to any other land to which the rates may be made applicable by notification. These rules have been applied to some areas previously assessed as agricultural but whose site value is in considerable excess of its agricultural value. For the purpose of assessment the land in these areas was classified into three categories agricultural, residential and trade sites. In the recent resettlements carried out under the provisions of the Assam Land Revenue Reassessment Act the agricultural land has been assessed at a rate of revenue not exceeding by more than 7½ per cent the rate fixed for similar land in the highest rated adjoining villages,. Residential and trade sites have been divided into as many classes as circumstances warranted and an average annual value-calculated from recorded selling and letting values—has been worked out for each class.

Before 1933, Dibrugarh, North Lakhimpur, Tinsukia, Doom Dooma, Jaipur, Digboi and Bardubi were town land areas of Lakhimpur district Dibrugarh was settled under Town land Rules for 30 years beginning from 1913-14. In 1934 new additions were made to the town and these were settled for nine years to fall in line with the date of town settlement. Resettlement operation in Dibrugarh Town was again taken up and completed in 1959. North Lakhimpur was settled for 30 years from the 1st April 1933, and the rest also for 30 years from the 1st April 1934 The following places were classed and settled as townland areas with effect from the 1st April 1934 :-(a) Kaka Bazar, for 5 years ; (b) Panitola, for 10 years ; (c) Makum Junction, for 30 years ; (d) Margherita for 30 years ; (e) Chabua, for 30 years ; (f) Naharkatiya, for 30 years. Resettlement operations at Panitola Town were taken up

along with Dibrugarh Town. The term of settlement of Kakabazar town has been extended and resettlement operation will be taken up there along with other towns of the district.

Forms of settlement : The Assam Land and Revenue Regulation which came into force in 1886 provided for several types of estates or interests in land. These tenures which have been either created or acknowledged under this Regulation, fall under two main classes—(1) those under which land is held for the cultivation of ordinary crops and (2) those under which grants have been made for the growth of tea or other crops not included within the ordinary staples of the State and which require considerable investment of capital. The following form of land tenure of the first category are prevalent till now in the areas covered by the undivided Lakhimpur district.

(1) The *lakhiraj* estates and estates held in fee simple, with estates under the Special Waste Land Rules.

(2) Temporarily settled estates held direct from the Government or periodic lease. These again cover the following classes of estates :-

(a) Revenue paying estates in all district under the Special Waste Land Rules or under Section I of the Settelement Rules of Assam prior to 1929 and held at favourable rates.
(b) The *nisf-khiraj*, or half revenue paying estates.
(c) The *khiraj* or full revenue paying estates.
(d) Temporarily settled *khiraj* estates held direct fromh the Government on annual lease.

The *lakhiraj* estates are religious endowments created by the Ahoms before the advent of the British. Free grants were made by the Ahom kings to idols, priests, religious institutions and distinguished scholars and officers of state. The British Government did not acknowledge at first the claims of the proprietors of those estates who enjoyed and grants free of revenue. As early as 1834 the Government of India ruled that all rights to hold lands free of assessment founded on grants made by the Ahom kings must be considered to have been cancelled following the British conquest. The first British Commissioner of Assam, Mr. Scott disregarded the claims of grantees to hold land revenue free. When General Jenkins became the Commissioner of Assam the question was reopened and he divided such grants into three classes.

(1) *Debottar* (appropriated to temples), (2) *Dharmottar* lands devoted to some religious purpose, and (3) *Brahmottar* (dedicated to priests not being temple lands.) In all cases of Debottars Jenkins confirmed the grants revenue free. In the case of *bona fide* and valid *Brahmottar* and *Dharmottar* land he simple confirmed the grantee in possesion, subject

to payment of revenue as assessed by David Scott on favourable rates. These two classes of land were eventualy assessed at half the ordinary rates of revenue, and came to be known as the *nisf-khiraj* estates. The *lakhiraj* and *nisf-khiraj* estates. are two classes of land tenures still recognised in Assam. The estate of the *lakhirajdar* or fee-simple owner is the highest in Assam. It has all the advantages of a permanently settled estate ; and is moreover revenue free. A *lakhiraj* estate is heritable and transferable in case of those who are owners of these estates and not trustees like *shebaits* or *dolois* of a temple. Their powers to enhance rents of the tenants are limited by law. They constitute a class of "Proprietors" as defined under the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation. There are only five *lakhiraj* estates in the undivided Lakhimpur district, covering an area of 1586. acres.[4] The lands of temples and *Satras* have been acquired under the Assam State Acquistion of Land belonging to Religious and Charitable Institutions of Public Nature Act, 1963.

The owners of all temporarily settled estates settled for terms of not less than ten years have been designated as "land owners" in the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation. They have a permanent, heritable and transferable right over the land. The settlement of his class of land is however made by the Government for a period of some years only, and the revenue is usually enhanced on resettlement. The land holder lose his rights unless he complies with the conditions of the lease issued to him by the Government. He has a right to resettlement on the expiry of the lease, subject to the condition that he accepts the terms of settlement offered to him.

Some of the *khiraj* lands are however settled annually. The annual settlement holder has no heritable or transferable right over the land. If his land is taken up for a public purpose, no compensation is given to him for the loss of the land itself. If on expiry of settlement, the land is not required by the Government for any public purpose, he is ordinarily given settlement. Where the previous settlement holder does not come forward and apply for re-settlement, the settlement Rules require settlement to be made ordinarily with the person in actual, possession. To this extent, transferability of annual holdings may be said to bear the stamp of legal validity.

The general character of all settlements of temporarily-settled estates has been described as "rayatwari." The main object of settlement is to avoid intervention of any middleman or land-lord and to settle the land directly with the occupant. It does not however follow from this that settlement has always been made with the actual cultivator. Different types of sub-letting are prevalent in the district and the rights of tenants are governed by the Assam Temporarily Settled Areas Tenancy Act and the Assam Non-Agricultural Urban Areas Tenancy Act.

4. *Assam land Revenue Manual, Vol. I,* (1931) Introduction. p. XIX.

Settlement of land for the cultivation of tea : In order to encourage tea cultivation in Assam, large blocks of land were settled with tea planters under various Rules since the early days of the British administration. The first Special Grant Rules were the Waste Land Grant Rules of 1838 under which no grant less than 100 acres or greater than 1000 acres was authorised. The whole grant was liable for resumption if one fourth of the entire area could not be brought under cultivation within the first years of the grant. One fourth of the grant was to be held in perpetuity revenue free. The rest was assessed on easy terms. The next rules were those for lease-hold grants of 1854, commonly called the Old Assam Rules. Under these rules no grant was to be less than 500 acres in extent. One fourth of the grant was exempted from assessment in perpetuity and the remaining three-fourths were brought under revenue assessment at low but progressive rates of revenue.

The Fee Simple Rules were enforced from 1862. These rules provided for the disposal of land with the applicant at a fixed rate. Subsequently these rules were modified and the grants were disposed of by auction. Grants were limited except under special circumstances to compact blocks of 3000 acres. These rules were in force until 1872 when further grants under these rules were stopped pending revision of the Fee Simple Rules. The revised rules came in force in 1874. Under these rules the upset price of the land sold was raised to Rs. 8 per acre.

In 1876 new rules were issued under which land was leased for thirty years at progressive rates and the lease was put up to sale by auction, at an upset price of rupee one per acre. These rules were subsequently revised and incorporated in the Land Revenue Regulaton. These rules remained in force until recently ; but the extent of thier application was progressively restricted with the extension of cultivation in the district. The extent of settlement of lands for tea cutivation in the undivided Lakhimpur district is indicated in the statement below.[5]

Rules	No. of grants	Area in acres.
1. Rules of 1838	Nil	Nil
2. Rules of 1854	Nil	Nil
3. Fee simple Rules	140	104134
4. Thirty year lease rules of 1876 and corresponding settlement Rules.	8	3326
5. Periodic Rules for special cultivation	761	89540

5. *Assam Land Revenue Manual—Intro.*, p. XII.

The above Rules provided for concessional rates of revenue besides creating large blocks parts of which remained unutilised. The circumstances which existed at the time of settlement of these lands have now changed and there has been heavy pressure on land from the growing agricultural population. Moreover it was considered desirable to remove the disparity and inequality in the enjoyment of land rights and privileges between these Grant holders and the ordinary cultivators. The Assam Assessment of Revenue Free Waste Land Grant Act was enacted in 1948 providing for assessment of revenue free waste lands of Tea Grants.

In the current resettlement operation lands covered by tea have been separately classified on the basis of detailed survey. During the resettlement operation of the thirties lands covered by tea leases were reassessed at a flat rate of Re. 1 per *bigha* in Dibrugarh subdivision and 81 paise per *bigha* in North Lakhimpur subdivision. From the first April of 1950 separate rates were fixed for tea land as shown below :—

1. All lands covered by tea in (a) North Lakhimpur subdivision 81 paise per *bigha*, (b) Sadiya, Saikhowa, Buri-dihing, Tipling mauzas 87 paise per *bigha* (c) other areas of Dibrugarh subdivision Re. 1.00 per *bigha*.

2. Annual Patta lands at *faringati* rates of the village.

System of survey of land and assessment of land revenue : A detailed plotwise cadastral survery and reassessment of revenue of the lands covered by periodic leases constitute an important part of the re-settlement operation which is carried out on or at the time of expiry of the term of the previous settlement. The opeation usually covers the entire district and continues for five years or more. Section 17 of the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation enumerates three stages of this operation These are :—

(a) survey and demarcation,

(b) preparation of record of rights,

(c) assessment of land revenue.

These steps have been further elaborated in the rules framed under the Regulation, and the Assam Reassessment Act, 1936.

Survery and demarcation of land is initiated by a traverse based on theodolite observations. Whenever possible, it is connected with two or more points fixed by previous surveys. When the village has not already been demarcated in an adequate manner, boundary marks of a permanent nature are erected at points where boundaries of three villages meet. Established villages for which cadastral maps have been prepared in the preceding settlement operation are not generally required to be traversed. The plots are usually surveyed by the Mandals by chain.

For each new village a large scale cadastral map based on traverse survery is prepared. Roads, rivers, railways and other physical features of the country, homesteads and fields are shown in the maps. In case of those villages for which suitable large scale map is already in existence, no fresh map is usually prepared. The existing maps are brought upto date.

After a village has been surveyed and demarcated, a draft *chitha* or field index is prepared. This register also shows the names of persons who are in possession of each field shown in the map and classification of the land as approved by the Government. Another register called *jamabandi* or rent roll, is also prepared on the basis of the *chitha*. The *jamabandi* resgister contains in addition to other paticulars classification of each field, the area covered by each lease, the fields which have been found in possession of the owner of the land. At first a draft *jamabandi* is prepared and after proper examination of the entries in the *jamabandi* and settlement of disputes, revenue payable for each estate is entered in the register. The revenue is calculated on the basis of rates approved by the Government. Every person having interest in the land is provided with extracts from the draft *jamabandi* and are given the opportunity to file objections in respect of ownership of the land or the amount assessed as revenue. The settlement officer then prepares the final copy of the *chitha* and the *jamabandi*. The final copy of the *jamabandi* is the record of rights of owners of land. Finally periodic or annual leases corresponding in all particulars with entries in the record-of-rights are offered to the persons entitled to receive leases.

For the purpose of carrying out the settlement operation one Settlement officer is appointed for one district. One Assistant Settlement Officer is appointed in each revenue circle in addition to one Senior Assistant Settlement Officer appointed in each subdivisional headquarters to assist the Settlement Officer. The Assistant Settlement Officers are Sub-deputy Collectors who are invested with necessary powers to conduct the settlement operation under the supervision of the Settlement Officer. The staff of the Sub-deputy Collector includes two or more *Kanangos* and as many *Mandals* as there are village *lots* consisting of a group of villages. The *Kanangos* are promoted from the *Mandals* and are members of the non-gazetted staff. Their primary task is to supervise the works of the *Mandals*.

The bais of the land revenue system is the *Mandal*, the surveyor whose functions are numerous. The *Mandal* surveys the plots, prepares the cadastral map *chitha* and *jamabandi*, under the supervision of a *Kanango*. In March he inspects the fields which have been formally

resigned to see whether they have been actually, relinquished, tests the boundaries of fields taken up in recent years to see whether they are in accordance with the map, and surveys land which has been broken up for what is called the regular settlement, or for which a formal application has been field. His two principal registers are the *Day-chitha*, and the *jamabandi* or rent roll. During the summer-season he is occupied with the revision of his maps and registers, and the preparation of his, leases. When the winter comes, he again proceeds to the field, distributes the leases he has prepared, and surveys the land which has been broken up since his former tour, and which is included in what is known as the *Dariabadi* or supplementary settlement. He is also required to prepare statistics of the area under different crops, he assists in the collection of revenue, and is often ordered to report on local disputes connected with land. His duties have increased manifold with the expansion of activities of the Revenue Department. The *Mandal* is often called upon to collect various data about loss or damage to crops during floods and to find out the extent of the area affected by by flood etc.

Collection of land revenue : Mauzadari system : In the early days of the British rule land revenue was collected through the agency of the Mauzadars in the areas covered by the undivided Lakhimpur district. The Mauzadar received 10 per cent of his collections as commission. In Lower Matak he received an extra 2 per cent. He was responsible not only for collection of land revenue but also for its assessment over a fixed area. He wielded considerable powers and the system was open to obvious objections. The *Kataki* or the village accountant who assisted the Mauzadar received 5 per cent of the total collection. The peons employed were remunerated by grants of land. The fiscal units, known as mauzas at that time were different from the mauzas of today. In 1853, out of 87 mauzas of Lakhimpur district more than 26 mauzas yielded less than Rs. 100/- each. Annual revenue demand in any mauza was less than Rs. 3000/-

Gradually the size of units of collection was increased and the number of mauzas was reduced. The mauzadars who were thus entrusted with heavier responsibilities were given incentive in the shape of enhanced commission. In 1867 the commission of the Mauzadars reached the level of 15 per cent. This amount was in addition to half the revenue of land reclaimed during the currency of settlement. The rate of commission was however reduced to 10 per cent in 1872. This amount was henceforward made payable to the Mauzadar at the rate of 10 per cent on the first Rs. 6000/- of revenue and 5 per cent on the amount exceeding Rs. 6000/-

As the Mauzadari system suffered from some inherent defects a system was devised in 1883 to replace the Mauzadar by a salaried officer called Tahsildar whose jurisdiction extended over a fixed area known as a Tahsil. The officer was responsible for collection of land revenue ; but was exempted from the responsibility imposed upon the Mauzadar of paying the revenue on due dates. Only one Tahsil was opened at Lakhimpur in 1896 and that was the Dibrugarh Tahsil. As this system was found unsatisfactory, it was replaced by the Mauzadari system and the Dibrugarh Tahsil was divided into its constituent mauzas in 1904.

The Mauzadari system is still prevalent in Assam. There are thirty mauzas in Dibrugarh district, and twenty one in the present Lakhimpur district. The scale of commission of the Mauzadar has been changed from time to time. Till 1972 they used to get a commission of 17 percent, upto Rs. 15,000/- then 11 per cent upto 40,000/- and 6 per cent on the balance. With effect from 1972-73 (1378 B. S.) the commission of a Mauzadar has been fixed at the following rate :—

1st one-fourth of the revenue demand—10%
2nd one-fourth of the revenue demard—15%
3rd one fourth of the revenue demand—20%
4th one-fourth of the revenue demand 25%

In addition to the commission the mauzadar earns a subsidy of Rs. 500/- a year. He maintains a number of registers such as the (1) *Jama washil*, (2) *Dainik Amdani* registers, (3) Counterfoil Receipt Book, (4) Inspection Book, (5) Daily Register of Process Fees Realised (6) Cash Book, and the (7) *Bakijai* Register.

Coercive measures for realisation of arrear land revenue, include attachment of movable and immovable properties of the defaulter under the provisions of the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation. Some of the Mauzadars are empowered to sell the movable properties ; but the proceedings of sale of immovable properties are conducted in the offices of the Deputy Commissioner, Sub-divisional officer and Circle officer who are duly empowered.

(iii) Income from land revenue and special cesses connected with it :

An important feature of collection of land revenue is the heavy arrear which accumulates almost every year. The following two tables show the amount of land revenue collected in the undivided Lakhimpur district.

Land revenue of the undivided Lakhimpur district.

Year	Amount in Rupees	Year	Amount in Rupees
1948-49	23,45,585	1954-55	19,65,173
1949-50	24,44,639	1955-56	25,56,899
1950-51	22,38,864	1956-57	27,76,264
1951-52	20,49,804	1957-58	25,07,116
1952-53	24,86,786	1958-59	14,80,722
1953-54	21,66,043	1959-60	15,78,637

Year	Demand (in Rupees)			Collection (in Rupees)		
	Current	Arrear	Total	Current	Arrear	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1962-63	28,81,870	49,12,804	77,94,674	6,14,804	15,94,916	22,09,720
1963-64	30,12,518	55,11,848	84,24,366	5,37,579	21,84,411	27,21,990
1964-65	29,15,735	52,14,946	81,30,681	7,94,095	16,50,509	24,44,604
1965-66	28,69,318	53,53,559	82,22,877	6,81,400	16,29,977	23,11,377
1966-67	29,52,639	58,96,369	88,49,008	14,29,553	12,35,912	26,65,465
1967-68	28,92,914	56,40,733	85,33,647	4,47,270	21,34,728	25,81,998

Local rate : In addition to the ordinary land revenue, all estates, whether revenue-paying or revenue free are assessed to Local Rates under the provisions of the Assam Local Rates Regulation. As early as 1895-96 the total demand of the local rate in the district amounted to Rs. 39,183/- and rose to Rs. 2,78,972/- in 1950-51. Previously the local rate was made available to the Local Boards. Since the abolition of these Boards the amount has been made over to the Panchayats. The following table shows the amount of local rate collected in the undivided Lakhimpur district.

Local Rate collected in the undivided Lakhimpur district

Year	Demand (in Rupees)			Collection (in Rupees)		
	Current	Arrear	Total	Current	Arrear	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1962-63	5,05,980	6,67,674	11,73,654	1,00,945	2,71,658	3,72,603
1963-64	7,28,183	7,96,085	15,24,268	2,50,153	3,80,077	6,30,230
1965-66	6,71,327	15,24,219	21,95,546	1,41,847	3,57,666	4,99,513
1966-67	7,38,362	16,07,972	23,46,334	3,38,534	3,71,827	7,10,361
1967-68	7,20,692	16,35,973	23,56,665	2,96,031	2,90,407	5,86,438

Fisheries : The undivided district of Lakhimpur had a number of Fisheries which contributed a good amount of revenue to the State exchequer every year. The right to fish in fisheries is put to auction and the highest bidder gets the lease for one year. There were about 61 Fisheries in the undivided Lakhimpur district. Of these Fisheries 35 are in the present Dibrugarh district, 21 being in Dibrugarh Sub-division and 14 in Tinsukia Sub-division. The Lakhimpur district has only 26 Fisheries of which 16 are locatod in North Lakhimpur Sub-division and 10 in Dhemaji Sub-division. Some of these Fisheries are very large, yielding an annual revenue of Rupees sixty to seventy thousand. The appendix 'A' at the end of the chapter shows the names of Fisheries along with the annual rental value for the three years.

Miscellaneous revenue : Royalties on mineral oil and coal mines are two important sources of revenue of the district. The oil royalty on crude oil, natural gas, dead rent, surface rent etc. and grazing fees and taxes yield considerable revenue. The following table shows the amount of miscellaneous revenue collected in the district.

Collection of miscellaneous revenue.
(in Rupees)

Year	Coal mines	Mineral oil	Grazing fees and taxes	Miscellaneous
1	2	3	4	5
1962-63	1,09,169.45	83,36,286.96	28,047.22	60,874.20
1963-64	6,10,535.22	1,19,07,322.81	17,162.29	6,50,276.96
1964-65	3,92,543.37	1,90,67,760.77	31,224.30	3,81,501.69
1967-68	4,34,480.45	2,95,29,183.88	29,547.57	2,29,188.72

Land Reforms :

Under the Constitution of India, the States are responsible for implementation of land legislations within their respective jurisdiction. In order to maximise the agricultural production by removing impediments which arise from the character of the agrarian structure and to establish an egalitarian society it was considered necessary to remodel the existing agrarian structure. Emphasis was therefore laid on land reforms in the Five Year Plans which embodied a broad common approach in the sphere of land reforms to be pursued by the States. The measures recommended in the Second Five Year Plan related to (i) abolition of the intermediary tenures ; (ii) tenancy reforms including regulation of

rents ; security of tenure and enabling tenants to become owners (iii) consolidation of holdings ; and (iv) agrarian reorganisation. During the Fifth Five Year Plan land reform measures have been taken up as matters of high priority. The progress of implementation of land reform measures in the undivided Lakhimpur district is given below.

(i) **Abolition of intermediaries** : The Zamindary system was not introduced in the undivided Lakhimpur district. However lands belonging to the temples, *Satras* and charity Trusts used to be enjoyed by the raiyats under the religious institutions. The Assam State Acquisition of Lands belonging to Religious and Charitable Institutions of Public Nature Act, 1956 has been enforced to abolish this class of intermediaries. By virtue of a notification published in the Gazette, all rights and interests in land including rights in mines are vested in the State free from all encumbrances. Such an institution is, however, allowed to retain possession over all such lands which were occupied by it by constructing buildings, raising orchards and flower gardens. This exemption has been extended to the compounds of all such lands. The lands which are thus exempted from the operation of the Act will remain revenue-free. The institutions are given compensation annually on the basis of net income in the form of perpetual annuity. All excess lands are allotted to the raiyats who are in occupation. An area of 691 Bighas of land was acquired by the Government in Dibrugarh subdivision till 1968-69, under this Act.

Tenancy Reforms : The Assam Temporarily Settled Districts Tenancy Act, 1935 regulates the relation between the landlords and tenants in respect of agricultural lands. The rights and liabilities of non-agricultural urban tenants are regulated under the Assam Non-Agricultural Urban Areas Tenancy Act, 1955. The Assam Temporarily Settled Districts Tenancy Act, 1935 provided for fixity of tenure, protection of tenants against arbitrary eviction and laid down principles to determine fair rents. Tenants were divided into three classes—(1) Privileged Raiyats, (2) Occupancy Raiyats, and (3) Non-occupancy raiyats. The Act also recognises Under-Raiyats holding lands under the Raiyats. The Act determined the extent of rights of each class of tenants in respect of occupancy, inheritance, transfer, subletting over the land held by them under the landlords. Each class of tenants enjoyed these rights within the limits prescribed by the Act. Similarly, they were under obligation to pay rent and to use the land with due care. An important feature of this Act is that subject to certain conditions the Priviliged Raiyats enjoy permanent, heritable and transferable right of use and occupancy in his land, on a rate of rent not exceeding the revenue rate, or at half rate of revenue in addition to the service rendered by him or on payment of *bhog*." The status of Privileged Raiyat is acquired

on continuous holding of land for twelve years. This Act was replaced in 1971 when a new tenancy legislation was enacted.

The Assam Temporarily Settled Areas Tenancy Act which came into force in 1971 has been made applicable not only to the tenants but also to the crop-sharers called *adhiars*. They are now regarded as tenants. A tenant acquires occupancy right by holding the land continuously for three years. They are however prohibited from sub-letting the land. Provisions have also been made under this Act for acquisition of intermediary and ownership rights by the occupancy tenants on payment of fixed compensation which amounts to fifty times the revenue payable for such land. Maximum rent payable in cash will not exceed three times the land revenue payable for the land held under the tenancy. Similarly the burden of payment in kind has been made relatively light. The Act imposes restrictions on arbitrary eviction of both occupancy and non-occupancy tenants.

The implementation of the provisions of this Act involves preparation of records-of-rights of tenants under this Act. The scheme is under implementation along with the re-settlement operation in the districts of Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh.

The Assam Adhiar Protection and Regulation Act 1948 was enforced in all the plains districts of Assam. The primary object of the Act is to protect those persons who under the system generally known as *adhi, barga, chukti, bhag* or *chukani* cultivate the land of another person on condition of delivering a share or quantity of produce of such land to the landowner. The Act provides for constitution of Adhi Conciliation Boards, and protection against arbitrary eviction. It also lays down the principles to determine the *adhiars* share of the produce. From the gross crop, the seedgrains are to be paid to the person who contributed it. Of the balance the landowner gets one-fourth if he supplies the plough and the cattle and one-fifth if he does not supply the same. Thus the *adhiar* gets either three-fourths or four-fifths of the balance depending upon the supply or not of plough and cattle by the landowner. In fact, this provision applies to all those cases where the landowner provides tractors to an *adhiar* for the purpose of cultivation of the land.

The Adhi Conciliation Board consists of three members—one from the *adhiar*, one from the landlords and the third is a Revenue officer of the rank of Sub Deputy Collector. The Board decides any dispute between the *adhiar* and the landlord in respect of the shares of the produce and ejectment of the *adhiar* under certain circumstances. The Adhi Conciliation Boards were formed in the following Anchalik Panchayats of the undivided Lakhimpur district :—

Name of the Sub-division	Anchalik Panchayats where Adhi Conciliation Boards were formed.
1. Dibrugarh Sub-division.	(1) Tengakhat, (2) Joypur, (3) Khowang, (4) Barbarua, (5) Lahoal, (6) Panitola, (7) Hapjan, (8) Kakapathar, (9) Marghe-rita, (10) Murkongsellek (11) Dhemaji.
2. North-Lakhimpur Sub-division.	(1) Bihpuria, (2) Narayanpur, (3) Nawboicha, (4) Lakhimpur, (5) Bordoloni, (6) Dhakuakhana.

The Assam Adhiar Protection and Regulation Act 1948, was repealed in 1971 and has been replaced by the Assam Temporarily Settled Areas Tenancy Act 1971. The Adhi Conciliation Boards also ceased to function since 1971.

Land Ceiling : The Assam Fixation of Celing on Land-holdings Act 1956 came into force on 15.2.58. The main objects of this Act were (1) to reduce disparities of wealth, and (2) to redistribute excess lands available from large holdings among landless cultivators in rural areas. The level of ceiling was fixed at 150 *bighas* for all kinds of lands irrespective of the size of the family, nature of the soil or availability of irrigation. In case of orchard lands the ceiling was increased by the actual area of orchard subject to a maximum of 30 bighas. Following lands were kept outside the purview of the Ceiling Act :—

(a) lands held by the State Government or by the Union Government or by any local authority ;

(b) lands belonging to any religious and charitable institution of public nature ;

(c) lands held for special cultivation of tea or purposes ancillary thereto ;

(d) lands exceeding 150 bighas utilised for large scale cultivation of citrus in a compact block by a person one year before the Act came into operation ;

(e) lands utilised by efficiently managed farms on which heavy investments have been made ;

(f) lands held by mills, factories and workshops for the purpose of expansion of the mill or for ancillary purposes ;

(g) lands held by a sugar factory or by a Co-operative Farming Society for cultivation of sugarcane ;

(h) lands vesting in a Gram Sabha under the Assam Gramdan Act.

The burden of declaring a person's excess land has been laid on himself. On submission of the return he is given the opportunity to choose any plot or plots of land totalling 150 bighas which he is entitled to retain. He is deprived of this opportunity on failure to submit the return. The Revenue officers make a thorough enquiry about the total holding of such persons whose lands are likely to be acquired under the Ceiling Act. After determining the excess lands and lands to be retained by the person, the Collector prepares and publishes a draft statement. The person concerned may file objection within thirty days. The Collector after hearing the objection passes orders on the objection. The aggrieved party may prefer an appeal against the order within thirty days. The State Government may also, of its own motion, call for the draft statement within sixty days of the order and revise the order of the Collector. The draft statement is made final in the light of the order of the Collector or the State Government as the case may be. The final statement is given wide publicity and thereafter it cannot be questioned in the court of law.

Compensation for the excess land acquired under this Act is paid to the owner and the tenants. The rate of compensation is also fixed under the same Act. The excess lands are thereafter allotted to the cultivating tenants in occupation of the land by offering settlement. Where there is no tenant in occupation, the land is settled with landless people. The Ceiling Act also restricts future acquisitions within the limit of the ceiling fixed.

Till 1968-69 an area of 12775 bighas of land was acquired by the State Government under the Act in Dibrugarh subdivision. In Lakhimpur subdivision only 6 bighas 3 kathas of land were acquired till 1969-70.

The existing legislation on land ceiling has already been amended and the level was first reduced from 150 bighas to 75 bighas and finally to 50 bighas. The allowable area of orchard lands has been reduced from 30 to 15 bighas. The surplus land so acquired will be distributed among several beneficiaries.

Consolidation of holdings : The main object of the Assam Consolidation of Holdings Act 1960 is to prevent fragmentation of agricultural holdings measuring less than 5 bighas and to affect consolidation of holdings. The scheme was orginally taken up to save labour and money in agricultural operations and to increase agricultural production. In view of the desirability of completing at first the work of preparation of records of rights of the tenants, implementation of the scheme has been kept in abeyance.

Gramdan and Bhoodan Movement : Acharyya Vinoba Bhave made the historic *padyatra* in the undivided Lakhimpur district during the

period from 1959-60 and with it the movement also gained momentum. The Assam Gramdan Act 1962 has been enforced with effect from 10.3.62. The field work is done by a non-official agency under the Sarvodaya Mandal. These workers collect declarations from individuals in prescribed forms and thereafter the Sub Deputy Collector gives wide publicity directing the persons interested in lands to file objections. The officer then hears objections and makes necessary enquiries about the exact location of the lands and the identity of the person who makes the declaration. If the prescribed number of persons in a village makes such declarations the village is declared as a Gramdan village and a notification to that effect is published in the official gazette. In a Gramdan village all lands belong to the Gram Sabha which is formed by all the adults of the village. It is the responsibility of the Gram Sabha to manage the lands. According to report received from the Assam Sarvodaya Mandal there were IIII Gramdani villages including 167 registered Gramdani villages in the undivided Lakhimpur district in 1971.

The Assam Bhoodan Act, 1965 has been enforced with effect from 22.8.66. This Act envisages taking formal recognition of donation of land by any individual. The State Bhoodan Board has been constituted under this Act to distribute lands vested in the Board.

Other Sources of Revenue :—

Excise Revenue :— The Superintendent of Excise, Dibrugarh and the Deputy Superintendent of Excise, North Lakhimpur are responsible for collection of excise revenue which is steadily increasing during the last two decades. There were 45 country spirit shops, and 14 foreign liquor shops in the undivided Lakhimpur district in addition to two whole-sale liquor shops in 1971. The excise revenue is derived mostly from settlement of liquor shops, usualy called *mahals*. The following statement shows the excise revenue of undivided Lakhmipur district.

Year		Revenue (In Rupees)
1951-52	..	45,27,032.
1952-53	..	46,33,960.
1953-54	..	47,39,614.
1954-55	..	63,07,435.
1955-56	..	77,11,736.
1956-57	..	71,34,208.
1957-58	..	80,91,021.
1958-59	..	70,00,911.
1960-61	..	77,03,980.
1961-62	..	82,20,782
1962-63	..	90,58,229.
1963-64	..	82,02,372.
1967-68	..	1,13,56,880.

Year		Revenue (In Rupees)
1968-69	..	1,66,76,417.
1969-70	..	1,00,27,682.
1970-71	..	62,74,313. (upto Nov. 1970).

Registration receipts : The Additional Deputy Commissioner of a district is the ex-officio District Registrar. Actual registration is done by sub Registrars posted at Dibrugarh, and North Lakhimpur. Under the Indian Registration Act, registration of certain documents is compulsory. Documents which fulfill the prescribed requirements and for which required stamp duty and registration fees are paid are registered. The sub-Registrar, maintains a record of all the registered documents and copies of such records are supplied to persons on payment of required fees and on furnishing sufficient stamps. The following table shows the registration receipts of the undivided Lakhimpur district.

Year		Regitration Receipt (in Rs.)
1951	—	18,838.00
1952	—	20,228.00
1953	—	25,008.00
1954	—	25,147.00
1955	—	23,403.00
1956	—	41,664.00
1957	—	36,042.00
1958	—	54,107.00
1959	—	49,196.00
1960	—	54,700.00
1965-66	—	70,250.53
1966-67	—	76,509.48
1967-68	—	106,512.05
1968-69	—	80,647.65
1969-70	—	88,173.89

Miscellaneous Taxes : The Department of Taxation of the Government of Assam is responsible for collection of taxes levied or assessed under the following Acts : (1) Assam Sales Tax Act, (2) Assam Professional Tax Act, (3) Assam Passengers and Goods Tax Act, (4) Assam Amusement and Betting Tax Act, (5) Assam Finance Act, and (6) Central Sales Tax Act. The Department also collects the Carriage Tax, Assam Electricity Tax, taxes on Urban Immovable Property and taxes on Sales of Mineral Oil. For the purpose of collection of the taxes there are Superintendents of Taxes in each district. They are assisted by a number of Inspectors. There were in 1971, three Superintendents of Taxes at Dibrugarh, one at Tinsukia and one at North Lakhimpur.

Table No. 1 shows the collection of taxes as a whole for the period 1950-51 to 1966-67 and the table Nos. 2(a), 2(b) and 2(c) show the Zone wise collection of taxes for the period 1966-67 to 1969-70, by the Taxation Department in the undivided Lakhimpur district.

TABLE NO. I.

Year	Heads of Revenue.				
	Assam Sales Tax. in Rs.	Assam Amusement & Betting Tax. in Rs.	Motorspirit & Lubricant Tax. in Rs.	Professional Tax. in Rs.	Agri Income Tax in Rs.
1950-51	13,23,536	2,80,324	6,17,312	79,849	25,86,687
1951-52	19,23,778	3,73,733	7,28,887	84,791	38,87,760
1952-53	21,98,623	4,05,105	8,76,861	85,386	37,88,790
1953-54	22,53,332	3,74,753	8,80,616	94,772	55,44,640
1954-55	27,84,928	4,19,375	9,63,810	1,67,310	54,23,344
1955-56	31,85,427	5,75,108	11,36,348	3,36,699	71,10,989
1956-57	39,82,667	6,24,833	18,58,319	3,00,494	81,48,409
1957-58	41,29,464	6,03,055	21,41,430	3,23,841	1,26,32,637
1958-59	42,72,906	6,59,326	28,69,011	3,05,675	1,54,14,083
1959-60	48,84,212	6,60,679	32,49,092	2,99,961	93,19,472
1960-61	50,84,958	7,28,754	28,04,740	3,30,792	N.A.
1961-62	51,54,962	8,04,781	1,10,24,360	3,41,780	1,59,78,670
1962-63	54,17,550	8,62,218	1,74,47,134	3,46,347	1,49,52,729
1963-64	33,56,521	8,72,314	2,20,26,444	3,97,885	2,33,98,519
1964-65	34,42,584	9,60,664	2,11,03,818	4,15,956	1,92,77,602
1965-66	45,63,485	9,77,330	2,95,66,229	4,48,890,11	75,60,005
1966-67	42,04,718	9,74,892	3,09,62,451	48,469	N.A.

Table 2 (a)

Tinsukia Zone

Heads of Revenue	Amount Collected (in Rupees) during			
	1966-67	1967-68	1968-69	1969-70
Assam Sales Tax.	27,51,630.16	27,57,752.16	33,21,467.50	25,12,371.05
Assam Finance Tax	20,41,902.08	34,95,654.42	37,10,946.26	37,88,380.28
Central Sales Tax.	14,00,246.13	92,76,32.91	8,33,011.04	8,30,858.39
Assam Professional Tax.	3,41,813.00	3,50,899.00	4,05,225.00	33,21.3642.55
Assam Passengers and Goods Tax.	1,57,704.24	1,86,968.47	1,88,210.04	4,26,941.55
Urban Immovable Property Tax.	48,054.14	65,188.03	36,899.98	7,89,481.60
Assam Electricity Tax.	3,69,859.47	6,49,851.02	5,90,774.19	1,34,983.21
Carriage Tax.	743.25	Nil	1,32,556.70	7,86,527.68
Sales of Petroleum etc. Tax	3,09,59,002.16	3,11,48,575.42	3,25,13,301.62	4,66,516.75
Assam Amusement and Betting Tax.	5,54,792.97	6,37,505.18	7,76,971.28	N.A.

Table 2 (b) North Lakhimpur Zone

Heads of Revenue	Amount collected (in Rupees)			
	1966-67	1967-68	1968-69	1969-70
Assam Sales Tax	2,32,920.69	204415.46	199,300.37	1,68,338.64
Assam Finance Tax.	1,63,807.21	2,4479.58	26,747.46	2,38,915.20
Central Sales Tax.	2,930.57	1630.51	19502.88	24,592.10
Assam Professional Tax.	34,769.00	32991.00	34085.00	83.59
Assam Passengers and Goods Tax	59,433.02	56,095.38	54989.55	36,494.00
Urban Immovable Property Tax.	7,927.18	7043.69	6494.75	1,46,245.88
Assam Electricity Tax.	7,201.74	5616.93	6088.53	44,696.61
Carriage Tax	4,988.76	Nil	Nil	3,004.07
Sales of Petroleum etc. Tax	995.89	1334.32	164.96	36,428.85
Assam Amusement and Betting Tax.	71633.86	1109953.34	120049.92	1446.72

Table 2 (c)

Dibrugarh Zone

Heads of Revenue	Amount collected (in Rupees) during		
	1966-67	1967-68	1968-69
Assam Sales Tax.	12,20,167.40	10,71,722.48	8,93,966.56
Assam Finance Tax	26,17,443.67	26,25,016.74	25,70,786.42
Central Sales Tax	1,06,825.65	1,47,533.36	1,39,127.83
Assam Professional Tax	1,08,097.00	1,14,969.00	1,39,129.00
Assam Passengers and Goods Tax.	1,36,087.14	1,71,034.09	1,66,861.74
Urban Immovable Property Tax.	20,737.78	14,953.75	13,815.60
Assam Electricity Tax.	62,732.02	93,259.88	75,086.32
Carriage Tax.	Nil	Nil	58,237.00
Sales of Petroleum etc. Tax	2,453.91	5,668.01	3,057.59
Assam Amusement and Betting Tax.	3,48,465.37	3,56,835.13	3,26,886.23

Motor Vehicle Tax and Fees : With the steady increase in the number of motor vehicles, there has been a rapid rise of the revenue derived from taxes and fees on motor vehicles. There are two District Transport Officers at Dibrugarh and North Lakhimpur. It is their primary responsibility to collect these taxes and fees and to ensure that no motor vehicle is plied without payment of dues. Each District Transport Officer is assisted by Motor Vehicle Inspectors and some members of the Enforcement Branch. The District Transport Officer issues driving licences, registration certificates, road permits and maintains records of all vehicles plying in that district. The following table shows the total amount of receipts under the heads Motor Vehicle Fees for the undivided Lakhimpur district.

Year	Amount of Motor Vehicle Tax.	Amount of Motor Vehicle Fees.
	Rs.	Rs.
1960-61	12,55,676.76	79,741.50
1961-62	14,29,825.83	75,369.17
1962-63	15,63,678.18	90,169.00
1966-67	28,22,299.00	Not available
1967-68	29,22,811.17	,,
1968-69	30,00,591.84	,,
1969-70	30,52,256.00	,,

Income Tax : For the purpose of Income Tax administration the present Lakhimpur district is tagged with Tezpur in Darrang district. The Dibrugarh district is divided into three units-Dibrugarh, Tinsukia and Digboi. There are ten Income Tax Officers at Dibrugarh, two at Tinsukia and one at Digboi. The Income Tax Officers are assisted by Inspectors. There are eight Income Tax Inspectors at Dibrugarh, two at Tinsukia and one at Digboi.

Besides these officers there are three Assistant Commissioners of Income Tax at Dibrugarh. One of these officers is the Inspecting Officer, while the other two hear appeals. The jurisdiction of the Inspecting Assistant Commissioner extends over Lakhimpur, Sibsagar and Mikir Hills districts of Assam, in addition to the entire State of Nagaland. The jurisdiction of the Assistant Appellate Commissioner is confined to the Dibrugarh and Lakhimpur districts only. The Income Tax Officers also function as Gift Tax and Wealth Tax Officers. One of the Income Tax Officers posted at Dibrugarh is the Tax Recovery Officer. The following statement shows the amount of Income Tax and other taxes collected by the Income Tax authorities at Dibrugarh, Tinsukia and Digboi.

Name of the Units	Year	Income Tax		Wealth Tax		Gift Tax	
		Collection (in Rupees)	No. of assessees	Collection (in Rupees)	No. of assessees	Collection (in Rupees)	No. of assessees
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Dibrugarh	1968-69	85,41,000	7,758	1,85,000	228	18,000	10
	1969-70	92,41,000	9,308	1,41,000	227	17,000	28
	1970-71	47,70,000	10,194	2,28,000	490	87,000	17
Digboi	1968-69	18,23,000	5,552	11,000	112	1,000	7
	1969-70	12,01,000	4,849	21,000	110	2,000	5
	1970-71	12,85,000	5,685	17,000	201	8,000	20
Tinsukia	1968-69	42,85,000	5,900	76,000	116	20,000	28
	1969-70	12,82,000	6,066	51,000	160	4,000	28
	1970-71	22,48,000	6,033	188,000	144	3,000	6

Estate Duty : There is one Assistant Controller of Estate Duty cum Income Tax Officer at Dibrugarh whose jurisdiction extends over the entire States of Assam, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur and Tripura. He is assisted by two Inspectors, one of whom is posted at Dibrugarh. The following statement shows the total number of cases and the amount collected by the Estate Duty Officer at Dibrugarh.

Year	No. of Cases		Collection
	Disposed	Pending	Rs.
1968-69	109	35	4,96,000.
1969-70	17	69	4,82,000.
1970-71	115	64	4,94,000.

Central Excise : The office of the Assistant Collector of Customs and Central Excise is located at Dibrugarh. For administration of Central Excise the present Lakhimpur district is attached to Tezpur. In Dibrugarh district there are three Superintendents of Central Excise at Dibrugarh, Tinsukia and Digboi. These officers are assisted by Inspectors. The department collects taxes on mineral oil, tea, paints, varnish, tobacco, sodium silicate, acid, resin, plywood, battery, steel furniture, fertilizer and biscuits. This department has a net work of offices in the important tea gardens. For the purpose of collection of central excise the undivided Lakhimpur district was divided into two circles—Dibrugarh and Tinsukia. The following statement shows the taxes collected by the Department.

Year		Taxes collected Rs.
1964-65		21,19,88,000.
1965-66	—	17,41,24,000.
1966-67	—	19,75,03,000.
1967-68	—	23,31,58,000.
1968-69	—	23,52,30,000.

APPENDIX—A.

List of Fisheries

	Annual rental for the years (in Rupees)		
Dibrugarh Sub-division	**1964-65**	**1968-69**	**1970-71**
1. Dibru River, Part-II	42,551.	50,000.	60,000.
2. Bhakat Dadhikur Badulikur	1,351.	1,521.	1,050.
3. Brahmaputra III, Part-V.	37,400.	45,000.	73,200.
4. Dihing, Part-III	11,100.	13,320.	15,984.

5. Dihing, Part-II	6,101.	6,779.	3,130.
6. Dihing, Part-I	15,500.	17,250.	20,700.
7. Sessa River	26,275.	15,501.	18,601.
8. Lorua *bil*	6,300.	11,500.	14,000.
9. Chapara *bil*	3,500.	1,517.	2,955.
10. Romai *bil*	1,200.	2,200.	1,651.
11. Kowaimari *bil*	6,505.	10,000.	4,321.
12. Disangjan	5,750.	7,000.	7,509.
13. Borbil	6,500.	4,032.	8,755.
14. Dimow River	2,100.	1,942.	5,555.
15. Mernaghnakhana	3,700.	9,990.	11,988.
16. Hakai *bil*	2,000.	3,000.	3,650.
17. Alichiga Burajan	1,100.	1,350.	3,375.
18. Dangiri, Part-II	2,150.	4,251.	6,121.
19. Chabrojan	1,800.	1,400.	10,000.
20. Genna	8,000.	8,100.	1,200.
21. Tingrai	12,000.	15,251.	14,000.
Tinsukia Sub-division.			
1. Saikhowa *bil*	5,859.	10,106.	10,368.
2. Brahmaputra, Part-I	9,525.75	16,000.	19,201.
3. Pawai *bil*	N.A.	N.A.	1,020.
4. Dhola *bil*	1,050.	1,200.	2,225.
5. Dirak *bil*	2,675.29	6,151.	7,381.
6. Sat *bil*	8,000.	13,551.	8,000.
7. Dihing, Part-IV	2,500.	3,750.	4,500.
8. Dibru River, Part-I	1,251.	8,800.	10,560.
9. Dangri River, Part-I	3,551.	7,000.	8,400.
10. Tingrai River	12,000.	15,251.	14,000.
11. Tipling-Digboi	4,600.	3,351.	2,551.
12. Brahmaputra, Part-II	5,051.	6,500.	7,800.
13. Kerua Ladhar Jan	3,201.	12,000.	14,400.
14. Dibang River	3,252.	2,629.	2,225.
Dhemaji Sub-division.			
1. Batua	800.	1,000.	3,600.
2. Botumajan	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
3. Barbil (Sissi)	1,055.	N.A.	N.A.
4. Kirmijan	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
5. Sissi River	34,100.	41,100.	49,200.
6. Buri-Suti, Part-I	26,730.	32,250.	N.A.
7. Pabhomari	2,821.	2,800.	3,101.
8. Jonai River	10,000.	13,000.	13,255.
9. Upper Buri-Suti	1,775.	1,225.	N.A.
10. Ramdhun	9,321.	11,100.	18,205.

CHAPTER—XII.

LAW ORDER AND JUSTICE.

(a) Incidence of crimes in the district :

Ahom period : During the Ahom period administration of justice was an important function of the king and his governors. It was considered to be the sacred duty of the king to protect his subjects and to give them security of life, property and belief. The following instructions given to the king at the time of coronation give an idea of the duty of the king in the administration of criminal justice. "Cherish and protect your subjects as your own children. Employ secret emissaries to ascertain their condition. Bring capital criminals to condign punishment.....Exterminate traitors root and branch. Let not might prevail over right ; and let the strong who oppress the weak be punished. Let thieves and robbers be diligently searched out : thus shall your country be benefited by increased security."[1]

The administration of criminal justice was characterised by sternness that often verged on brutal torture. The principle "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" was followed to the extent of inflicting precisely the same injury on the perpetrator as that suffered by the victim of the crime. Punishment for rebellion was very severe varying from flaying alive ; empaling, hanging, cutting throats, grinding between two wooden cylinders, sawing and applying burning hoes to different parts until death. Capital punishment extended to the whole family of the rebel including parents, brothers, sisters, wives and children.

Francis Hamilton who visited Assam in 1807-1809 has observed as follows "Except the gang from Bengal, there are few robbers and atrocious house-breakers or pirates. Such persons are punished in a summary manner by thrusting out their eyes, or by cutting off knee-pans. .....Petty thefts are very common and are punished by whipping or by cutting off the nose or ears. The first punishment may be inflicted by any considerable officer, such as a *Raja* or *Phukan ;* but the two latter can only be inflicted by the Chief Judge of the district."[2]

Inspite of the severity of punishment rebellion could not be completely eliminated as is evident from various uprisings against the Ahom Kings. The condition was almost anarchical at the time of the advent of the British. This has been described in the old Gazetter as follows : "The condition in which we found the country was lamentable in the extreme. For fully fifty years, the province has been given over to desolation

1. S. K. Bhuyan—Atan Buragohain and His Times, pp. 13-14.
2. Francis Hamilton— *An Account of Assam*, 1963. p. 50

and anarchy. Life, property, honour were no longer safe, and the people in their misery had even abandoned the cultivation of the soil, on which they depended for their very livelihood.....The hill tribes were no longer kept in order, and the Daflas descended and harried the submontane tracts, and even extended their depredations to the south of the Brahmaputra."[3]

British period : With the consolidation of the British rule in Upper Assam the anarchical condition was brought to an end and normalcy was gradually restored. In time, courts, both civil and criminal were constituted at Dibrugarh and North Lakhimpur as also in the Transferred Areas. Records were properly maintained.

With the constitution of Magisterial courts at Dibrugarh and North Lakhimpur regular trials were held at both these stations. The crime position of Lakhimpur district in 1902 has been described by B. C. Allen as follows : "Altogether there were 1,294 cases under the Penal Code returned as true, the immense majority of which were either offences against property or the human body. Of recent years the number of cases of murder and culpable homicide in Lakhimpur has been unusually large. In the ten years ending with 1899, the average was 9 per annum, and in 1897 there were 19 and in 1900, 18 cases of this the most serious of all crimes. The total number of lives sacrificed is, perhaps, not very large, but in proportion to the population of the district it is most excessive. In 1897, there was one true case of murder or culpable homicide for every 19,000 people. In the province of Bengal in 1901 the proportion was one for every 134,000 people. Judged by the far from satisfactory test of the value of the property reported to be stolen, Lakhimpur is well up to the provincial standard for theft and burglary, and if anything a little in advance of it. The average value of the property annually stolen during the ten years ending with 1899, was about Rs. 20,000/-"[4]

Since Independence : In 1948 there were seven stipendary Magistrates, one Honorary Magistrate besides the Additional District Magistrate and the District Magistrate in the undivided Lakhimpur district. 4106 cases under the Indian Penal Code and 347 cases under miscelleneous Acts were pending for disposal in these courts at the end of the year, and the total receipts of these courts amounted to Rs. 80,252/-. The following table shows the number of cases, in which charge sheets were submitted by police after investigation during the period from 1944-48.[5]

3. B. C. Allen ; *Assam District Gazetteers, Lakhimpur*, (1905), p. 46.
4. Ibid, p.270.
5. *Statistical Abstract of Assam*, 1951 ; Department of Economics and Statistics, Assam, Shillong. p- 79.

	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948
1. Rioting or unlawful assembly.	27	30	29	48	29
2. Other offences against the State, public tranquility, etc.	23	72	40	20	16
3. Murder, attempt at murder, culpable homicide, dacoity with murder etc.	57	58	54	55	56
4. Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapons.	193	204	248	238	235
5. Serious Criminal force.	13	20	22	24	21
6. Other serious offences against the person.	45	49	44	43	31
7. Robbery and dacoity.	17	9	22	26	21
8. Serious mischief including mis chief by killing, poisoning or maiming any animal.	52	49	52	35	65
9. House breaking and serious house trespass.	299	317	568	594	837
10. Wrongful restraint and wrongful confinement.	19	15	7	10	19
11. Theft.	673	639	747	1251	1116
12. Receiving stolen property.	33	67	58	129	120
13. Lurking and criminal house trespass.	39	51	50	44	91
14. Total	1485	1584	1941	2517	2657

The tremendous progress which the district has made in the field of industry has brought in its wake an element of heterogeneity in the total population of the district. The old social order has changed. The disputes which were settled amicably by the village elders in the past are very often referred to courts at present. The pressure on land from the growing population has gradually become more acute. These and many other factors have an unmistakable impact on the crime position of the district.

The following two tables A & B indicate the incidence of crimes in the undivided district of Lakhimpur since 1949.[6]

6. Statistical Abstract of Assam, 1958. p. 306, Statistical Handbook of Assam, 1961. pp. 123-125, and Statistical Handbook of Assam 1971. pp. 120-121.

TABLE—(A)

Incidence of crimes (Principal Police offences) Since 1949 to 1957

Varieties of crimes	Year								
	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957
1. Rioting or unlawful Assembly.	37	77	61	57	78	51	78	70	127
2. Other offences against the State, Public tranquility, etc.	12	10	11	3	9	8	8	7	9
3. Murder, attempt at murder, culpable homicide and murder by dacoity.	72	71	63	103	104	62	99	120	68
4. Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapons.	192	129	109	207	263	185	208	306	320
5. Serious criminal force.	15	13	17	24	24	20	32	26	28
6. Other serious offences against the person.	68	59	61	75	110	94	96	102	114
7. Robbery and dacoity.	41	50	42	64	51	47	45	59	39
8. Serious mischief including mischief by killing, poisoning or maiming any cattle.	67	109	73	82	93	73	46	69	86
9. House breaking and serious house-trespass.	893	809	830	1026	935	663	644	851	787
10. Wrongful restraint and confinement.	18	13	17	14	17	13	20	35	39
11. Theft including cattle theft.	1178	89	1053	1067	1062	802	810	1017	959
12. Receiving stolen property.	107	42	65	54	66	41	18	26	49
13. Lurking and criminal house-trespass.	49	58	38	69	69	49	65	135	201
14. Total.	2749	1529	2500	2845	2881	2108	2169	2833	2826

TABLE—(B)

Incidence of crimes ; (Principal Police offences).
Since 1959 to 1970

Year	Offences against the State & Public tranquility		Murder		Other serious offences against the person.		Dacoity		Cattle theft.		Ordinary theft.		House-trespass & House breaking with intention to commit offence.		Total	
	Number		Number		Number		Number		Number		Number		Number		Number	
	Reported.	Convicted	Reported.	Convicted.	Reported.	Convicted.	Reported.	Convicted.	Reported.	Convicted.	Reported.	Convicted.	Reported.	Convicted.	Reported.	Convicted.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1959	—	—	65	45	736	166	24	9	52	16	1017	170	714	114	2608	519
1962	108	23	109	38	833	165	27	5	46	18	831	183	555	92	2509	524
1966	359	14	91	39	801	82	23	4	56	12	1177	122	476	59	2983	332
1967	245	10	117	23	711	86	21	2	77	17	1082	133	562	76	2815	347
1968	274	23	87	30	699	84	29	1	64	24	1045	130	466	74	2664	366
1970	281	21	90	44	952	136	12	1	52	22	989	138	470	74	2846	436

Varieties of crimes and their relative importance : From the three tables of crimes given above, it is evident that incidence of crimes in the undivided district of Lakhimpur is on the increase since 1947 and the most common crimes in recent years are theft, house-trespass or house-breaking with intention to commit offences and serious offences against the persons. These alone constitute more than three-fourths of the total principal police offences in the district. Next come offences against the State and public tranquility, murder, dacoity and cattle theft. However, these figures do not fully reflect the crime position of the district as these figures are only of the principal Police offences. Beside the offences described above, cases of forgery, cheating, criminal trespass, receiving stolen property, defamation, criminal intimidation are also registered. Prosecution is launched under various special Acts such as the Foreigners Act, the Motor Vehicles Act, the Assam Excise Act, the Assam Ganja and Bhang Prohibition Act, Essential Commodities Act and orders promulgated thereunder. The crime picture of the district is a conglomeration of a wide variety of cases under numerous Acts. Thus, in 1959, the total number of cases taken up for trial in the criminal courts of the district was 7,782 out of which 3,025 were pending from previous years and the rest were instituted during that year. During 1956-57, the offences in the entire State of Assam under special and local laws constituted about a half of the total number of offences. A similar picture emerges in the district of Lakhimpur as well. In 1959, the value of property stolen amounted to Rs. 2,84,373/- out of which property worth Rs. 59,089/- was recovered.

Offences under the Motor Vehicles Act and the Excise Laws formed a large share of the total number of cases under special Acts and Local Laws. The incidence of offences under the Motor Vehicles Act has assumed an upward trend with the increase in the number of vehicles in the district. The statement below indicates the cases registered under various Excise Acts.

Item	1961-62	1962-63
Opium	232	379
Ganja	216	181
Bhang	109	143

In the last few years the number of cases detected by the Excise Department of the State Government has increased several times as

indicated below.

1963-64	..	6735 cases.
1964-65	..	8375 cases.
1965-66	..	7898 cases.
1966-67	..	6791 cases.
1967-68	..	6812 cases.
1968-69	..	8165 cases.
1969-70	..	7896 cases.

Reference was made in the old Gazetteer of Lakhimpur to border raids made by tribes such as the Daflas, Abors, Mishmis, Singphos etc. A chain of outposts were opened along the frontier and these were guarded by the military police battalion of the district. Raids by the hill men on the plains took place in early part of the British administration in Assam. With the gradual expansion of administrative control over the hills border raids became a thing of the past.

(b) Organisation of the Police Force :

Historical background : Francis Hamilton has observed that "the officers under whom the *Payiks* or servants of the crown are placed, the persons (*Chaudhuris*) who farm the revenue of the lands which are let for rent ; and every one who has received free lands have charge of the police within the bounds which their people cultivate ; they also settle small disputes that arise among their dependants, and all assume the right of whipping, but this seems illegal. The power of inflicting punishment is reserved for the principal officers and Rajas ; and in all civil cases, except in the men granted to the three great counsellors of state, there is an appeal to the three provincial courts in which the Bara Boruya, the Bara Phukon, and the Sadiya Khaoya Gohain preside. These have full jurisdiction in all cases, civil and criminal, and without reference to the royal authority, may inflict punishment short of death ; but no person is put to death without an order from the king, and that order is always communicated in writing, and procured by a written account of the proceedings having been submitted to the royal consideration. In such cases the trial is carried on openly and the chief judge or governor of the province seems never to condemn without the concurrence of his assessors, who in Kamrup are six Phukons so that unfair trials are not usual ; but it is alleged, that the guilty, who can bribe, are often allowed to escape with impunity, while the punishments inflicted on the guilty poor are exceedingly severe. In fact the possession of jurisdiction in police, and in civil and criminal law, without any salary or regular fees, is considered as a valuable and productive authority."[7] Such was the picture when he visited Assam in

7. Francis Hamilton—*An Account of Assam*, p. 49.

1807-09. The police force of the present day is, however a legacy of the British administration. To protect the lives and properties of the people in the interior, the police force was raised in Assam by the British administrators even before 1857. This has been described by H. K. Barpujari as follows—"The *thana*, the unit of the organisation was in charge of a *Thanadar*, or the *Daroga*, who was empowered to arrest suspected persons, to detain them and even to hold preliminary trials before sending them to the headquarters. He was aided in his duties by one *Jamadar*, one or more *Muharres* and a few constables or *Barkandazes*. There were no village watchmen or *Chowkidars* as in other provinces, but the *Choudhuries*, the *Patgiris* and the *Mauzadars* were expected to assist the *Daroga* in the detection and apprehension of criiminals. The *thana* of Dhakuakhana in the district of Lakhimpur with a *Daroga* and six *Barkandazes* had jurisdiction over Sisi, Dhemaji and all the Villages from the river Subansiri to the mouth of the Buridihing and from the northern hills to the Lohit. In a country of jungles and marshes where mobility was exceedingly slow, this extensive jurisdiction together with an inadequate staff rendered the police utterly inefficient. The usual emolument received by a *Daroga* hardly exceeded rupees twenty, with which he was expected to meet both ends. This was certainly too inadequate a remuneration with which to demand of him honesty, discipline and efficiency. Far from the control of the higher authorities and vested with the powers of the Judge, the Police officials of the age had become a byword of reproach for extortion and oppression.[8]

There was much improvement in the strength of the police force at the beginning of the twentieth century. We find in the old Gazetteer of Lakhimpur district that in 1900-01, there were three police stations in Dibrugarh Sub-division and one in North Lakhimpur Sub-division. There were five police outposts in Dibrugarh Sub-division and one in North Lakhimpur. The position is shown below.[9]

Name of the Police Station or outpost	Sectional strength			
	Sub-Inspectors	Head constables	Constables	Total
1	2	3	4	5
Dibrugarh Sub-division				
Dhemaji Outpost	—	1	4	5
Dibrugarh P.S.	3	1	16	20
Doom-Dooma P.S.	2	—	10	12
Joypore Outpost	1	—	5	6
Margherita outpost	1	—	5	6
Moran outpost	1	—	3	4
Sadiya outpost	—	1	10	11
Tinsukia P.S.	2	—	10	12
North Lakhimpur Sub-division				
Dhakuakhana Outpost	1	—	7	8
North Lakhimpur P.S.	2	—	10	12

8. H. K. Barpujari—*Assam in the days of the Company*, p. 195.
9. B. C. Allen—*Assam District Gazetteers, Lakhimpur*, 1905, Appendix—Table XX.

Besides this force, there were some more force in the headquarters. The sanctioned strength of the headquarters consisted of 2 Inspectors, 18 Sub-Inspectors and 163 constables. The entire civil force was in charge of a District or Assistant Superintendent of Police. Forty smooth Bore Martinis were allotted to Lakhimpur district and a reserve of men was kept in the district and Subdivisional headquarters who were armed with those weapons and were employed on guard and escort duty. The District Police force constituted largely of non-Assamese people. Rural police was not employed. In addition to the regular duties in connection with prevention and detection of crime, police was required to check the returns of vital statistics, manage pounds, enquire into the cases of unnatural deaths, furnish guards and escorts and serve all processes in warrant cases. By this time the *Daroga* was divested of his powers to try minor cases.

Since Independence : The Police department has witnessed phenomenal expansion after Independence and specialised wings have been opened to bring about improvement in the field of scientific investigation, communication, prevention and control of hazards, modernization of training methods, prevention and detection of corrupt practices, collection of local intelligence etc. The number of police stations and outposts has been increased and the staff position augmented. Besides extending telephone connections to most of these police stations, the Assam Police Radio Organisation has also been expanded in order to facilitate quick dissemination of information from remote areas. The Fire Service Organisation has been set up under the Police Department since 1955. The services of this wing are available in the district and the sub-divisional head-quarters. During the post-Independence period, there has been marked improvement in the residential, recreational and other amenities besides substantial rise in salaries. The following table shows increase in the number of Police Stations, Outposts and Patrol Posts.[10]

Year	No.of Police Stations	No. of Out Posts	No. of Patrol Posts	Total
1	2	3	4	5
1959	15	7	N.A.	22
1963	16	12	,,	28
1968	16	13	,,	29
1971*	16	16	14	46

Due to the rapid increase of population and to maintain proper law and order some of the old Outposts have been converted into Police Stations and more Outposts and Patrol posts have been opened in the newly developed areas of the district. The sanctioned strength of the district Police force is given below.[11]

10. *Statistical Handbook of Assam*, 1961, and 1968.
*Superintendent of Police, Lakhimpur.
11. *District Statistical Abstract*, 1963.

Year	No. of S. Ps.	No. of Addl. S. Ps.	No. of Asstt. S. Ps.	No. of D. S. Ps.	No. of Inspectors	No. of S. Is.	No. of A. S. Is.	No. of Constables	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1957-58	1	1	Nil	2	7	50	122	735	908
1960-61	1	1	1	2	7	57	126	840	1035
1971-72	1	1	Nil	4	13	83	102	1300	1504

In addition to the above, according to the Superintendent of Police Lakhimpur, there were in 1971, 19 Head Constables, 46 *Havilders* in the armed branch, 1 Traffic Sergeant and 25 Driver Constables in Lakhimpur district. The above figures, however, indicate the strength of Officers and men of the Police Department of the undivided Lakhimpur district. After bifurcation of the old Lakhimpur district on 2nd October 1971, the position of the Police force in the two districts has undergone some changes both numerically and structurally.

In Dibrugarh district, the Superintendent of Police is assisted by one Additional Superintendent of Police, three Deputy Superintendents of Police, including one Sub-divisional Police officer at Tinsukia, 9 Inspectors of Police and a number of Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors and Constables.

Similarly after the bifurcation of the district in October, 1971, a new post of Superintendent of Police was created for the new Lakhimpur district. The Superintendent of Police whose headquarters are at North Lakhimpur is assisted by two Deputy Superintendents of Police, one of whom is posted at Dhemaji and the other at North Lakhimpur. Besides these officers, the district police force comprised four Inspectors, 25 Sub-Inspectors, 24 Assistant Sub-Inspectors and 395 Constables in 1972. The District Special Branch staff includes one Deputy Superintendent of Police, 4 Inspectors, seven Sub-Inspectors, five Assistant Sub-Inspectors and 13 Constables.

The Sub-divisional Police Officers are the heads of the subdivisional Police force. They are under the control of the respective Superintendents of Police.

The Circle Inspectors are required to supervise the works in the Police Stations within their jurisdictions under the control of the Deputy Superintendent of Police in charge of the Sub-division. The Police Stations are in charge of Sub-Inspectors of Police who are invested with full powers of investigation, and arrest of suspects of cognizable offences, habitual offenders and deserters from the army. The Sub-Inspector in charge of a Police Station is assisted by one or two Sub-Inspectors, a few Assistant Sub-Inspectors, one head constable and a number of constables posted in the *thana*. The Sub-Inspector in charge of a police station is also required to supervise the works in the outposts within his jurisdiction. Besides the force kept in the *thanas* a reserve force is also maintained at district headquarters and is utilized to supplement or replace the force kept in *thanas*. The posts of Inspectors and above are gazetted and the rest are non-gazetted. The constables, Assistant Sub-Inspectors of Police, Sub-Inspectors of Police and the Deputy

Superintendent of Police are directly recruited ; but facilities exist for promotion of officers of each rank to the next higher post.

State Fire Service Organisation : During the Second World War, Fire Brigades were opened in almost all the important towns in Assam under the Civil Defence Organisation. On cessation of hostilities the equipment brought for this purpose was disposed of and the organisation was disbanded. The Organisation was revitalised in the early fifties. The Government of Assam sanctioned the establishment of the Fire Station at Dibrugarh and Sub-Fire Station at Tinsukia in 1958-59. One Fire Service Adviser of the rank of the Superintendent of Police was appointed to run the State Organisation. Subsequently the scheme was extended to include all the Sub-divisional towns including Dibrugarh and North Lakhimpur.

Assam Police Radio Organisation : In 1946 nine Wireless Stations were installed in the district headquarters of Assam. The net work of the Assam Police Radio Organisation has since been extended to all the district and sub-divisional headquarters besides some important *thanas* of the districts. The Organisation has achieved conspicuous success in quick dissemination of information particularly under emergent situations.

The Village Defence Organisation : This Organisation was first started in 1950 in the district of Sibsagar. Subsequently other districts were included in this scheme. Prior to 1953 it was a non-official organisation, but subsequently this was brought under official control as an auxiliary force. This organisation is subsidised by the Government and its object is to assist the authorities in maintaining order, peace and tranquility in the villages. Each Village Defence Party is provided with one lantern, one torch light, one whistle, five blankets and five umbrellas. The party also receives an amount of Rs. 60. per annum. The Village Defence Party executes patrol duty at night within the limits of the particular village. It has emerged as a powerful organisation in the prevention and detection of crimes. In 1971, there were 476 registered village Defence Parties in the undivided Lakhimpur district out of which 246 were registered during 1970-71. They function under the control and supervision of the Superintendent of Police who is the District Village Defence Officer and the Secretary of the District Village Defence Organisation.

Railway Police : This is a branch of the State Police Organisation. The Superintendent of Railway Police is the head of the Railway Police and he works directly under the Inspector General of Police. There are two Railway Police Stations in the Dibrugarh district, one at Dibrugarh and the other at Tinsukia. One Inspector of Police whose

headquarters are at Tinsukia is in charge of the Railway Police of this district. The function of the Railway Police is prevention and detection of crime within the railway area. This organisation is required to keep watch over movements of suspicious characters travelling by or operating on the trains and to keep watch over inter-State criminals. It is entrusted with the task of maintenance of order at Railway Stations. The Railway Police also assists and collaborates with the District Police of the State in the investigation of crimes.

The State Railway Police is not required to perform watch and ward duties for which the Railway Ministry has its own force known as the Railway Protection Force which provides escorts to treasures, goods trains etc.

The Anti-corruption Branch : This was first started in 1946. This branch is mainly concerned with detection of corrupt practices among the State Govenrment employees. The headquarters of the eastern Zone of this branch is located at Dibrugarh where there is a Deputy Superintendent of Police attached to the Anti-corruption branch. There are two other Zones in Assam. The Organisation functions directly under the control of the Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam. Other staff of the Anti-Corruption branch in Dibrugarh Zone includes one Inspector, two Sub-Inspectors, one Assistant Sub-Inspector and five Constables.

Home Guards : In 1948 there was a Home Guard Unit at Dibrugarh with 125 men including one Area Commandant. This Organisation ceased to function after some time. In the wake of the Chinese aggression in 1962 important towns of Assam were brought under the Civil Defence Organisation. The main function of this organisation is to impart training in Civil Defence methods. Dibrugarh and Digboi towns have been covered under this scheme, so far. There are two Deputy Controllers of Civil Defence at Dibrugarh and North Lakhimpur.

Prohibition Squad : The Superintendent of Excise is the head of the Excise force in the district subject to the general supervision of the Deputy Commissioner. The main function of this organisation is to enforce prohibition laws in the district. Prior to the bifurcation of the Lakhimpur district on the 2nd October, 1971, there were three Deputy Superintendents of Excise in the district with headquarters at Dibrugarh, North Lakhimpur and Tinsukia. They worked under the control and supervision of the Superintendent of Excise, Dibrugarh. Other staff in the undivided Lakhimpur district consisted of 27 Excise Inspectors and 25 Assistant Excise Inspectors.

Following the bifurcation of the district, no Superintendent of Excise was posted at North Lakhimpur. One Deputy Superintendent of Excise

continues to head the Excise Force in the present Lakhimpur district. In Dibrugarh district, the old post of the Superintendent of Excise has been retained. Though Excise is a separate State Government department with the Commissioner of Excise at its apex, the Superintendent of Excise as mentioned earlier is to work under the control of the Deputy Commissioner. The districts of Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh have not yet been declared dry ; but there are certain restrictions in use and sale of liquor. Other prohibited items are *opium, ganja* and *bhang*. Before the enforcement of the prohibition laws, consumption of opium was a social menace. The undivided district of Lakhimpur was badly affected from the consumption of this harmful drug. But the enforcement of the prohibition laws gradually changed the atmosphere and many opium addicts were treated and cured in the Treatment Centres. The statement below shows the number of cases detected and disposed of under various prohibition laws.

Statement of cases detected and disposed of in the undivided Lakhimpur district under prohibition laws.

Period	Opium		*Ganja*		*Bhang*	
	No. of cases detected	No. of cases disposed	No. of cases detected.	No. of cases disposed	No. of cases detected.	No. of cases disposed
1963-64	303	262	202	195	74	68
1964-65	221	191	159	150	134	134
1966-67	87	43	159	107	46	40
1967-68	158	60	235	133	72	43
1968-69	322	132	268	166	192	162
1969-70	110	84	134	111	155	116

(c) **Jails and Lock-ups** :

There were two Jails in the undivided Lakhimpur district, one at Dibrugarh and the other at North Lakhimpur. The condition of the Dibrugarh jail in 1905 has been described as follows: "The Jail at Dibrugarh differs from most of those in the Province, in that the outer wall and almost all the buildings inside are composed of solid masonry. The principal sleeping wards are three in number, and there are other small detached buildings for the reception of the sick, and under-trial, civil and female prisoners. Outside the main wall, there is on one side a large vegetable garden, and on the other an enclosure in which are situated the jail workshops. The convicts are usually employed on oil-pressing, bamboo and cane work, tailoring, weaving, carpentry and

gardening, but the receipts from manufactures are not large. Males sentenced to more than one year's imprisonment, and females with a longer sentence than a month, are transferred to Tezpur."[12]

The Dibrugarh Jail now comes under the category of first class jail. The Jail stands to the south of the Dibrugarh Court, the entire jail area now covers 11.94 acres of land. This area includes newly extended wards for prisoners, staff quarters, and vegetable gardens. There are fourteen wards in the old building having capacity to accommodate 233 prisoners. Due to overcrowding in recent years four additional wards with capacity to accommodate 134 prisoners were constructed by the side of the old jail building with a bamboo palisade around it. In 1971, the daily average of the jail population was 1032.17. Only 367 prisoners, can be accommodated in this jail.

The statement below shows the daily average number of non-criminal lunatics, convicts and under trial prisoners of the Dibrugarh district Jail from 1965 to 1969.

Year	Non-criminal lunatics.	Convicts	Undertrial Prisioners
1965	30.22	235.37	494.19
1966	34.72	242.46	550.69
1967	34.72	260.92	590.98
1968	22.35	260.05	722.10
1969	18.85	257.77	766.41

Prison Organisation : The Superintendent of Jail holds charge of the jail. He is assisted by one Jailor, 7 Assistant Jailors, 4 Head warders, 35 warders and 2 Female warders. The jailor is primarily responsible for the maintenance of prision discipline.

Boards of Visitors : There is a Board of Visitors consisting of five non-official (including one female) and also official members. The District Magistrate is the Chairman of the Board. The Board hears grievances of the prisoners and inspects all wards of the jail. The Board records the findings in the Visitor's Book and reports are communicated to the Inspector General of Prisons, Assam through the Deputy Commissioner, Dibrugarh.

Non-Criminal Lunatics (N. C. L.) : There is provision for keeping non-criminal lunatics in the jails of Assam. In 1959, the daily average of non-criminal lunatics both male and female in Dibrugarh

12. B. C. Allen, *Assam District Gazetteers, Lakhimpur*, 1905, p. 275.

jail was 18.14. They are examined by the jail doctor as well as by the Civil Surgeon and reports are communicated to the District Magistrate, Lakhimpur. After recovery the Non-Criminal Lunatics are examined by the Civil Surgeon on the basis of whose findings they are released. Violent types of lunatics are sent to the Mental Hospital at Tezpur for treatment, together with those who suffer from long spells of lunacy. The District Magistrate makes necessary arrangements for transfer of these lunatics to the Mental Hospital.

Income and expenditure of the jail : The vegetables grown in the jail garden constitute the main source of income of the jail. Products of the handicraft section of the jail are sold to local customers. The statement below shows the year-wise income, expenditure and expenditure per prisoner of Dibrugarh Jail for the period from 1965 to 1969.[13]

Year	Income of the jail	Expenditure	Expenditure per prisoner per year.
1965	Rs. 2,910.98	Rs. 3,30,167.00	Rs. 429.54
1966	Rs. 2,197.99	Rs. 5,98,088.37	Rs. 719.39
1967	Rs. 3,595.06	Rs. 4,49,008.66	Rs. 504.50
1968	Rs. 3,057.03	Rs. 6,81,077.70	Rs. 673.97
1969	Rs. 15,288.15	Rs. 6,57,925.06	Rs. 635.84

District Jail, North Lakhimpur : In 1901, there was a small subsidiary jail at North Lakhimpur. The buildings were made of thatched timber and bamboos and were surrounded by a bamboo palisade. The old jail contained accommodation for 23 convicts. Prisoners sentenced to longer terms than three months were transferred to Dibrugarh Jail. This Jail belongs to the third class category and is located within the Municipal area near the local Police Station. It covers an area of 5 *bighas*, 2 *kathas* and 13 *lachas* of land including the garden and staff quarters. The jail staff includes one Superindendent of Jail, two Assistant Jailors, two Head Warders, eight male Warders, two female Warders, one Medical Officer and one Pharmacist.

The daily average jail population in 1971 was 112.28. The jail mortality is negligible. In 1969, only one person died within the jail, constituting .04 per cent of the jail population. From 1965 till 1968 jail mortality was nil. The following statement shows the daily average of different categories of jail population in North Lakhimpur Jail.[14]

13. Source : Superintendent of District Jail, Dibrugarh.
14. Source—Sub-divisional Officer, North Lakhimpur.

Year	Non-criminal lunatics.	Convicts	Undertrial prisoners.
1965	10.63	28.75	135.13
1966	9.39	28.75	127.55
1967	12.77	30.39	113.25
1968	9.77	32.86	150.93
1969	9.73	41.10	154.50

The annual income, expenditure of the jail and the average expenditure incurred per prisoner during the period from 1965 to 1969 is shown in the following table :

Year	Income of the jail.	Expenditure.	Expenditure per prisoner per year.
1965	Rs. 1,561.14	Rs. 65,284.00	Rs. 367.78
1966	Rs. 583.50	Rs. 75,070.00	Rs. 453.07
1967	Rs. 1,493.00	Rs. 73,270.00	Rs. 468.45
1968	Rs. 1,030.20	Rs. 1,47,920.00	Rs. 764.20
1969	Rs. 1,213.27	Rs. 1,59,380.00	Rs. 776.27

Probation System : The Probation of Offenders Act was enforced in the undivided district of Lakhimpur recently. One District Probation Officer was posted at Dibrugarh after 1960. The Probation of Offenders Act provides for the release of offenders on guarantee of good conduct as an alternative to imprisonment in jail. The Magistrate refers the case to the District Probation Officer after guilt is established and the latter collects the informations regarding home surroundings, criminal records, social history etc., of the offender and circumstances under which the offence was committed. He then submits a report to the court suggesting whether the offender may be released on probation or be given institutional treatment. If the court passes a probation order, the District Probation Officer is charged with the duty of supervision of the probationer. During the period of probation, the District Probation Officer is required to visit the probationer periodically. If the probationer violates any of the conditions of probation, his case is referred back to the concerned Magistrate. The Magistrate may order the convict to serve a term of imprisonment. This Act is applicable to juveniles and adolescent offenders.

Lock-ups : Lock-ups are provided almost in every important Police Station of both the districts. In the lock-ups the prisoners are kept only for a short period before being produced before a Magistrate. Prior to the bifurcation of the old Lakhimpur district in 1971, there were 13 lock-ups in the district.

(d) **Civil and Criminal Courts of Justice** :

(i) **Civil** : From 1837 to 1860 Assam proper was administered by a Code of rules known as the *Assam Code* of 1837. These rules were subsequently supplemented by a few civil and criminal rules in 1839. In 1860 and 1861, the *Civil* and *Criminal Procedure Codes* which were in force in Bengal, were extended to Assam also and the *Assam Code* was taken as repealed. From 1st of July, 1887, *the Bengal, Agra, and Assam Civil Courts Act* (Act 12 of 1887) came into force in Assam excluding certain areas. Now all the civil courts under the jurisdiction of the Gauhati High Court are functioning under this Act.

During the early years of the British administration *Sadar Dewani* Courts were constituted for administration of Justice. In 1880 the District and Sessions Judge, Gauhati was allowed to hold the post of the Commissioner in addition to his own duties. But in 1902, the post of the Commissioner was separated. The District and Sessions Judge was then a member of the Bengal Judicial Service, and this continued till 1912 when Assam was separated from Bengal. The administration of civil justice in Lakhimpur district, was under the control of the District Judge, Assam Valley Districts, whose headquarters were at Gauhati. He was under the control and superivision of the High Court at Calcutta. In November, 1948, a separate judgeship for Upper Assam, comprising the districts of Sibsagar, Lakhimpur and Cachar was created with headquarters at Jorhat. Consequent upon the formation of a separate High Court for Assam, the control and supervision of the High Court of Calcutta over all courts of Assam ceased to exist. The District and Sessions Judge, Upper Assam Division was assisted by one Additional District Judge posted at Dibrugarh, two Sub-ordinate Judges at Dibrugarh and Jorhat and five Munsifs at Jorhat, Sibsagar, Golaghat, North Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh.

It may be mentioned here that the Civil works not being heavy, the Deputy Commissioner used to act as the Sub-judge and the Assistant Magistrate including the Sub-Divisional Officer, North Lakhimpur carried out the works of the Munsif. Owing to the increase in the volume of work, the civil courts were separately constituted and Munsifs were posted at North Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh. The Deputy Commissioner ceased to function as the Sub-Judge since 1949. The

courts of the Sub-Judge, Dibrugarh and that of the Additional District and Sessions Judge were established in the fifties of this century.

In 1955, the Assam Judicial Service was introduced. It is divided into two groups, Senior and Junior and each group is also subdivided into two grades :

(1) **The Senior Judicial Service : Grade I** :- The officers of grade I are the District & Sessions Judge, the Registrar of the High Court and the Legal Remembrancer, Assam, and officers of Grade II, are the Additional District & Sessions Judges.

(2) **The Junior Judicial Service** :—**Grade** I officers are the Subordinate & Assistant Sessions Judges and the Deputy Registrar of the High Court ; while *Munsifs* come under Grade II.

A separate judgeship (District and Sessions Judge) was created at Dibrugarh in 1967 and this court has been functioning from August 5, 1967. After bifurcation of the old Lakhimpur district on 2nd October, 1971, no separate Judgeship has been created for the newly formed Lakhimpur district and the District and Sessions Judge posted at Dibrugarh conducts the Sessions cases in circuit at North Lakhimpur.

At present there is one District and Sessions Judge and one Assistant District and Sessions Judge at Dibrugarh. The post of the Additional District and Sessions Judge has since been abolished following the separation of Judiciary from the Executive. The Sub-Judge has been designated as the Assistant District and Sessions Judge. There are two *Munsifs* at Dibrugarh and North Lakhimpur. The pecuniary jurisdiction of the *Munsifs* extends to all civil suits the value of which does not exceed five thousand rupees. Previously the pecuniary limit extended upto rupees two thousand only. Appeals from the orders or decrees of the *Munsifs* lie with the Assistant District and Sessions Judge, whose pecuniary jurisdiction is unlimited. Those suits which are beyond the pecuniary jurisdiction of the *Munsifs* are filed in the court of the Assistant District and Sessions Judge. An appeal from the decree or order of the Subordinate Judge in exercise of his original jurisdiction lies with the District Judge within certain pecuniary limits ; but all other appeals lie with the High Court. The Subordinate Judge is authorised to exercise the powers of the District Judge for the purposes of the Indian Succession Act.

The District Judge receives applications in contention cases under certain provisions of the *Probate Act*, the *Indian Companies Act*, 1956, the *Hindu Marriage Act*, 1955, and memorandum of appeals under the *Indian Trade Union Act*, 1926. He disposes of them himself or transfers them to the subordinate competent court. The District Judge also receives applications under *Guardians and Wards Act* 1890 and may

endorse them to the Assistant District and Sessions Judge by name to dispose of such proceedings.

The civil courts and officers subordinate to the Gauhati High Court are guided by the Civil Rules and Orders issued by the authority of the High Court. The District Judge is empowered to withdraw *suo moto* or on motion of any party, any civil suit, miscellaneous case, execution case or any civil appeal from the file of a subordinate court and transfer it to any other court competent to try the case. The District Judge is required to inspect personally the works of all the courts and offices under him ordinarily every year and to submit notes of inspection to the High Court. Occasionally a High Court Judge also inspects the courts of the District Judge or other courts in the district. Prior to the constitution of the court of the District Judge in 1967 at Dibrugarh, the District Judge of Upper Assam Division occasionally held circuit courts at Dibrugarh. It has been a long-standing practice for the Sub-Judge to hold circuit courts at North Lakhimpur.

The statement below shows the disposal of cases in various Civil Courts of undivided Lakhimpur District during 1969.[15]

Court	Class of Cases	Disposed of during the year 1969.	Pending at the close of the year 1969.	Pending for more than two years on 1.1.70
District & Sessions Judge, Dibrugarh.	1. Civil Suits	15	9	3
	2. Civil cases	32	28	
	3. Civil Appeals	5	5	
	4. Sessions Cases	125	34	
	5. Crl. Appeals	86	20	
	6. Crl. Revisions	68	19	
Assistant District & Sessions Judge, Dibrugarh.	1. Civil Suits	71	136	42
	2. Civil Cases	177	95	4
	3. Execution Cases	55	73	22
	4. Civil Appeals	61	114	
	5. Sessions Cases	50	22	
Munsiff, Dibrugarh	1. Civil Suits	469	400	15
	2. Civil Cases	584	327	3
	3. Execution Cases	157	138	15
Munsiff, North-Lakhimpur.	1. Civil Suits	119	71	9
	2. Civil Cases	100	23	
	3. Execution Cases	43	30	
	4. Criminal Cases	387	333	

15. Source—District and Sessions Judge, Dibrugarh.

II) **Criminal** : During the Ahom period the principal judicial authorities were *Bar Barua* and *Barphukan* in their respective areas. An appeal lay to them from their subordinates. A second appeal could be made to the Sovereign. The Presiding Officers of the courts were assisted by a number of assessors such as *Kakatis*, *Daivajnas* or *Pandits*. Minor civil and criminal disputes were decided by the *Panchayats* known as *mels*. David Scott allowed the institution of *mels* to continue. From 1826 regular courts were instituted at Gauhati and these were presided over by officers who exercised the powers of the *Munsifs* and *Sadar Ameens*. The history of personnel during the early part of the British administration has been summed up by Mr. W. E. Ward as follows :-[16]

"The officers of the Assam Administration subordinate to the Commissioner originally bore the following designations which occur in the Assam Code of 1837.

(1) Senior or Principal Assistant Commissoiners incharge of districts ;

(2) Junior or Assistant Commissioners in-charge of Sub-Divisions of Districts ;

(3) Sub-Assistant Commissioners.

With the resumption of Upper Assam in 1838 from Purandar Singha the duties of the Commissioner considerably increased, and with a view to relieve him of a part of his duties, a Deputy Commissioner of Assam was appointed from 1st April, 1839 by an executive order. This officer enjoyed the powers of a Civil and Sessions Judge and he practically took over all the judicial work which was assigned to the Commissioner by the Assam Code. He had also to perform executive duties as Assistant to the Commissioner in the Judicial Department. The Commissioner and his Assistants performed both judicial and executive functions. As judicial officers the Commissioner and his Assistants in-charge of the districts were the only European officers at first ordinarily employed in the administration of Civil Justice. The Assam Civil Code made provision for their assistance by two classes of native judges, *viz.*, *Munsifs* and *Sadar Ameens* with certain defined powers. The European officers and the *Sadar Ameens* also administered criminal justice according to Magisterial powers assigned to them by the Assam Criminal Code. The Commissioner had the status of a Civil and Sessions Judge and his subordinates were magistrates of different grades. No executive powers were given originally to *Sadar Ameens* and *Munsifs*. Under Regulation V of 1831 a new appointment, that of Principal *Sadar Ameens* was made to meet the increased judicial work, although no such post is recognised by the Assam Code. Only one such officer appears to have been appointed to the province in 1845 and he had his headquarters at Gauhati. The district *Sadar Ameens* were however frequently given the powers of a Principal *Sadar Ameen* which served the same purpose. Principal *Sadar Ameens* were both Criminal and Civil Judicial Officers, but they took no part in the executive administration. In 1861 the designation of Deputy Commissioner of Assam was with the sanction of the Government of India changed by Bengal Notification as published in the *Calcutta Gazette* of 30th April 1861 to that of Judicial Commissioner and from that time his functions became entirely judicial, corresponding in every respect with those of a Civil and Sessions Judge in Bengal except that the territorial jurisdiction of the Judicial Commissioner was greater than that of a Bengal Judge. By the same Notification the designations of Senior or Principal Assistants, Junior Assistants, and Sub-Assistants were changed

16. K. N. Dutt, *A Handbook to the Old Records to the Assam Secretariat*, pp. 48-49.

respectively to Deputy Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners and Extra Assistant Commissioners, designations that have survived till to-day. In 1864, all officers of grades below the judicial Commissioner then attached to the "Non-Regulation Province of Bengal", *viz* ., to Assam, Chota Nagpur, Darjeeling and Cachar were formed into one amalgamated service by an executive order of the Bengal Government as sanctioned by the Government of India. The orders of 1861 and 1864 did not however in any way affect the Principal Sadar Ameens, *Sadar Ameens* and *Munsifs* appointed throughout the Province. By a Resolution, dated 28th May 1864, the Bengal Government vested all Deputy Commissioners with the powers of a Collector and all Assistant Commissioners and Extra Assistant Commissioners with the powers of a Deputy-Collector, but only for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of the Rent Law, Act X of 1859. The same Notification vested all Deputy Commissioners the powers of a Principal *Sadar Ameen* for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of Act VIII, 1859 (Civil Procedure Code). The Judicial Commissioner was similarly vested with the powers of a *Zilla* Judge. After the introduction of the Civil Procedure Code, not only were the Deputy Commissioners vested with the powers of a Principal *Sadar Ameen*, but the Assistant Commissioners and the Extra Assistant Commissioners were also vested from time to time, as the judicial work of the Province increased, with the powers of *Munsifs*. Similarly, on the introduction of the Criminal Procedure Code, all officers of the Administration were vested with magisterial powers under that Code. In 1866 the Government of India revised the uncovenanted Judicial Service in Assam and amalgamated it with that of Bengal. The service in Assam was then fixed at (1) Principal *Sadar Ameen* (2) *Sadar Ameen*, (3) *Munsifs*. By Act XVI of 1863, the office of *Sadar Ameen* was abolished and the Principal *Sadar Ameen* at Gauhati was converted into a Subordinate Judge. In 1869 however the office of Subordinate Judge at Gauhati was abolished as no longer required, and in 1872 all Deputy Commissoiners were made *ex-officio* Subordinate Judges by the Bengal Government acting under S. 10, Act VI, 1871 (which Act repealed Act XVI of 1868) and certain Subdivisional Officers named were given similar powers to be exercised within their Subdivisions. By the same Notification certain other officers of the Commission (Assistant Commissioners and Extra Assistant Commissioners) were vested with the powers of *Munsifs* to be exercised within particular districts. The Judicial Branch of the service in Assam which had been recruited from Bengal, was however entirely abolished by the Bengal Government in March, 1872, and several of the *Munsifs* were appointed to be Extra-Assistant Commissioners. This policy of amalgamating the purely judicial branch of the service in Assam with that portion of the service which prior to 1872, had performed both Executive and Judicial functions, was sanctioned by the Government of India in their Resolution No. 2029, dated 14th December, 1871. Such a policy was considered highly desirable in 'Non-Regulation tracts" of large extent but sparse population in which it may be necessary to multiply Subdivisions but in which there is not sufficient work for a Munsif and a Magistrate. These orders of the Bengal Government of 1872 were however required to be modified soon after the creation of the Chief Commissionership of Assam in February, 1874. By a Government of India Notification No. 683 dated 13th May, 1875, and in supersession of these orders the Judicial Commissioner of Assam was vested *ex-officio* with the powers of a District Judge in the six Valley Districts and the Deputy Commissioner of Cachar was vested with similar powers in Cachar :, the Deputy Commissioners of the Six Valley Districts and officers-in-charge of certain Subdivisions were vested *ex-officio* with the powers of Subordinate Judge ; and the Senior Assistant Commissioners and the Senior Extra Assistant Commissioners of the six Valley Districts and of Cachar located at the *Sudder* Stations and certain officers-in-charge of Subdivisions were vested *ex-officio* with the powers of a *Munsif*."

As mentioned earlier the Deputy Commissioner continued to act as the Sub Judge in respect of disposal of civil suits till 1949. Till then the Deputy Commissioner exercised the powers as envisaged under the Code of Criminal Procedure and heard appeals from the orders passed by Magistrates with second and third class powers. Appeals against the orders of a Magistrate of the first class and the District Magistrate or the Deputy Commissioner lay before the Judge of the Assam Valley whose seat was at Gauhati. In 1902, there were nine stipendary Magistrates and seven Honorary Magistrates in the district. Of these only two were Assistant Magistrates including the Sub-divisional Officer, North Lakhimpur. As mentioned earlier the Deputy Commissioner was divested of the powers to take up civil suits and cases.

Till the separation of the Judiciary from the Executive, the Deputy Commissioner, Lakhimpur, Subdivisional Officer, North Lakhimpur and Extra Assistant Commissioners posted at these stations presided over Criminal Courts. The Deputy Commissioner in his capacity as the District Magistrate disposed of criminal cases and heard appeals against orders of Magistrates of the second and third class. The Additional Deputy Commissioner also exercised the powers of the District Magistrate in respect of the trial of criminal cases and disposal of appeals. The Sessions Judge, Additional Sessions Judge and the Assistant Sessions Judge tried sessions triable cases and heard appeals from the orders of the courts. The Extra Assistant Commissioners, *Munsifs* and at times Sub-Deputy Collectors were invested with powers of Magistrates of the third class, second class and first class. At times, the Magistrates held local trials at some interior places of the district. Occasionally the presiding officers of these courts also held Mobile Courts for expeditious disposal of the uncontested cases under the Excise Act and the Municipal Bye-Laws.

Separation of Judiciary from Executive : In the undivided Lakhimpur district complete separation of judiciary from executive took place with effect from 26.2.64. At the initial stage some members drawn from the Assam Civil Service were allowed to hold the posts of Judicial Magistrates, Subdivisional Magistrates (Judicial) and Additional District Magistrates (Judicial). Their services were temporarily placed under the disposal of the High Court. The *Munsifs*, Assistant Sessions Judges, Additional Sessions Judges and the Sessions Judges were already under the direct control of the High Court. With the separation of the judiciary from the executive, all judicial officers ceased to be under the direct control of the executive authorities. After a few years Judicial Magistrates were appointed and officers of the Assam Civil Service were released by the High Court. Today the judiciary comprises only members of the Assam Judicial Service. Certain Magisterial

powers relating to the executive functions of a Magistrate are however exercised by the officers of the Assam Civil Service and the Indian Administrative Service and in these matters they exercise powers of Magistrates of the first, second and third class.

The administrative set-up relating to criminal justice in the districts consists of Judicial Magistrates, Assistant Sessions Judges and the Sessions Judge. Judicial Magistrates have been posted at Dibrugarh, North Lakhimpur and Dhemaji. There is one Subdivisional Magistrate (Judicial) at Dhemaji. Two Additional District Magiatrates (Judicial) have been posted at Dibrugarh and North Lakhimpur. Their jurisdiction extends over the respective districts.

The following table shows the total number of criminal cases instituted and disposed of in the undivided Lakhimpur district in 1967 and 1969.[17]

Nature of Cases	Year	Number reported during the year.	Number disposed of during the year.	Number pending at the end of the year.
1. I.P.C. Cases	1967	8266	4409	3857
	1969	3724+ 1559 pending investigation by police	N.A.	N.A.
2. Motor vehicle Cases	1967	7971	7871	3100
	1969	8741	N.A.	N.A.
3. Excise Cases	1967	6972	3314	3658
	1969	4379	N.A.	N.A.

Administration of justice in Transferred Areas : Of the three Transferred Areas of the undivided Lakhimpur district, Murkongsellek is situated in the present Lakhimpur district. Tirap Transferred Area and Sadiya Transferred Area form parts of Dibrugarh district. These areas are predominantly inhabited by tribal people and in deciding disputes between tribals the courts are guided mostly by local customs. Petty disputes are locally settled by village headmen and other village elders. In Murkongsellek area this institution is known as *Kebang*.

17. Source—Deputy Commissioner's Office, Dibrugarh

Regular trials are held in accordance with the provisions of the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation 1945. The Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh districts function as Political Officers of the respective areas in their capacity as appellate authorities. In each Transferred Area there is a court where both civil and criminal cases are decided. Officers of the rank of Extra Assistant Commissioners and designated as Assistant Political Officers preside over the courts. The Murkongsellek Transferred Area is now known as Jonai area and the designation "Assistant Political Officer" has fallen into disuse. In Sadiya and Margherita the Assistant Political Officers are still functioning. The jurisdiction of the former extends over Sadiya Transferred Area and that of the latter over Tirap Transferred Area. The pecuniary jurisdiction of the Political Officers is unlimited and that of the Assistant Political officers extends upto Rs. 1000/-.

Revenue Courts :

In addition to the courts mentioned above different Revenue Officers also decide disputes or claims relating to some revenue matters. Proceedings connected with boundary disputes, resumption, mutation, disputes relating to record of rights, partition of estates, attachment and sale of movables and immovables and application to set aside sale are all judicial proceedings. Under the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation, the Civil Courts are barred from exercising jurisdiction in some revenue matters such as claims to perfect and imperfect partition, remission and refund of any revenue, assessment of revenue etc. Revenue officers are empowered under the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation to record evidence and to pass final orders in revenue cases.

For the purpose of revenue administration both Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh districts have been divided into two subdivisions each and each subdivision comprises a number of revenue circles. One Subdeputy Collector is placed in charge of a revenue circle. In a subdivision, subject to the general control of the Deputy Commissioner all Revenue Officers are subordinate to the Subdivisional Officer. The Deputy Commissioner exercises control over all Revenue Officers of the district. For the purpose of conducting the periodical re-settlement operation in a district one Settlement Officer is appointed duing a settlement operation. His jurisdiction extends over the entire district. In each revenue circle one Subdeputy Collector is appointed as Assistant Settlement Officer who is subordinate to the Settlement Officer.

Except in a few cases, orders passed by Revenue Officers in disposing of revenue matters are appealable. Appeals from orders of these officers lie as follows :-

(a) To the Board of Revenue from orders, original or appellate, passed by a Deputy Commissioner and a Settlement Officer, within 2 months from the date of the order.

(b) To the Deputy Commissioner, from orders passed by a Sub-Divisional Officer and Assistant Commissioner or an Extra Assistant Commissioner, within 30 days from the date of the order.

(c) To the Settlement Officer from orders passed by an Assistant Settlement Officer, within 30 days from the date of the order.

The following are some of the non-appealable orders :-

(i) Orders of a Deputy Commissioner or a Settlement Officer imposing a fine not exceeding Rs. 50/-.

(ii) Orders of a Deputy Commissioner under Section 79 setting aside or refusing to set aside a sale ;

(iii) Any award of arbitration ;

(iv) Orders admitting an appeal after the period of limitation for sufficient cause ;

(v) Orders expressly declared by the Regulation to be final.

CHAPTER—XIII

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

(a) Department of Public Works :

The Public Works Department in Assam came into being in 1861 when the Assam Circle was created under a Superintending Engineer. This officer was vested with the powers of the Chief Engineer and he acted as the Secretary to the then Commissioner of Assam in the Public Works Department. His headquarters, located initially at Gauhati were subsequently shifted to Shillong. The convention of the Chief Engineer acting as the Secretary of the Department was followed till 1972. Since then the two posts have been entrusted to different persons. Initially, there were four divisions in Assam, each comprising two or more districts. This organisational pattern remained virtually unchanged for long. Describing the activities of the Public Works Department in the district of Lakhimpur, B. C. Allen has observed as follows : "Public Works are in-charge of an Executive or Assistant Engineer, who is usually assisted by four upper and two lower subordinates. The Public Works Department are entrusted with the construction and maintenance of all the larger public buildings. The most important are the jail, the public offices, the buildings occupied by the military and the military police, schools, and post and telegraph offices at district and sub-divisional headquarters, official residences for Government officers, circuit houses, dak bungalows, and rest houses on provincial roads. Rest houses on other roads are maintained by the Local Boards. Local Board works that require professional skill or engineering knowledge are usually made over to the Executive Engineer for execution. The principal difficulties with which the department has to contend are the absence of an artizan class, and the scarcity and dearness of unskilled labour. It is to these two causes that the heavy cost of public works in Lakhimpur is largely due".[1]

With the manifold increase in constructional activities after Independence some changes were effected in the Department. It was bifurcated into two wings Public Works Department (Roads and Buildings) and Public Works Department (Embankment and Drainage). The former was entrusted with construction and maintenance of roads, bridges and buildings and the latter with works relating to embankment, drainage, flood protection and irrigation etc. In 1956 the Public Works Department (R. &. B) was completely separated and placed under a separate Chief Engineer. For execution of works by the Public Works Department (Roads and Buildings) the entire State has been divided into a number of circles. Each circle comprising of one or more districts or a part thereof is placed under one Superintending Engineer. The circle

1. B. C. Allen ; *Assam District Gazetters, Lakhimpur*, 1905, pp. 268-69.

is further divided into divisions each of which is under the charge of an Executive Engineer.

There are six such divisions of which four divisions viz., North Lakhimpur Division, North Lakhimpur ; North Trunk Road Division, North Lakhimpur ; Ghilamara Division, Ghilamara and North Trunk Road Division, Chawldhowa ghat, cover the Lakhimpur district and two divisions viz. Dibrugarh Division and Dibrugarh National High Way Division cover the Dibrugarh district.

The division-wise administrative set-up of the Public Works Department is the same all over Assam. The Superintending Engineer is responsible for the implementation of all the programmes in the entire circle and the Executive Engineer who is the head of the Division in turn is entrusted with the execution of works within the Division. Each division comprises one or more sub-divisions and each sub-division is placed in-charge of a Sub-divisional Officer. Under him there are Sectional Officers and each of them holds the charge of a section and supervises the works of the subordinate staff including the Beat Muherers in the lowest rung. The officers of the rank of the Subdivisional Officers and above exercise the financial powers delegated to them.

With the beginning of the Planning era, a number of undeveloped roads were improved and many new buildings and bridges were constructed by the Department in the undivided Lakhimpur district. In this connection mention may be made of the construction, widening and diversion of North Trunk Road between Laluk and Narayanpur with a R. C. C. bridge over the Dikrong at Harmuty ; reconstruction of the Rangnade R. C. C. bridge 700 feet in length, on the North Trunk Road connecting North-Lakhimpur and Tezpur after collapse of the old bridge in the great earthquake ; construction of the Assam Medical College, Dibrugarh, Circuit House and Government Higher Secondary School at Dibrugarh, a number of dispensaries, Veterinary dispensaries and a score of other buildings for public purposes. For the construction and maintenance of various types of buildings of the Assam Medical College, Dibrugarh, there is one separate Sub-division known as Assam Medical College Building Construction (A. M. C. B. C.) Sub-division under the charge of a Sub-divisional Officer. The total mileage of the roads under the Department in the two districts during the year 1970-71 was 2330.89 kms. (including the two National High Ways Nos. 37 & 38) of which 660.21 kms. were blacktopped, 1445.29 kms. gravelled and 225·39 kms. earthen bound.

(b) Department of Agriculture :

Till the pre-Second World War, emphasis on agriculture was peri-

pheral and only a skeleton staff looked after the agricultural activities in the Province. The Second World War brought in its wake acute shortage of food-stuff which led to steep rise in prices. Taking into consideration the exigencies of the War, the Government of India in 1942-43 launched the Grow-More-Food Drive to step up the production of all agricultural commodities. The pinches of food shortage were more keenly felt at the end of War and this led the Government of India to concentrate on agriculture and gradually the Agriculture Department was reorganised and greatly expanded at the State level as well as at the district level.

Formerly the District Agricultural Officer at Dibrugarh was the head of the Agriculture Department in the undivided district of Lakhimpur. With the bifurcation of the district on the 2nd October, 1971, the administrative set up of the agriculture Department has also undergone considerable changes. It is now manned by two District Agricultural Officers, one of them is posted at Dibrugarh in Dibrugarh district and the other at North Lakhimpur in Lakhimpur district. The District Agricultural Officer is the head of the district organisation and works under the technical guidance and administrative control of the Director of Agriculture, Assam, Shillong.

Under the District Agricultural Officers there are Subdivisional Agricultural Officers at North Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, Dibrugarh and Tinsukia. They are assisted by a number of officers including the Assistant Plant Protection Officer and a few Agricultural Inspectors. In each Community Development Block there is one Extension Officer, Agriculture, under the immediate control of the Block Development Officer. This Officer is assisted by a number of Gram Sevaks and Demonstrators in implementing different schemes of intensive and extensive cultivation. The Subdivisional Agricultural Officer who is invested with financial powers in respect of drawal and disbursement, supervises the activities of the Extension Officers, posted in the Community Development Blocks within his jurisdiction.

The details of activities and achievements of the Agriculture Department have been fully described in Chapter IV and to avoid repetition only a brief reference to the various schemes for the development of agriculture undertaken by the Department is considered adequate for this chapter. Among the schemes undertaken by the Department mention may be made of the distribution of Phosphatic Ammonium Sulphate and mixed fertilizers, green manure, insecticides, preparation and distribution of improved seeds, rural compost, measures undertaken for plant protection, double cropping, demonstration, execution of minor irrigation schemes, and distribution of improved agricultural implements. For development of horticulture, three nurseries have been established. For

multiplication and distribution of better seeds, the Department has established 14 seed farms in the district.

Department of Agricultural Engineering :

Till a few years ago the engineering wing was attached to the District Agriculture Office. The Assistant Engineer who headed this wing in each district was assisted by one or two Overseers. In order to cope with the ever-increasing activities of the Agriculture Department, this wing has been reorganised and its strength has been augmented. Now a Joint Director of Agriculture heads the State organisation. The Executive Engineer (Agriculture) is the head of the organisation in the district. He is assisted by a Sub-divisional Officer (Agricultural Engineering) at the Sub-divisional level besides a number of other technical staff.

The main function of the Department is to supply and undertake repairs of agricultural implements such as, tractors, diesel and electric pumps and to install deep tube wells etc. The execution of minor and medium size irrigation projects and reclamation of land for agricultural purposes are the other two important functions of the Department.

Three regional workshops have been established at Gauhati, Jorhat and Silchar to undertake repairs of agricultural implements belonging either to the Department, *Anchalik Panchayats*, *Gaon Panchayats* or private agriculturists. There is one branch work-shop at Dibrugarh and two repairing centres at North Lakhimpur and Dhemaji for attending to minor repair works of agricultural implements.

(c) Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary :

The Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary commenced its activities in the undivided district of Lakhimpur from 1907 when the strength of sanctioned staff was only three Veterinary Assistants. Two of them were posted in Sadar Sub-division with head-quarters at Dibrugarh and Tinsukia and one in the North Lakhimpur Sub-division. These Veterinary Assistants were placed under the control of the Chairman of the respective Local Boards. This Department was known as Civil Veterinary Department till 1953 when it was redesignated as the Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary. Thereafter the Farms, Key Village Centres, and all other sections were brought under the direct administrative control of the District Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Officer. He is the head of the district organisation and is under the administrative control of the Director of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department, Assam, Shillong. At the

Sub-division, there is one Sub-divisional Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Officer under him.

With the inauguration of the Community Development Blocks the district organisation of this Department was also expanded considerably to cover the Blocks. Each Community Development Block has a Veterinary dispensary under the charge of a Veterinary Assistant Surgeon. One Extension Officer (Veterinary) and a field Assistant were also appointed in each Block. Some other Veterinary dispensaries were also established.

In 1970, with the bifurcation of the district, the organisational set-up of the department has undergone some further changes. Now, in both the districts of Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh there are District Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Officers who head the organisation in their respective districts. In Lakhimpur district, besides one Sub-divisional Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Officer whose headquarters are located at Dhemaji, the District Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Officer, is assisted by a staff of 79 technical personnel, including one Assistant Poultry Development Officer, 14 Veterinary Assistant Surgeons, 8 Extension Officers (Vety) and 60 other field staff. There is one Assistant Director for B. C. P. P. Programme who functions directly under the control of the Director of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary, Shillong. In Dibrugarh district, the District Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Officer is assisted by a staff of 98 technical hands including one Project Officer for Crash Programme, one Assistant Dairy Development Officer, one Regional A. I. Cfficer posted at Lahowal, 14 Assistant Surgeons, 11 Extension Officers and 69 other field staff. The post of Sub-divisional Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Officer at the newly constituted Sub-division of Tinsukia is yet to be created.

The main function of the Department is to take preventive measures against the outbreak of epidemics of animals, to control animal diseases and to take up treatment of ailing animals. Castration of weedy bulls, grading up the local breeds and cattle through artificial insemination or natural services, improvement of local poultry, particularly the fowls by introduction of pure and improved cocks, development of dairy and fodder farming etc, are important responsibiltiies with which the department is charged.

In 1971, the Department had under its control one Veterinary Hospital at Chabua and 10 Veterinary Dispensaries and Animal Innoculation-cum-Veterinary Dispensaries in Dibrugarh District. The district of Lakhimpur has 12 Veterinary Dispensaries including one Mobile Veterinary Dispensary and three Animal Innoculation-cum-Veterinary Dispensaries.

Besides these departmental institutions there is one Dairy-cum-Poultry Farm at Khonikor and one Rural Animal Husbandry Centre at Jokai and two Key Village Centres at Khonikor and Kothalguri in Dibrugarh district. Under the jurisdiction of the Khonikor Key Village Centre there are four sub-Centres at (1) Dibrugarh Veterinary Dispensary (2) Gopal Goshala, Dibrugarh (3) Jokai Village and (4) Bogapara Village. Two Veterinary Sub-Centres are also functioning at Panilota C. D. Block and one Key Village Centre is attached to the C. D. Block at Tengakhat. The activities and achievements of the Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary have been discussed at length in Chapter IV.

(d) **Forest Department :**

Formerly the boundaries of the Forest Divisions were not coterminus with the district boundaries and the reserved forests of the undivided district of Lakhimpur were covered by two forest divisions viz., Lakhimpur Forest Division with headquarters at Dibrugarh and Darrang Forest Division with headquarters at Tezpur. The jurisdiction of the former extended over Dibrugarh sub-division and that of the latter over Darrang district and North Lakhimpur subdivision. But presently the forests in the two districts fall under the administrative control of three forest divisions. The forests in Dibrugarh district are administered by the Dibrugarh Forest Division with headquarters at Dibrugarh (formerly known as Lakhimpur Forest Division) and Digboi Forest Division with headquarters at Digboi. The newly created Lakhimpur Forest Division with headquarters at North Lakhimpur administers the forests of Lakhimpur district.

The administrative pattern of all the forest divisions are the same except for the strength of personnel which depends upon the area, number and importance of the reserved forests under the administrative control of the particular forest division. The Divisional Forest Officer who works under the administrative control of the Chief Conservator of Forests, Assam, Shillong is the administrative head of the division. He is assisted by a number of subordinate officers consisting of the Assistant Conservators of Forests, Range Officers, Beat Officers and Forest Guards etc. For administrative purposes each division is divided into Ranges and all ranges in turn are divided and sub-divided into beats and sub-beats. The Officer-in-Charge of the range is called Range Officer, and that of the beat is Beat Officer. Generally Forest Beat is manned by the Forest Guard, Grade 1, assisted by two or more Forest Guards but, sometimes, taking the importance of the range into consideration, one Deputy Ranger is also posted. Sub-beats are always manned by Forest Guards.

The jurisdiction of the Lakhimpur Forest Division extends over the entire district of Lakhimpur and has under its control 17 reserved forests. Administratively, it is divided into three Forest Ranges of

North Lakhimpur, Jonai and Dhemaji and Forest Beats of Dhemaji, Harmuty, Kiming, Dhunaguri, Kakoi, Boginadi, Pathalipam, Laimekuri, Galighat, Halkata and Dhakuakhana. Forest Sub-Beats are located at Dhekiajuli, Phulbahi, Rampur, Adhakhana, Bihpuria, Oriamghat, Silapathar, Sissi, Dimow, Simen, Miungmong, Dirpai, Jogamukh. Besides the above, there are four camps located at Joyhing, Ghagar, Jonakareng and Jinmileghat under the charge of Forest Guards.

The Dibrugarh Forest Division which has under its control 28 reserved forests in Dibrugarh district is comprised of 4 Forest Ranges viz., Dibrugarh Range, Tinsukia Range, Makum Range and Saikhowa Range. Besides, there is only one beat known as Sadiya Forest Beat. The boundaries of the Dibrugarh Forest Division are as follows :—

North : Starting from the point where the interstate boundary between Assam-Arunachal meets the junction of the Gango and the Sesseri rivers, the boundary follows the same Assam-Arunachal boundary eastwards up to the point where it meets and crosses the Balijan river in Sadiya area and then turns south.

East : From the last named point along Assam-Arunachal boundary it runs southwards and across the Brahmaputra (*Luhit*) up to the point where it crosses the Dibru river.

South : From the point mentioned above it runs along the Dibru river downstream up to the point where the river crosses the Nazirating-Duarmara road and thence it runs along the same road southwards up to the Railway line wherefrom it marches along the Railway line up to Tinsukia. From Tinsukia the boundary line moves southwards along the Railway line upto the Burhi-Dihing river and thence along the Burhi-Dihing river down stream upto Kendugurighat. From Kendugurighat it runs along the old P. W. D. road up to Tinali, wherefrom it runs by a straight line to the source of the Digsam river ; thence along the Digsam river up to the junction of the Digsam and Diroi rivers. Thence the line stretches along the Diroi river downstream up to the point where it crosses the district boundary.

West : From the last named point the line runs along the district boundary northwards up to the Brahmaputra, and then after crossing it, it proceeds to the mouth of the Kherketia Suti with the Brahmaputra. Thence it stretches along the north bank of the Brahmaputra northwards upto the point on the south of Murkong-Sellek where the inter-district boundary between Lakhimpur and Sibsagar again crosses the Brahmaputra. From the last mentioned point the boundary line follows the south bank of the Brahmaputra till it meets the Gango stream, thence it runs along the Gango stream to its junction with the Sesseri river, the starting point.

The Digboi Forest Division with headquarters at Digboi has under its administrative control 17 reserved forests of Dibrugarh district. This division consists of 4 Forest Ranges known as Digboi Range, Margherita Range, Lakhapani Range and Joypost Range and 19 Forest Beats known as Bogapani Beat, Borjan Beat, Tipling Lakhipathar Beat, Saraipung Beat, Khatangpani Beat, Makum Beat, Khato gate Beat, Bordubi Beat, Borjan Beat, Kathalguri Beat, Kherajan Beat, Powai Beat, Agbandhar Beat, Nither Beat, Ledo Beat, Jagun Beat, Tinkhong Beat, Naharkatiya Beat and Dilli Beat. The description of the boundary of the Division is as follows :—

North : Starting from Tinsukia the line stretches along the railway line upto the point where the Nazirating Duaramara road crosses the railway line, thence it runs along the Nazirating-Duarmara road upto the Dibru river and thence it moves along the Dibru river upstream upto the point where it crosses the boundary between Assam and Arunachal.

East : From the last mentioned point it moves along the boundary between Assam and Arunachal upto the point where the Dilli/Disang river crosses the boundary between Assam and Arunachal.

South : From the last mentioned point the line stretches further along the Dilli/Disang river downstream which is the common boundary between Dibrugarh and Sibsagar districts, upto the point where the Dilli/Disang river diverts from the common boundary between Dibrugarh and Sibsagar districts, thence it runs along the district boundary upto the point where the Diroi river crosses the district boundary, thence it marches along the Diroi river upstream upto its junction with the Digsam river and thence it moves by a straight line to Tinali. From Tinali the line moves along the old P. W. D. Road westwards upto the Dihing river near Kenduguri ghat, thence it proceeds along the Burhi-Dihing river upstream upto the Railway line.

West : Thence the line runs along the Railway line upto Tinsukia.

Primarily, the functions of the Forest Department are the protection and scientific working out of the forests to secure the maximum use of its products ; replenishing the stock of timber and other minor forest produce by undertaking afforestation and other regeneration schemes and planning for the long range developmet of forest resources ; maintenance of a regular supply of raw materials for the forest-based industries ; maintenance of forest *dakbungalows* and rest-houses, roads, buildings etc., as well as opening of new lines of communication to facilitate the development and utilization of the forest resources ; demarcation and survey ; settlement and maintenance of forest villages ; conservation of wild life and enforcement of forest laws etc.

(e) Department of Industries :

It is during the 1st Five Year Plan that the Office of the Superintendent of Industries started functioning at Dibrugarh under the Directorate of Industries to look after all matters relating to the industrial development of the undivided district. Subsequently one Assistant Director of Cottage Industries was posted in this district and a new office of the Superintendent of Industries was established at Tinsukia. However, the jurisdiction of the Assistant Director of Cottage Industries, Dibrugarh extended only over the then Dibrugarh Sub-division. There was a separate office of the Superintendent of Industries at North Lakhimpur. The Superintendent of this subdivision functioned under the administrative control of the Assistant Director of Cottage Industries, Darrang, Tezpur. With the bifurcation of the district, this office of the Superintendent of Industries was also upgraded to the office of the Assistant Director of Cottage Industries and its jurisdiction extended over the newly created district of Lakhimpur. Another office of the Superintendent of Industries was opened at Dhemaji for Dhemaji Sub-division.

Presently the Assistant Director of Cottage Industries is the head of the Industries Department in the district and he handles all matters relating to the industrial development of the district under the administrative control of the Directorate of Industries. He is assisted by the Superintendents of Industries who are posted at the Sub-divisions other than Sadar Sub-division. Formerly the Extension Officers of Industries were posted in each of the Community Development Blocks to carry out an integrated programme of the development of Industries in the Development Blocks. These officers were also charged with the respon sibility of developing rural arts and crafts for which purpose some funds were separately earmarked in the Block budgets.

These Officers have now beer withdrawn from the Development Blocks and have been attached either to the Office of the Superintendent of Industries or Assistant Director of Cottage Industries. The Department of Industries in Dibrugarh district is now manned by one Assistant Director of Cottage Industries with headquarters at Dibrugarh, one Superintendent of Industries posted at Tinsukia and 6 Extension Officers. There is one Assistant Director of Cottage Industries at North Lakhimpur, one Superintendent of Industries at Dhemaji and three Extension Officers in the Lakhimpur district. There is one Joint Director of Industries, Eastern Assam Zone, at Dibrugarh who supervises the works of the Department of Industries at the Zonal level in the districts of Dibrugarh, Lakhimpur and Sibsagar.

All matters relating to industrial growth and development come within the purview of the Industries Department. These are dealt with at the district level in the office of the Assistant Director of Cottage

Industries. The Department provides grants-in-aid to deserving artisans Cottage Industrial Units and Industrial Co-operative Societies to the extent of Rs. 500/-. It also undertakes to give rebates and make subsidies available to the industrial units functioning in the economically backward districts. The Department also provides loan to the industrial units under the State Aid to Industries Act as per rules framed there under from time to time.

Responsibility of rehabilitating the goldsmiths eflected by the Gold Control Act was also entrusted to the Department. The Department has also undertaken a scheme known as 'Implant Training Scheme' under which the industrial units can recruit trainees in accordance with their requirements. The Department pays stipend of Rs. 40/- per mensem to each trainee with the understanding that he would be absorbed after completion of training.

Among other functions of the Department mention may be made of sponsoring the application of the registered industrial units for the purchase of machinery on hire-purchase basis, arranging of raw materials and undertaking industrial survey and marketing etc.

(f) Co-operative Department :

The organisational set-up of the Co-operative Department at the district level is headed by the Deputy Registrar of Co-operative Societies. At the Sub-divisional level he is assisted by the Assistant Registrar of Co-operative Societies. All the works of the Co-operative Department at the Sub-diviisonal level are implemented under the supervision of the Assistant Registrar of Co-operative Societies. He is assisted by one Sub-Registrar and a few Senior Inspectors, Auditor, Co-operative Societies and Junior Inspectors. The Senior Inspectors and Junior Inspectors carry out the audit of the Co-operative Societies in the Sub-division.

Presently, the staff of the Co-operative Department in Lakhimpur district consists of the Deputy Registrar, one Assistant Registrar, one Sub-Registrar, 13 Senior Inspectors, and 21 Junior Inspectors. In Dibrugarh district there are one Deputy Registrar, one Assistant Registrar, one Sub-Registrar and 17 Junior Inspectors. The history, growth and development of Co-operative Societies in the two districts have been discussed at some length in Chapter VI.

———

CHAPTER—XIV
LOCAL SELF GOVERNMENT

The history of Local Self Government in the undivided district of Lakhimpur dates back to the period of formation of Municipalities and Local Boards in the two sub-divisions of the district during the middle of the last century. Prior to that *Panchayats* or counsellors of elders are believed to have been in existence in different parts of the country and the undivided district of Lakhimpur was no exception.

The present system of Local Self Government owes its existence to the British. Formerly, it comprised of Municipalities in towns, Local Boards at subdivisional levels and *Panchayats* in villages. However, with the enactment of the Assam Panchayat Act in 1959 all Local Boards were abolished and their functions devolved on *Gaon Panchayats*, *Anchalik Panchayats* and *Mahkuma Parishads*. A brief account of the growth and development of each of these institutions is given below.

Local Boards : According to B. C. Allen, in 1872 the management of the district roads was entrusted to a Committee presided over by the Deputy Commissioner. The fund at its disposal was partly obtained from tolls on ferries and local roads and other miscellaneous sources, but principally from grants made by the Bengal Government from the Amalgamated District Road Fund. In 1874 when Assam was brought under a separate Administration the Government of India assigned one seventeenth of the net land revenue for local purposes. The District Improvement Fund was as before entrusted to the Deputy Commissioner assisted by a Committee. The actual amount placed at its disposal was not large and in 1875-76, the total income of the district funds of the Province was only Rs. 1,85,000 which was a small sum in comparison with the twelve and a half lakhs of rupees received by the Local Boards in 1903-04. In 1879, a Regulation was passed, providing for the levy of a local rate and the appointment of a Committee in each district to control the expenditure on roads, primary education, and the district post. Three years later the district committees were abolished by an executive order, and their place was taken by Boards established in each subdivision.

Thus in the undivided Lakhimpur district two Sub-divisional Local Boards at Dibrugarh and North Lakhimpur came into being. In 1901 the Dibrugarh Local Board with its jurisdiction over 3033 sq. miles with 286572 population was composed of 26 members—15 Europeans, and 11 local people. Four members were officials, 10 elected and the rest nominated. Similarly in 1901 the North Lakhimpur Local Board with its jurisdiction over 1174 sq. miles with 84824 population was composed of 14 members—8 Europeans and 6 local people. Two members were officials, six elected and the rest nominated.

The Deputy Commissioner was the Chairman of the Board at the district headquarters at Dibrugarh while the Board at North Lakhimpur was presided over by the Subdivisional Officer. The Local Boards were entrusted with the maintenance of all roads within their jurisdictions with the following exceptions ; the trunk road North and South of the Brahmaputra, the roads from North Lakhimpur to Kamalabari, and from Dibrugarh to Jaipur, the roads within Municipal limits and a few of purely political importance in the neighbourhood of Sadiya. They were also charged with the provision and maintenance of local staging Bungalows and Dispensaries and with the supervision of village sanitation, vaccination and the district post. They were also in charge of Primary Education, subject to the general control of the Education Department and were empowered to make grants-in-aid to schools of higher grade, subject to certain rules. For these purposes they had at their disposal the rate which was levied under the Assam Local Rates Regulation of 1879, at the rate of one anna per rupee on the anunal value of lands as well as the surplus income of ponds and ferries, and some minor receipts. The receipts under the head of provincial rates were not sufficient to provide for the proper development of the district and the local income was supplemented by large grants from Provident Funds. In the case of the North Lakhimpur Board, this grant amounted to more than half of the total income, while in Dibrugarh it exceeded one third. Thus during the decade 1891-1901 the total income and expenditure of the Dibrugarh Local Board increased from Rs. 48702 and Rs. 35908 in 1890-91 to Rs. 72433 and Rs. 90208 respcetively in 1900-01 and those of the North Lakhimpur Board increased from Rs. 29791 and Rs. 22071 to Rs. 40633 and Rs. 45181 in the corresponding years.

The annual budget of the Boards were submitted to the Chief Commissioner for sanction. The estimates for all works, costing five hundred rupees or over had to be submitted to the Public Works, Department for approval and important works requiring much professional skill were made over for execution to that Department. Less important works were entrusted to the Board Overseers.

The Subdivisional Local Boards formed under Executive orders underwent various changes by the time the Assam Local Self Government Act, 1915 was passed to give legal footing to these institutions. This Act provided inter-alia for an elective non-official majority and for the election of a non-official Chairman and Vice-Chairman. The Act also reserved the power of the Government to appoint an official or non-official as the Chairman and also to appoint the Vice-Chairman if the Board failed to elect one within the prescribed period. In practice the Local Boards of Dibrugarh and North Lakhimpur continued to have

official Chairmen. After amendment of this Act in 1926 which enjoined that the Chairman should ordinarily be an elected non-official, the Dibrugarh Local Board had its elected non-official Chairman but the North Lakhimpur Board continued with the official one. The new Assam Local Self Government Act 1953, repealing the old Act also retained the power of Government to appoint the Chairman under extraordinary circumstances but practically all Local Boards elected their own Chairmen. Finally the Local Boards were replaced by *Mahkuma Parishads* formed under the Assam *Panchayat* Act, 1959.

Thus at the time of transition the Dibrugarh Local Board consisted of 31 elected and six ex-officio and nominated members. The North Lakhimpur Board consisted of 23 elected and one nominated member. With the launching of the First Five Year Plan the Local Boards had to shoulder heavy responsibilities in rural construction and development and had often to resort to deficit financing. In 1951-52 the Dibrugarh Local Board incurred a total expenditure of Rs. 590015 against its total income of Rs. 487791 and the North Lakhimpur Board spent Rs. 546174 against its income of Rs. 530716. These institutions began to lose importance along with the growth of Community Development Blocks and *Panchayats* which ultimately replaced them.

Municipalities : The most important agency of Local Self Government at present in urban areas is the Municipality. Now-a-days the Municipal Boards everywhere are playing very important roles in the fields of communication, public health and sanitation in towns. In the undivided district of Lakhimpur there were three Municipal Boards at Dibrugarh, Tinsukia and North Lakhimpur. Among these the Dibrugarh Municipal Board was the oldest in the district.

The first Town Improvement Committee in the undivided district of Lakhimpur was established at Dibrugarh in 1847. It was allowed to appropriate the land revenue collected from the town for municipal purposes. In 1849, the Commissioner of Assam sought the permission of the Bengal Government for the levy of Municipal taxes in the Joint Magistrates' Stations of Assam including the town of North Lakhimpur. The Bengal Government agreed in principle to the levy of the tax without consulting the Board of Revenue. It is evident that prior to this date there were some non-statutory town committees functioning in those towns and these may safely be described as "the genuine type of Local Self-Government institution"[1] .

In 1877 a second class Municipality was formed at Dibrugarh under the Bengal Municipal Act, 1876. But soon after its formation the

1. V. Venkata Rao : *A Hundred Years of Local Self Government in Assam*, 1967, p. 37.

Dibrugarh Municipality faced difficulties in executing its programmes owing to inherent difficulties in the Act such as absence of provision for levying water rate, lighting rate, conservancy fee etc. It failed to levy a scavenging fee to pay its sweepers. There were also other structural difficulties in the Act. In 1887 the Government of Assam adopted the Bengal Municipal Act, 1884 and introduced it in Gauhati, Dibrugarh and Sylhet (now in Bangla Desh). The former difficulties were thus overcome. The Act provided inter-alia for some levies and for two thirds elective majority of the members of the Boards. It also eliminated the ex-officio elements and stations and unions under the old Act. The Government of Assam however, did not want to abolish the stations and unions already formed and therefore retained the Act of 1876 to run side by side with the other Act. It was much later that unions were constituted under the Act of 1876 in North Lakhimpur, Doom Dooma and Tinsukia in 1914, 1916 and 1919 respectively.

Thus when Assam passed its own Municipal Act in 1923, first and second class Municipalities, unions and stations were functioning in different towns of the Province under two different Bengal Municipal Acts. The Assam Act was rather a codified Act which ushered in important improvements by providing for substantial elective majority of members and an elected non-official Chairman. It also reduced the nominated members but retained Government's power to appoint one or all members including the Chairman in exceptional circumstances. It also gave the Municipal Boards freedom to levy tax subject to rules, but without reference to the Government. When this Act came into force Town Committees were formed in place of unions at North Lakhimpur, Doom Dooma and Tinsukia in the undivided Lakhimpur district. Thus one Municipal Board and three town Committees were functioning under the Act of 1923 till 1956. The Assam Municipal Act, 1956 was passed to provide a more democratic set-up to these institutions in the light of the Indian Constitution. The Municipal institutions are now formed and function under this Act and subsidiary rules framed thereunder by the Government from time to time.

Dibrugarh Municipal Board : Among the three Municipal Boards of the district the Dibrugarh Municipal Board is the oldest. The Municipality was formed in 1878 under Act. V (B.C.) of 1876 which was substituted by Act. III (B. C.) of 1884 in 1887. Since then this Municipality has undergone various changes along with the changing Municipal legislations and now it functions under the Assam Municipal Act of 1956. At present this Board has 26 members of whom two are nominated by the Government from Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes communities. The rest are elected from twelve wards each of which is a double-member constituency. The Chairman is elected by the

members themselves. The population of Dibrugarh town according to the 1971 Census was 58480 persons of whom 35427 were males and 23053 females. The Municipality comprised 3.52 sq. miles (9.12 sq. kms.) with a density of population of 16614 persons per square mile. As per the 1971 census Dibrugarh town comprised an area of 10 square kms. with a total population of 80348 persons composed of 46741 males and 33607 females ; the density of population per sq. km. being 8035 persons.

Tinsukia Municipal Board : The present Municipal Board at Tinsukia was initially a Union Committee in 1919 and it was converted to a Town Committee in 1924. It was upgraded to a Municipal Board in 1937. The Board now consists of 17 members of whom two are nominated. The Board has its own Chairman and Vice-Chairman elected by the members themselves. According to the 1961 Census, Tinsukia town had a population of 28468 persons of whom 18333 were males and 10135 females inhabiting an area of about four square miles (10.36 sq. kms.). The density of population was 7117 persons per square mile. The 1971 Census showed that the population of the town had increased to 54911 persons of whom 33313 were males and 21598 females. The density of population rose to 5300 persons per square kilometre. It may be mentioned here that there was no expansion of the town during the last decade.

North Lakhimpur Municipal Board : The Municipal Board at North Lakhimpur is the offspring of the Union Committee constituted in 1914. It was converted to a town Committee in 1923 and on 1st April, 1963 it became a Municipality. The first Municipal Board was constituted on 1.5.63 with twelve appointed Commissioners including the Chairman and Vice-Chairman. The area of the town according to the 1961 census was 1.25 sq. miles (3.24 sq. kms) with a population of 6576 persons of whom 4327 were males and 2249 females. The density of population was 5261 persons per sq. mile. As per the 1971 census the town covered an area of 13.74 sq. kms. and had a population of 20094 persons of whom 12288 were males and 7806 females. The density of population per sq. km. was 1462 persons.

The main sources of income of the Municipality are the taxes levied on municipal holdings, cinema halls, rice mills, flour mills, hotels, restaurants, bakeries, soda water factories, bamboo, fire-wood, timber godowns, pony carts, rickshaws, cycles and tolls levied on markets etc. In addition to their income from taxes Municipalities also receive recurring and non-recurring grants from the Government.

One of the primary duties of Municipalities is to maintain roads and bridges under their jurisdiction and to clean all principal lanes and

thoroughfares. Urban sanitation, conservancy, parks, public health and hygiene, street lighting and communication are some of the important aspects which the Municipalities and Town Committees have to bear in mind. They also engage vaccinators for prevention of outbreak of epidemics.

The following statements show the income and expenditure of the three Municipalities of the present Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh districts.

STATEMENT—A

STATEMENT SHOWING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE OF THREE MUNICIPALITIES OF DIBRUGARH, TINSUKIA AND NORTH LAKHIMPUR FROM 1950-51 TO 1960-61 (IN RUPEES).

Year	DIBRUGARH							TINSUKIA				NORTH LAKHIMPUR			
	Incomes from				Expenditure	Incomes from				Expenditure	Incomes from				Expenditure
	Rates & taxes	Other sources including E.O. Debets.	Total of Income			Rates & taxes	Other sources including E. O. Debets.	Total of Income			Rates & taxes	Other sources including E. O. Debets.	Total of Income		
1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		
1950-51	1,41,839	1,94,441	3,36,280		3,04,535	41,954	1,15,034	1,56,988	1,76,039	3,153	67,978	71,131	30,339		
1951-52	1,33,784	1,26,316	2,60,100		2,63,522	43,383	1,40,427	1,83,810	1,25,388	3,350	1,24,360	1,27,710	1,29,826		
1952-53	1,51,900	1,68,879	3,20,779		3,21,730	44,420	1,72,107	2,16,527	2,00,177	3,111	19,819	2,290	59,316		
1953-54	1,79,572	2,32,481	4,12,059		2,90,365	45,202	2,53,458	2,98,660	3,25,259	4,965	22,438	27,403	26,785		
1954-55	1,54,991	1,39,734	2,94,725		3,49,404	58,569	1,79,252	2,37,821	2,80,238	7,083	24,605	31,688	30,806		
1955-56	2,07,557	2,81,841	4,89,398		4,12,267	67,505	3,91,903	4,59,408	3,59,408	7,605	30,168	37,773	36,916		
1956-57	2,03,273	2,87,062	4,90,335		6,34,695	77,424	3,13,091	3,90,515	3,12,026	5,338	23,143	28,481	27,547		
1957-58	1,94,712	2,23,757	4,18,469		4,26,326	94,414	5,33,039	6,27,433	3,90,581	5,354	25,522	30,876	33,729		
1958-59	2,17,818	65,058	2,82,876		4,69,050	91,673	3,01,491	3,93,164	5,88,573	15,239	32,529	47,768	40,717		
1959-60	1,72,488	1,14,302	2,86,790		2,00,805	46,307	5,90,806	7,37,113	5,85,145	11,536	1,62,959	1,75,495	1,55,855		
1960-61	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.		N.A.	43,056	2,57,513	4,00,569	4,10,760	27,641	36,786	64,427	84,714		

STATEMENT—B.

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE OF DIBRUGARH TINSUKIA AND NORTH LAKHIMPUR MUNICIPALITIES FOR 1967-71*

Name of the Municipality	Year	Income	Expenditure
1	2	3	4
		Rs.	Rs.
1. Dibrugarh Municipality	1967-68	7,35,126.00	8,19,121.00
	1968-69	7,46,809.00	7,54,338.00
	1969-70	7,05,033.00	7,48,558.00
	1970-71	7,96,034.00	8,16,427.00
2. Tinsukia Municipality	1967-68	6,25,729.00	3,97,566.00
	1968-69	5,91,914.00	6,14,607.00
	1967-70	6.14.420.00	5,93,418.00
	1970-71	5,96,944.00	5,44,070.00
3. North Lakhimpur Municipality	1967-68	75,000.00	85,000.00
	1968-69	90,000.00	95,000.00
	1969-70	1,00,000.00	1,00,000.00
		(approximate)	
	1970-71	1,41,055.00	1,43,682.00

* Source : Director, Municipal Administration, Assam, Gauhati.

Doom Dooma Town Committee : The Doom Dooma Town Committee is the oldest of the five Town Committees of the undivided Lakhimpur district. It was started as an Union Committee in 1916 and was upgraded to the status of a town committee in 1925 under the Assam Municipal Act of 1923. The Town Committee at present consists of six members of whom two are nominated by the Government and the rest are elected from four wards. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman are elected by the members themselves. According to the 1961 Census the town comprised an area of about one square mile (about 2.59 sq. kms.) and had a density of 8192 persons per sq. mile. It had a population of 8192 of whom 5319 were males and 2873 females. In the 1971 census the area of the town remained the same while the population increased to 10510 persons of whom 6190 were males and 4320 females. The density of population per sq. km was 4058.

Digboi Town Committee : It was only in 1960-61 that the Digboi Town Committee was formed under the Assam Municipal Act of 1965. This town committee consists of six members including the elected Chairman and Vice-Chairman. Two of the members are nominated by the

Government. In 1961 the Town Committee comprised an area of about two square miles (5.18 sq. kms) with a population of 18235 persons and a density of 9118 persons per square mile. But the 1971 census revealed that both the area and population of this Town Committee decreased to 4.03 sq. kms. and 16538 persons respectively. However, Digboi Town should not be confused with the near-by Digboi Oil Town which is famous for its oil industry and has a population of 15850 persons inhabiting an area of 5.15 sq. miles (13.34 sq. kms) as per the 1971 census.

Chabua Town Committee : The Town Committee at Chabua was constituted on 22nd February, 1961. It consisted of six nominated members including the Chairman and Vice-Chairman. The area of this Town Committee decreased from 2.59 sq. kms. shown in the 1961 census to 0.94 sq. kms. according to the 1971 census. Its population on the other hand increased to 3888 as per the 1971 census from 2533 persons shown in the 1961 census.

Bihpuria Tinali Town Committee : The Town Committee at Bihpuria in present Lakhimpur district was constituted in 1961. The first committee was formed with six members including the Chairman and Vice-Chairman. The town covered an area of 1.3 sq. miles (3.34 sq. kms) and had a population of 3198 persons giving it a density of 2460 persons per sq. mile as per the 1961 census. According to the 1971 census the area of the town increased to 5.36 sq. kms. and its population rose to 5256 persons.

Naharkatiya Town Committee : This Town Committee was established in 1960-61. It is a small but developing town. The discovery of oil at Naharkatiya has increased its importance and has necessitated the formation of the Town Committee to meet the growing needs of the town. According to the 1961 census it had an area of 1.95 sq. miles (5.05 sq. kms) with a population of 3500 persons giving it a density of 4552 persons per sq. mile. In the 1971 census its area extended over 7.24 sq. kms. and its population increased to 10774 persons.

In addition to the above a Town Committee was constituted after 1970 at Makum in the present Dibrugarh district.

The Town Committees do not materially differ from the Municipalities in respect of functions. The Town Committees also derive their income from taxes levied on holdings, cinema halls, rice mills, flour mills, hotels, restaurants, bakeries, fire wood and timber godowns, pony carts, rickshaws and from tolls on markets. Like Municipalities, Town Committees also receive recurring and non-recurring grants from the State Government. The following statement shows income and expenditure of the Town Committees of the undivided Lakhimpur district during the last few years.

STATEMENT SHOWING THE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE OF THE TOWN COMMITTEES OF THE UNDIVIDED LAKHIMPUR DISTRICT FROM 1967 TO 1971.*

Name of the Town Committees.	Year	Income Total	Expenditure Total
1	2	3	4
		Rs.	Rs.
1. Doom Dooma T. C.	1967-68	1,30,662.00	1,16,515.00
	1968-69	1,16,427.00	1,13,062.00
	1969-70	2,18,171.00	2,42,130.00
	1970-71	2,26,595.00	1,94,392.00
2. Digboi T. C.	1967-68	12,796.00	6,762.00
	1968-69	32,341.00	12,326.00
	1969-70	33,649.00	15,702.00
	1970-71	42,452.00	51,611.00
3. Chabua T. C.	1967-68	48,330.00	33,730.00
	1968-69	37,193.00	27,765.00
	1969-70	36,229.00	71,139.00
	1970-71	77,468.00	63,868.00
4. Naharkatiya T. C.	1967-68	59,133.00	52,636.00
	1968-69	60,244.00	48,555.00
	1969-70	46,059.00	63,868.00
	1970-71	1,67,695.00	40,138.00
5. Bihpuria T. C.	1967-68	27,383.00	28,092.00
	1968-69	35,259.00	33,304.00
	1969-70	43,026.00	39,711.00
	1970-71	52,087.00	52,676.00

*Source : Director, Municipal Administration Assam, Gauhati.

There are no Municipal Boards or Town Committees in the three transferred areas of the undivided district. Only in the Sadiya Transferred Area there is one Local Fund Committee under the supervision of the Assistant Political Officer, Chapakhowa. This Local Fund Committee was created by the old administration of the area and at present it is working along with the *Panchayat* as the unit of Local Self Government. The *Panchayat* is the only unit of Local Self Government in the Murkongselek Transferred Area.

Town Planning : The Town Planning scheme has been extended to Tinsukia and Dibrugarh towns. A Master Plan for Tinsukia was prepared and approved in 1962. Tinsukia is a growing industrial town and town planning has become essential to check its haphazard growth, acute congestion and unhygenic conditions. The Master Plan prepared for Tinsukia town covered an approximate area of 6.25 sq. miles including portions of Tinsukia and Rpngagora *Mauzas*. It is proposed within twenty five years to provide for a population of 65,000 which is a 300 per cent increase over the 1958 population of the town. The Tinsukia Development Authority headed by a Chairman has been constituted to execute the scheme under the Master Plan. The Chairman is assisted by the Secretary and other technical and non-technical staff. The Development Authority declares an area as "scheme area" before proceeding to improve the drainage and sewerage systems as also before widening, strengthening, extending, improving and laying out of roads. The Authority also regulates development and partition of lands.

The task of preparing a Master Plan for Dibrugarh town was undertaken by the Town and Country Planning Department in 1964. The plan is nearing completion. It will cover an area of about 25 sq. miles for an estimated population of approximately 2.25 lakhs by 1991.

Panchayats : At present the most important and all-pervading unit of Local Self Government for the district is the *Panchayat*. The present *Panchayat* system aims at decentralisation of powers and responsibilities. In 1948 Assam marched ahead of many other States by introducing the *Panchayat* system. Both Primary and Rural *Panchayats* were established in Assam under the Assam Rural *Panchayat* Act, 1948 (Assam Act XXVIII of 1948). With the enforcement of the Assam Panchayat Act in 1959, the Rural and Primary *Panchayats* were abolished.

Some of the Rural *Panchayats* established in Dibrugarh Subdivision under the provisions of the Assam Rural *Panchayat* Act of 1948 are :-Dinjoy Hatiali R. P., Baraguri R. P., Madarkhat Sarvoday R. P. Moran R. P. Tengakhat R. P. Bapuji R. P. Gharbandi R. P., Lengeri R. P., Khosang R. P., Rahmaria R. S., Tingkhong R. P., Jamirah R. P., Hapjan Chariali R. P., Mancotta R. P., Larua R. P., Rajgarh R. P., Doom Dooma R. P., Pub Dhemaji R. P., Paik Mahal R. P. Sissi Bargaon R. P., Pub-Makum R. P., Buridihing R. P., Lohit R. P., Sadiya R. P., Lahoal R. P., Tingrai R. P., Khemira R. P., Hapjan R. P., Sassoni R. P., Kakapathar R. P., Tirap R. P., Markongsellek R. P., Paschim Makum R. P., and Saikhowa R. P.,

Three Tier Panchayat System : In pursuance of the recommendations of the Balabantrai Mehta Commission on democratic decentralisation of powers the Government of Assam passed the *Assam Panchayat Act.*, 1959 repealing the old Act of 1948. The new Act was given effect from the 1st October, 1959. The Act provided for three tiers of *Panchayat* organisation—the *Panchayat* at the village level, the *Anchalik Panchayat* at the Block level and the *Mahkuma Parishad* at the Subdivisional level.

It has been noted earlier that after the enactment of the *Assam Panchayat* Act, 1959 the existing Local Boards and Rural *Panchayats* were abolished and their functions devolved on the three tier *Panchayat* system. In the undivided district of Lakhimpur 331 *Gaon Panchayats*, 17 *Anchalik Panchayats* and two *Mahkuma Parishads* in the two Subdivisions at Dibrugarh and North Lakhimpur were formed. Subsequently another *Mahkuma Parishad* was constituted at Dhemaji. Out of 331 *Gaon Panchayats* 169 were in Dibrugarh Subdivision, 87 in North Lakhimpur Subdivision and 75 in Dhemaji Subdivision.[2] Similarly, there were 9 *Anchalik Panchayats* in Dibrugarh 4 in North Lakhimpur and 4 in Dhemaji. It may be noted that every *Anchalik Panchayat* is coterminus with the respective Community Development Block and that the Block Development Officer is the Secretary of that *Anchalik Panchayat*.

Organisation of Panchayats : A *Gaon Sabha* consists of one or more villages with an average population of about 2,500. It has one President, one Vice-President and 11-13 members who are elected by direct voting by the electors of the concerning *Gaon Sabha*. The term of office of the President as also of the members is for four years. Initially the *Panchayat Act* 1959 introduced the system of open voting in electing members but this system was found defective as it frequently gave rise to violence at the time of election. The system of open voting was therefore replaced by secret voting in 1964.

The representatives of the *Anchkalik Panchayat* are elected directly by the electors of the different *Gaon Sabhas* constituting that *Anchalik Panchayat*. One representative is also elected to the *Anchalik Panchayat* by the Chairman of the Co-operative Societies. All members of Parliament and State Legislative Assemblies whose constituencies extend over the *Anchalik Panchayat* are ex-officio members of the *Anchalik Panchayat* but they have no right to vote. Officers who may be appointed as members of the *Anchalik Panchayat* by the State Government also have no right to vote. The Act further provides for co-option of one member each from the Scheduled Caste & Scheduled Tribe if none is elected.

It may be recalled that the *Panchayat Act.*, 1959 which has since been amended prohibited the President of a *Gaon Panchayat* from being

2. Figures relate to undivided Lakhimpur district,

a member of the *Anchalik Panchayat*. Thus if a President of a *Gaon Panchayat* was elected to the *Anchalik Pancnayat*, he ceased to be the President of the *Gaon Panchayat*. But in 1964 the Act was suitably amended and the President of the *Gaon Panchayat* situated within the jurisdiction of an *Anchalik Panchayat* was made an ex-officio member of the *Anchalik Panchayat*. The *Panchayat* Act, 1959 did not provide for the co-option of women. The *Panchayat* (Amendment) Act, 1964 fixed the number of co-opted women members at two if no woman was elected and at one if a woman member was already elected. The Block Development Officer, who is the ex-officio Secretary of the *Anchalik Panchayat* transacts all official business under the direct control and supervision of the President of the *Anchalik Panchayat*. The *Mahkuma Parishad* consists of the Presidents of *Anchalik Panchayats*, members of Parliament and Legeslative Assemblies whose constituencies extend over such *Mahkuma Parishad*, Chairmen of the Municipal Boards, Town Committees and a representative of the Co-operative Central Bank. The Chairmen of the Municipal Boards, Town Committees, and the representative of the Central Co-operative Bank are ex-officio members and have therefore no right to vote. If no persons belonging to the Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe is a member, the *Mahkumn Parishad* is authorised to co-opt such member from persons of such communities. The Planning Officer is the ex-officio Secretary of *Mahkuma Parishad*.

Functions of the Panchayats : The *Panchnyat* Act, 1959 distributed the functions and powers among the *Gaon Panchayats*, *Anchalik Panchayats* and *Mahkuma Parishads* as follows :—

The *Gaon Panchayats* are entrusted with cleaning and lighting of streets, sanitation and conservancy, burial and burning grounds, play grounds and other public recreational centres, control of public latrines, control of communicable diseases, medical relief, reclamation of unhealthy places, maternity and child welfare, grazing grounds, vaccination, control of buildings, planting of trees, cattle pounds, construction of roads, control of fairs, land management, community listening, public radios, library and reading rooms, education upto middle school, youth clubs, theatres, watch and ward, fairs and festivals, maintenance of land records census of all kinds, births and deaths, distribution of relief, development plan and cattle stard.

The *Anchalik Panchayats* are entrusted with sanitation and conservancy, anti-malaria operation, control of communicable diseases, medical relief, reclamation of unhealthy places, maternity and child welfare, vaccination, cattle pounds, control of buildings, planting of trees, construction and maintenance of roads, control of fairs, *dharmasalas*, irrigation works, control of slaughter houses, ware-houses, land management, youth clubs, theatres, damages and offensive trades, supervision of *Gaon Panchayats*, approval of budgets of *Panchayats*, agency functions, relief of the distressed and education above the Middle School standard.

The *Mahkuma Parishad* scrutinises and approves the budgets submitted by different *Anchalik Panchayats* within its jurisdiction. The decision of the *Mahkuma Parishad* is final. The *Mahkuma Parishad* is also responsible for reviewing the works of the *Anchalik Panchayats* from time to time. The *Parishad* also advises the Deputy Commissioner/ Subdivisional Officer in the distribution of Subdivisional Rural Development Fund. It also advises the Government in drawing up district plans. It is also concerned with the co-ordination of the work of the *Anchalik Panchayats* falling under the jurisdiction of the *Mahkuma Parishad*.

The *Anchalik Panchayats* of North Lakhimpur Subdivision are : (1) Narayanpur A. P., (2) Bihpuria A. P., (3) Nowboisha A. P., and (4) Lakhimpur A. P. Present Dibrugarh district comprises of nine *Anchalik Panchayats* which are (1) Borboorah A. P., (2) Khowang A. P., (3) Lahowal A. P., (4) Tengakhat A. P., (5) Panitola A. P., (6) Kakapathar A. P., (7) Joypur A. P., (8) Hapjan A. P., (9) Margherita A. P. There are four *Anchalik Panchayats* in Dhemaji sub-division. These are (1) Bordoloni A. P., (2) Dhakuakhana A. P., (3) Dhemaji A. P. and (4) Murkongsellek A. P. All the *Anchalik Panchayats* in the district work as units of Local Self Government. An *Anchalik Panchayat* has been recognised as the unit of Planning and Development. Besides the schemes and programmes under the Community Development Blocks programmes of the different development departments are also to be drawn up and executed by the Block Agency. Officers of different development departments posted in the Block are to handle both the types of programmes, under the leadership of the Block Development Officer and control and guidance of the *Anchalik Panchayats*.

The income of *Panchayats* is derived mainly from grants-in-aid, taxation and remunerative assets. Though grants-in-aid are comparatively easy to obtain for augmenting resources, they cut at the root of the idea of self-help which is the essence of the Community Development Programme. Further, grants-in-aid always entail certain restrictions in respect of the addition to the funds of the *Panchayats*. Taxation also cannot obviously bring considerable income in view of the conditions obtaining in the villages. Thus creation of remunerative assests is the only dependable way of ensuring a permanent source of income to the *Panchayats*.

Income of Gaon Panchayats : It has been noticed that the average annual income of *Gaon Panchayats* varies from Rs. 1,500/- to Rs. 3,000/- But considering the volume of works that a *Gaon Panchayat* is required to execute this amount falls far short of the requirement. Though

Gaon Panchayats have been empowered to impose taxes, the avenues for elastic taxes are very few. In order to obviate these difficulties, the share of land revenue payable to *Gaon Panchayats* and *Anchalik Panchayats* has been raised from 25% to 37%. But the normal share of land revenue to some of the *Panchayats* are not sufficient even to meet the obligatory expenditure like pay and allowances of staff. As such an Equalisation Fund has been created by crediting 2% of the land revenue with a view to helping such *Panchayats* with additional allocations.

In the undivided district of Lakhimpur, some of the *Gaon* and *Anchalik Panchayats* derive the major part of their revenue from *hats* and *bazars*. But formerly, the *Anchalik Panchayats* and *Gaon Panchayats* within whose jurisdiction the *hats* were situated appropriated the entire income from them. Now, after the amendment of the *Panchayat* Act, the *Anchalik Panchayats* and *Gaon Panchayats* may get certain portion of the income of the major *hats*. Moreover, according to the Assam *Panchayat* Act, 1959, a *Gaon Panchayat* can impose taxes on the following (a) brick or concrete buildings, (b) supply of water, (c) sale of firewood and thatch, (d) conservancy, lighting and slaughter houses. It can impose cess or fees on (a) registration of cattle sale within the local area, (b) licence for starting tea stalls, hotels, sweetmeat shops and restaurants, (c) collection of hides and bones, (d) minor *hats*, (e) licence for private *hats* as prescribed (f) surcharge on duty for the transfer of immovable property.

Similarly, an *Anchalik Panchayat* can impose the following taxes and charges in addition to the existing local rates collected from the area directly administered by the *Anchalik Panchayats* (a) tax on fisheries allotted to the *Anchalik Panchayat*, (b) water rate for recovery of cost of minor irrigation works taken up within an *Anchalik Panchayat* and such levy as may be necessary for the purpose of the maintenance and repair of such works. (c) fee for minor *hats* as prescribed. Further, it can impose tax on (a) cultivated land unnecessarily lying fallow for two consecutive years at a rate not exceeding twenty five paise per standard *bigha* being payable jointly or severally by those who are in possession of such land (b) tax on brick or concrete buildings, supply of water conservancy and lighting at such rate as prescribed in the area directly administered by the *Anchalik Panchayat*. An *Anchalik Panchayat* can impose any fees on licence for cinema halls, circuses, professional variety shows, fairs, confectionary and bakery, saw mills and timber depots, bamboo stalls, oil and rice mills inspite of provisions of their acts and licence fees for tea stalls, hotels, restaurants, sweetmeat shops and collection of hides and bones within the jurisdiction of the *Anchalik Panchayat* in the manner as prescribed.

In discussing the financial aspects of the *Panchayat* mention must be made about the Assam Rural Development Fund constituted under

section 64 of the Assam *Panchayat* Act, 1959. The Fund is administered by the State Government through the Director of *Panchayat*, Assam and is held in his personal ledger account at the Shillong treasury.

Payments from the Assam Rural Development Fund may be made to Subdivisional Rural Development Fund, *Anchalik Panchayat* Fund, *Gaon Panchayat* Fund, any organisation or body of individuals, and any individual directly through the Sub-divisional Rural Development Fund.

So far as the Sub-divisional Rural Development Fund is concerned, it is administered by the Deputy Commissioner or the Sub-divisional Officer as the case may be and is held in the personal ledger account at the Treasury or Sub-treasury. In the undivided district of Lakhimpur there were two Sub-divisional Rural Development Funds, one at Dibrugarh and the other at North Lakhimpur and they were administered by the Deputy Commissioner and Sub-divisional Officer respectively.

Expenditures of Mahkuma Parishad : The expenditure of the *Mahkuma Parishad* for establishment charges, equipments, contingencies, allowances and honoraria including other incidential charges thereto are charged to the Assam Rural Development Fund.

Gaon Panchayat Fund : Similarly, every *Gaon* and *Anchalik Panchayat* has its fund known as *Gaon Panchayat* and *Anchalik Panchayat* Fund respectively. A *Gaon Panchayat* Fund is utilised to meet charges in connection with its duties under this Act. The Fund of the *Gaon Panchayat* consists of taxes collected by the *Gaon Panchayat*, contribution from the Government including a share of the land revenue, the entire local rate collected from the area of the *Gaon Sabha*, contribution from private individuals or local authorities etc.

Anchalik Panchayat Fund : An *Anchalik Panchayat* Fund is administered by the Executive Officer who is the ex-officio Secretary of the *Anchalik Panchayat*. He keeps this fund in a current account with a Treasury or Subtreasury or the State Bank or in Assam Co-operative Apex Bank ; and or also in Postal Savings Bank if so directed by the State Government. The Secretary (B. D. O.) operates the account of the Fund.

An *Anchalik Panchayat* Fund is generally made up of all sums collected by the *Anchalik Panchayat* through taxation or assigned to the *Anchalik Panchayat* by State Government as well as grants from the Union or State Government, including share of the land revenue which shall not be less than ten per cent of the net receipts after providing for the agent's commission, public donations and contributions by Local Authorities.

Budget preparation : Preparation of Budget of the *Gaon* and *Anchalik Panchayat* :-According to the Assam *Panchayt* Act, 1959, every *Gaon* and *Anchalik Panchayat* is required to submit annual budgets showing the probable receipts and expenditures it proposes to incur and may from time to time furnish a supplementary estimate providing any modification which it may deem advisable to make in the distribution of the amount so revised and expanded in each financial year in the case of a *Gaon Panchayat* to the *Anchalik Panchayat* and in the case of an *Anchalik Panchayat* to the *Mahkuma Parishad*. Tae annual budgets of all *Gaon Panchayats* are approved by the concerning *Anchalik Panchayat* and the budgets of the *Anchalik Panchayats* are approved by the *Mahkuma Parishad*.

Priority on agriculture : Agriculture being the common occupation of the rural population, it has always been accorded prority in the Community Development programme. Further, the appearance of the *Panchayat* in the scene has added strength to the drive. It has also widened the scope for realisation of the concept of planning from below. Now-a-days, the *Panchayats* have been associated with the formation and implementation of the village production plan in the village. This plan embraces mainly two groups of schemes, namely (1) supply of credit, fertilizers, improved seeds, implements, assistance for plant production, river irrigation etc., for which a measure of assistance has to come from outside the village, (2) programmes such as installation of green manuring plants, preparation of compost pits, digging of field channels, maintenance of bunds which calls for efforts of the village community. It is said that some of the *Anchalik Panchayats* have prepared and executed the village production plant within the *Anchalik Panchayat*.

A brief account of each *Anchalik Panchayat* is given below.

1. **Bordoloni Anchalik Panchayat** : Bordoloni *Anchalik Panchayat* was formed with headquarters at Ghilamara in November, 1959, and it covered an area of 288.29 square miles. The *Panchayat* comprises 100 villages with 28,783 population, according to the 1961 Census. The Bordoloni *Anchalik Panchayat* consists of Bordoloni and Gohain *Mauzas* and there are fifteen *Gaon Sabhas* under the *Anchalik Panchayat*.

2. **Bihpuria Anchalik Panchayat** : Bihpuria *Anchalik Panchayat* was formed in November, 1959. It covers two *mauzas*, namely Bihpuria and Laluk. The total area of the *Panchayat* is about 150.36 square miles. 110 villages have been brought under this *Anchalik Panchayat*. The headquarters of this *Anchalik Panchayat* are located at a distance of 24 miles from North Lakhimpur town. It is situated by the side of the Bihpuria-Badati Road. According to the Census of 1961, the total population under the *Anchalik Panchayat* consisting of 23 *Gaon Panchayats* was 44,404.

3. **Nowboisha Anchalik Panchayat** : Nowboisha *Anchalik Panchayat* was formed in November, 1959 with headquarters at Doloohat. Two *mauzas* namely Nowboisha and Telahi fall within its jurisdiction and it covers 19 *Gaon Panchayats* extending over an area of 247.62 square miles. 146 villages fall under the *Anchalik Panchayat*.

4. **Narayanpur Anchalik Panchayat** : Narayanpur *Anchalik Panchayat* covering an area of 131.58 square miles of Narayanpur, Dhalpur and Narayanpur Kherajkhat *mauzas* was formed in November, 1959. There are 146 villages and 19 *Gaon Panchayats* within the jurisdiction of this *Anchalik Paachayat* The total population under the *Panchayat* in 1961 was 50,564 persons.

5. **Lakhimpur Anchalik Panchayat** : This *Anchalik Panchayat* with its headquarters at North Lakhimpur town was formed in November, 1959 and consisted of Lakhimpur, Nakari and Kadam *mauzas*. It covered 322.38 square miles and comprised 154 villages. According to the 1961 census the total population under the *Panchayat* was 49,439 persons served by 21 *Gaon Panchayats*.

6. **Dhakuakhana Anchalik Panchayat** : Dhakuakhana *Aachalik Panchayat* was formed in November, 1959 consisting of 92 villages of Dhakuakhana and Machkhowa *mauzas*. It covers an area of 184.58 square miles. Tribal people predominate this *Panchayat* and in 1961 its total population was 33,555. This *Anchalik Panchayat* comprises 21 *Gaon Panchayats*.

7. **Dhemaji Anchalik Panchayat** : Dhemaji *Anchalik Panchayat* was formed in November, 1959 consisting of Dhemaji, Sissi and Paikmahal *mauzas*. This *Panchayat* covered an area of 563.44 square miles. In 1961, its total population was 42,591 persons and covered 317 villages grouped under 20 *Gaon Panchayats*.

8. **Hapjan Anchalik Panchayat** ; Hapjan *Anchalik Panchayat* was formed in 1959 with headquarters at Makum Junction and consisted of Hapjan, Tingrai, Rangagorah *mauzas* and the rural portion of Tinsukia. The total area of the *Anchalik Panchayat* was 206.77 square miles. In 1961, the total population of this *Panchayat* was 112,393 persons in habiting 139 villages grouped under 20 *Gaon Panchayats*,

9. **Borborooah Anchalik Panchayat** : It was formed in 1959 and consisted of 141 villages of Jamira, Larua, Mankotta, and Khonikar *mauzas*. The headquarters of this *Panchayat* are located near Rajabhata and there are 20 *Gaon Panchayats* under it. The *Panchayat* covers an area of 152.35 square miles. In 1961, the total population under the *Panchayat* was 54,834 persons.

10. **Margherita Anchalik Panchayat** : Margherita *Anchalik Panchayat* was formed in November, 1959 with 119 villages of Makum and Tirap *mauzas* (Tirap Transferred Area). It covers an area of 397.32 square miles and has 14 *Gaon Panchayats* under it. In 1961, the total population under the *Panchayat* was 57,056 persons. The area covered by this *Panchayat* is inhabited mainly by tribal people such as Nagas, Duanias, Singphos and Fakials and other backward and Scheduled Caste people.

11. **Joypur Anchalik Panchayat** : The headquarters of Joypur *Anchalik Panchayat* are located at Konwarigaon and it covers an area of 181.90 square miles. 297 villages of three *mauzas*, namely Joypur, Sassani and Tingkhong are included under this *Panchayat*. This *Anchalik Panchayat* comprises 30 *Gaon Panchayats*. According to the 1961 Census, there were 100,772 persons living within the jurisdiction of the *Panchayat*.

12. **Tengakhat Anchalik Panchayat** : This *Panchayat* was formed in November, 1959 and it comprised four *Mauzas* namely Tengakhat, Tipling, Fakial and Kheremia, divided into 17 *Gaon Panchayats*. The *Anchalik Panchayat* covers an area of 264.70 square miles and has 204 villages under it. In 1961, the total population under the *Panchayat* was 81,848 persons.

13. **Murkongsellek Anchalik Panchayat** : In 1959, the *Panchayat* consisted of Murkongsellek Transferred Area and Sadiya Transferred Area. At that time, it covered an area of 1,221 square miles with 145 villages. The number of *Gaon Panchayats* covered by the *Anchalik Panchayat* was only 19. In 1961, the total population of the *Panchayat* was 31,166 persons. The headquarters of the *Panchayat* are located at Jonai.

In view of the distance between Murkongsellek and Sadiya, a separate *Anchalik Panchayat* was established a few years later at Sadiya in July, 1961 with headquarters at Chapakhowa.

14. **Kakapathar Anchalik Panchayat** : Kakapathar *Anchalik Panchayat* consists of Saikhowa, Doom Dooma and Buridhing *Mauzas* of Dibrugarh sub-division. It covers an area of 400.61 square miles and comprises 151 villages under 18 *Gaon Panchayats*. Total population of this *Panchayat* was 77,264 persons in 1961.

15. **Lahoal Anchalik Panchayat** : It consists of four *Mauzas* namely Lahoal, Rahmaria, Modarkhat and rural portions of Dibrugarh, covering an area of 269.70 square miles with 107 villages. In 1961, the total population of the *Panchayat* was 81,048 persons.

16. **Khowang Anchalik Panchayat** : It consists of 4 *mauzas*, namely Khowang, Lengeri, Moran and Sepon. The total area covered by the *Panchayat* is 156 square miles. In 1961, its total population was 66,252 persons.

17. **Panitola Anchalik Panchayat** : The headquarters of this *Anchalik Panchayat* are located at Chabua and it consists of four *mauzas* namely Chabua, Pulunga, Gharbandi and Bogdung. An area of 227.63 square miles is covered by the *Panchayat*. The total population within Panitola *Anchalik Panchayat* is 79,503 persons who live in 105 villages. There are 16 *Gaon Panchayats* under this *Anchalik Panchayat*.

The above analysis shows that these seventeen *Anchalik Panchayats* cover 5271.53 square miles (including the portions of the three Transferred Areas) and 2729 villages.

During the last part of 1960-61, three *Anchalik Panchayats* in Assam were selected under the Pilot Project programme of utilising local manpower from rural areas. Landless agricultural labourers in rural areas being extremely high, a large part of the agricultural labourers remain idle during the slack season. The introduction of the programme evoked wide public enthusiasm and demand for location of Pilot Projects was made in almost every part of Assam. Nowboisha from North Lakhimpur was selected for implementation of the scheme.

CHAPTER—XV.

EDUCATION AND CULTURE.

(a) Historical background :

In the mediaeval period education was confined mainly to the *Brahmins* who were engaged as priests by the monarchs and nobles of Assam. With the spread of *Neo-Vaishnavism* in Assam, the *Satras* also became centres of learning. All principal *Satras* used to maintain Sanskrit *Tols* and services of reputed scholars were requisitioned to run these institutions. A *Satra* was not only a religious centre but also a school and a library. This institution played a very important role in the spread of education among the masses.

The other type of schools were *Tols* run by Sanskrit scholars without any royal patronage. In some cases, however, royal favours were bestowed on distinguished scholars who had earned wide reputation. The *Tols* were meant for imparting lessons in various branches of classical learning such as grammar, astronomy, Law (*Somhita*), poetry and Philosophy (*Vedanta, Sankhya, Veda* etc). The students completed their education in the dormitories managed by their *Guru* (teacher). Education by and large, was free. Some scholars came from other parts of India at the behest of the kings of Assam. The kings showed highest regard to these scholars and settled them in various parts of the State. Though Sanskrit was compulsory for the students who had their education in *Tols*, Assamese also found its place in educational institutions. The inscription of *Kanaibarasi-boa* of the thirteenth century, bears testimony of the early Assamese script. S. N. Sarma has observed that the Assamese script pertaining to the period from the 6th century to the twelfth century can be termed as the ancient Kamrupi script. The Kamrupi script took the form of the old Assamese script in the latter period when the *Vaishnava* scholars accepted Assamese as the only vehicle of their literary talents.

In addition to the *Tols* there were some educational institutions known as *Pathsalas* during the Ahom period. H. K. Barpujari has observed as follows : "the indigenous system of education, however, continued to exist even after the period of Burmese invasion in some *Satras* and in a number of scattered *Pathsalas* and *Tols*"[1]. Education in Assam was in the doldrums during the period of transition when the Ahom king lost his former power and the British administration was yet to be consolidated. This is evident from an account that we find in the District Gazetter of Lakhimpur. It has been observed there that prior to the opening of the school in 1840 in Dibrugarh, education was

1. H. K. Barpujari, *Assam in the days of the Company*, p. 275.

almost unknown in the district and it was difficult to find a man even amongst the upper classes, who knew how to sign his name[2].

In the field of art and literature the Ahom period showed remarkable development of Assamese literature. Kings, ministers and nobles maintained poets, writers and scholars in their staff and patronised them by grant of lands and liberal munificence. The Koch kings of Assam were also patrons of Assamese culture and literature. During the fourteenth century several Assamese poets came into prominence. Among them Hem Saraswati, Rudra Kandali, Harihar Bipra, Kabiratna Saraswati, and Madhab Kandali were famous. In the later period, Sri Sri Sankardev, Madhavdev, and a host of their disciples enriched Assamese literature by their prolific contributions. Hundreds of books written in Sanskrit were translated by these writers into Assamese and devotional songs called *Bargeet* were composed. Biographical accounts of Sankardev and his principal disciples popularly called *Charit Puthis* were written with ethos and *elan*. One Act plays called *Ankiya Nat* were also written by *Vaishnava* writers in Assamese. *Buranjis*, the chronicles of the period, *Vansavalis*, the geneological histories were also written during this period. Thus Assamese literature attained a high degree of perfection during the mediaeval period. The intellectual level attained by the Assamese writers during this period presupposes a system of education that could cover a considerable section of people. With the advent of the British an attempt was made to impose western education in Assam. Earlier the upheavals leading to the downfall of the Ahoms and imposition of British rule produced a state of chaos that throttled the growth of education and culture. In fact, the first three decades of the nineteenth century is the period to which no literary work worth the name can be ascribed.

The traditional system of education in Assam suffered a set back as a result of introduction of Bengali as the court language of Assam. Bengali continued to be the court language for a span of thirty six years from 1836 to 1873. During this period, Bengali was also imposed in schools as the medium of instruction much to the detriment of education and Assamese literature. However, vigorous advocacy in favour of Assamese at different levels and a movement spearheaded by Assamese intellectuals led to the restoration of Assamese to its rightful place in 1873. Thereafter Assamese became the medium of instruction in schools of Assam.

Beginning of western education in Lakhimpur :—The history of western education in the undivided Lakhimpur district dates back to 1840 when the first English school was established in Dibrugarh. For the promotion of indigenous education the then Commissioner, David Scott pro-

2. B. C. Allen ; *Assam District Gazetteers*, Vol. VIII, *Lakhimpur* 1905. p. 276.

cured in 1826 sanction from the Government of Bengal to establish a number of schools both in Upper and Lower Assam. In these institutions ordinarily the only language taught was Sanskrit and the curriculum consisted of the study of Arithemetic, Astronomy and Medicine. **The impact of this system is not noticeable in Lakhimpur district.** Meanwhile it was decided in 1835 by the Governor General in Council that schools should be established for the promotion of European literature and science amongst the Indians. Major Jenkins submitted a scheme for the establishment of English Schools in Assam at a cost of rupees twelve thousand *per annum*. Under this scheme every Sadar Station was to get one English School under European functionaries. For various reasons these schools could not attract the indigenous people at the beginning. The aftermath of the turmoils and brutalities unleashed by the Burmese invaders on the people of Assam was the virtual closure of all the traditional educational institutions. The Ahom nobility was also apathetic to the modern education imparted in English schools. It may also be remembered that the monopoly of Bengali in schools as well as in offices alienated the indigenous people from the ruling section. The people kept themselves aloof from the precincts of the schools. The British rulers inducted a large number of Bengalis as clerks and petty officers in all districts of Assam and the local people were generally deprived of the benefits of employment. However, more schools were established in the district. In 1842 one English school was established at North Lakhimpur. Gradually the zeal for English education was whetted up by prospects of Government jobs such as those of *Mandals*. In the courts also the services of English knowing lawyers became indispensable. Commissioner Major Jenkins was the pioneer in the diffusion of western education amongst the Assamese.

The American Baptist Missionaries rendered invaluable service in imparting western education through the Assamese medium. No doubt, they were mainly inspired by the idea of proselytisation ; but their efforts were no less responsible for restoring the status of the Assamese language. To pacify the warlike frontier tribes especially the Singphos and Khamtis, the American Baptist Mission Foreign Society in March 1836, sent a mission to Sadiya under Reverend Nethan Brown and Oliver Cutter with a printing press. But the expeditions proved disastarous as the entire British party was annihilated at Sadiya in March 1939 in a tribal uprising. Mr. Brown soon moved to Jaypur and from there to Sibsagar. Another missionary Mr. Bronson who had established himself amongst the Nagas at Namsang near Jaypur also moved to Nowgong and settled there. Here in 1941, the first Assamese Mr. Nidhiram later on known as Nidhi Levi Farewell was baptised by him.

Inspired by their proselytising spirit, the missionaries carried on their activities. Gauhati, Sibsagar and Nowgong became the important

centres of their activities. They opened hospitals and schools for boys and girls which were uncommon in those days and espoused the cause of Assamese language. Brown, Bronson and Farewell, the trio, laid the foundation of Christian-Assamese literature. They published various text books for school children, in addition to religious books and propaganda literature. Bronson's monumental work is a Dictionary of Assamese language, Assamese to Assamese and to English. This is the earliest Assamese dictionary. Brown translated the New Testament into Assamese, wrote a grammar of the Assamese language, and collected a fairly good number of Assamese manuscripts. Nidhi Levi is credited with a historical work, a number of story books and the rendering into Assamese of the Indian Penal code. To crown all, missionaries published in January, 1846, the *Orunodai* the first Assamese monthly which was not merely a vehicle of their religious propaganda, but also a magazine of general interest. "Disseminating western thought and learning the *Orunodai* inspired the younger generation and paved the way for an intellectual awakening." The contributions of these and a few others, both Assamese and non-Assamese backed by the untiring efforts of the benevolent Commissioner Major Jenkins prepared the ground and sowed the seeds which germinated and bore fruits early in the next century."[3]

The first English school, as mentioned earlier, was established at Dibrugarh and another at North-Lakhimpur in 1842.[4] By 1853, there were only six schools in the district with 270 pupils on the rolls. The other four schools were situated at Dhakuakhana, Bardalani, Saikhowa and Tengakhat. During the next eleven years, the progress of education was described to "be very slow or rather there was retrogression in place of progress",[5] as the number of Govt. schools remained static and number of scholars also fell to 169. Besides there was one unaided Mission school at Dibrugarh with seventy or eighty pupils.

During the next decade of 1864-74, "there was an enormous development of the whole system of education."[6] The number of schools increased nearly ten-fold as also the number of pupils. The following statement shows the progress made in the educational field in the district of Lakhimpur upto 1900-01.

---

3. H. K. Barpujari, *Assam in the days of the Company*, 1826-1858, pp. 269-286.
4. B. C. Allen, *Assam District Gazetteer. Lakhimpur*, 1905, p.p. 276-280.
5. Ibid, p.p. 276-277.
6. Ibid, p. 277.

Year	Number of Secondary Schools	Pupils	Number of Primary Schools	Pupils	Total number of pupils.	Percentage under instruction to those of school-going age.	
						Males	Females
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1874-75	3	271	58	1582	1853	—	—
1880-81	6	551	53	1703	2254	15.52	0.22
1890-91	7	642	97	2351	2993	14.04	0.69
1900-01	13	1243	202	4184	5427	17.55	0.97

There was only one High School in the district situated at Dibrugarh. The boys were taught upto the Entrance Course as was then prescribed by the University of Calcutta. English was the medium of instruction in the four Senior classes of High schools while in the lower classes and in other schools, the medium of instruction was vernacular. The courses in the Middle English and Middle Vernacular Schools were the same except that English was taught in the former but not in the latter. Primary education was divided into Upper and Lower but the former was stated to be dying out.[7] The standard of instruction was not upto the mark and efforts were made to improve the same by raising the rates of pay of the teachers to Rs. 8/- *per mensem* for certificated and Rs. 5/- *per mensem* for uncertificated teachers supplemented by capitation grants at rates ranging from 3 *annas* to 6 *annas* for pupils in the three highest classes.

The only Medical School in the Province at that time, was opened at Dibrugarh in 1900 with a nucleus fund of Rs. 50,000/- bequeathed in a legacy for this purpose by Dr. Berry White. The school was under the management of the Civil Surgeon. The course was of four years duration and students were taught upto the standard of a civil hospital assistant. There was also one Survey School at Dibrugarh where students received training which qualified them for the post of village accountant or *Mandal*. In addition to these educational institutions there were some schools in the Buddhist villages where boys were taught by the village priests how to read and write in Buddhist script.

7. Ibid p. 279.

(b) Literacy and Educational standard

It has been stated earlier that the cause of education suffered a set-back in the wake of the upheavals which led to the downfall of the Ahom kingdom. However, the consolidation of the British rule, brought about the gradual expansion and improvement of modern education. A number of schools were established under State management. Missionaries also took keen interest in the spread of education and the urge for education was also noticeable among the masses. As a result a number of schools of Primary and Secondary standard came into existence in different parts of the district. Collegiate education did not make much headway then but there was a marked expansion after Independence of the country especially during the plan periods.

In 1901, 62 per mille of the male population and 5 of the female population were shown as literate. But among these literates quite a large number were foreigners and more than half of the literates were educated in Bengali and foreign languages. Moreover, prior to 1901 all persons under instruction were shown as 'Learning' whether they could read and write and as such it was difficult to measure the actual growth of literacy among the people of the district. However, the figures indicate a steady rise of literacy as a whole in the district since 1881 except for a slight fall in 1901.[8]

A steady rise in literacy has been maintained in the district since 1911. During the decade of 1901-11 ; there were 45 literate persons per mille in the district. Literacy among males increased to 80 showing a rise of 18 over that of 1901 but literacy among females remained static. In the two subsequent decennial censuses literacy per mille as a whole rose to 62 and 67 and that of male to 104 and 142 respectively. At the same time female literacy per mille rose to the level of 11 and then to 15 during these two decades. The following table shows the details of literacy in the district as per censuses of 1911, 1921 and 1931.[9]

Literacy by age and sex (Number per mille who are literate)

Year	All Ages			0-10		10-15		15-20		20 and above	
	Total	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1911	45	80	5	12	2	82	11	121	11	19	6
1921	62	104	11	30	8	84	16	137	21	125	10
1931	87	143	15	54	11	98	18	185	24	165	14

8. *Census of India*, 1911, Volume III, Assam Part I, Report, p. 91.
9. *Census of India*, 1921, Volume III, Assam Part I, Report. p. 109 and *Censns of India*, 1931, Volume III Assam, Part I. Report p. 160.

During the next two decades of 1931-51 male literacy per mille in the district increased from 143 in 1931 to 244 in 1951 and female literacy from 15 to 66 respectively. The percentage of literacy for 1951 for the district as a whole rose to 16.3 and that of male and female to 24.4 and 6.6 respectively. This percentage of literacy further registered a marked rise (28.7%) in 1961, even surpassing the all Assam percentage of literacy which stood at 27.4. Literacy for male and female also registered a rise and stood at 38.86% and 16.38% respectively. In 1971, the percentage of literacy in the district rose to 29.7. The rise in literacy during this decade is mainly due to the rise in female literacy which has increased from 16.28 per cent in 1961 to 29.6 per cent in 1971[10] The following table shows the percentage of literacy and literates in the district as per censuses of 1951, 1961 and 1971.

10. *Census of India*, 1971, Assam, Provisional Population Totals p.p. 14-15.

Year	Population			Literates			Percentage of literates.		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1951	586306	491851	1078157	143001	32684	175685	24.4	6.6	16.3
1961	853879	709963	1563842	331860	116322	448182	38.36	16.38	28.7
1971	1133080	985306	2118386	436301	192742	629043	38.5	19.6	29.7

The rise of literacy in the district in the last three decades has been largely due to the efforts initiated by the Union and State Governments esepecially after Independence in pursuance of the Directive Principles of State Policy, to extend educational facilities at different levels and particularly at the primary stage. Persons receiving higher education commencing from the Matriculation standard have also increased in number during this period. As per the 1961 Census the undivided district had a population of 1563842 of whom 448182 were literates. The sex-wise division of the literates was 331860 males and 116322 females. Of these persons, 239154 males and 89332 females were literates without any formal education ; 75687 males and 23500 females were literates of Primary or Junior Basic standard and the rest of the literates, i. e., 17019 males and 3490 females were literates of Matriculation standard and above. The table at Appendix-A, shows the literates with educational standard in the district as per census of 1961.[11]

The literates without any formal education constitute an overwhelming majority. Those of the Primary and Junior Basic standard are mostly from the rural areas whereas the majority of the literates of Matriculation and above standard hail from the urban areas of the district. The details of educational standard above Matriculation are available only for the urban areas. Out of the 8352 males and 2597 females of matriculation and above educational standard 6704 males and 2269 females were Matriculates or Higher Secondary School Leaving Certificate holders and of the rest, 72 were technical diploma holders, 85 non-technical diploma holders and 1442 University degree or Post Graduate degree holders other than technical degrees. There were 108 graduates in Engineering, 187 in Medicine, 5 in Agriculture, 5 in Veterinary and Dairying, 18 in Technology, 43 in Teaching and 11 in other subjects. The table at Appendix B shows the details of educational standard above matriculation in the urban areas of the dsitrict as per Census, of 1961.

Spread of Education among women : Early writers are eloquent about the high position of women in the Assamese society which never became the victim of cruel rites such as infanticide, *Sati*, dowry etc., usually associated with Hindu Society in early days. However, the idea of female education was not in tune with the times. Even the cultured families evinced little desire to educate their daughters and wives. Greater emphasis was, however, given to inculcate such virtues as would make them hospitable, religious minded and dutiful housewives.[12] The idea of female education took root some time after western education was introduced and the above analysis reveals that since 1901, female literacy in the district, has made considerable progress, especially during the last

11. *Census of India*, 1961, *District Census Handbook, Lakhimpur*, pp. 331-332.
12. H. K. Barpujari, *Assam in the Days of the Company*, p. 274.

two decades. It now stands at 163 per thousand females against 66 in 1951. It is also a matter of considerable satisfaction that the rate of female literacy is rising more rapidly than that of males, but the disparity between males and females in this field still persists. However, with the increase in the number of school going children of the female sex, the disparity between male and female is declining and is expected to decrease further in the next decade. The obstacles in the way of progress of female education lie in the very structure of Indian society. Till a few decades ago early marriage and the difficulty of procuring women teachers were the two notable impediments. The greatest obstacle was, however, the general spirit of social conservatism. Education of women was believed to be a dangerous western innovation which was liable to transform a dutiful, affectionate girl into a discontented lady. This spirit was widespread 30 years ago. "Several distinguished people and educationists of Assam had no hesitation in informing the then Census Superintendent that education, particularly higher education, is not a good thing for Indian women. Some others considered that present system of female education was radically unsound as it made girls unfit for the domestic duties of their home life. The spirit demanding emarcipation of women was only just raising its head at that time confined as it was to a mere handful of women."[13] Many changes have taken place since then. Child marriage is becoming rare. Women are coming forward in increasing numbers to participate in every sphere of life. There is no dearth of women teachers. People are now equally conscious of the need for girls education as of the boys. The passion for education has been whetted up among the women-folk, by various factors since Independence. As a result female literacy which has already registered a noticeable progress during the period from 1941 to 1971 is bound to increase further, with the passage of time.

Spread of education among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is another important feature in the district in recent years. It was observed by B. C. Allen in 1905, as follows :—"The aboriginal tribes such as the Miris and Kacharis who formed the bulk of the indigenous population were still but little impressed with the advantages of learning."[14] But since then these people have made considerable progress in the field of education. According to the 1961 Census, out of 77271 persons belonging to the Scheduled Castes and 166525 belonging to the Scheduled Tribes in the district the total number of literates was 15869 and 45665 respectively. Of the literates among the Scheduled Castes 12608 persons were without any formal education and 3001 were of Primary or Junior Basic standard and 260 were of Matriculation and above

13. *Census of India*, 1951, Vol-XII, Assam, Manipur & Tripura, Part IA Report pp. 345-46.
14. B. C. Allen ; *Assam District Gazetteers, Lakhimpur* 1905, p. 278.

standard. Among the Scheduled Tribes 35215 persons were literates without any formal education 9921 read upto Primary or Junior Basic standard and 510 were of the Matriculation and above standard. The table at Appendix-C shows literacy among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes sex-wise in the district.

(c) General Education :

Primary Schools : Primary education has made rapid progress in recent years and facilities for the same have been extended to every nook and corner of the district. In 1874-75, there were only 58 Primary Schools in the district with an enrolment of 1582 students. The number of schools rose to 202 in 1901 and the number of students to 4184. During the next six decades, there was almost a tenfold increase in the number of schools and the number of students almost increased twenty times. In 1960-61, the district had 1956 primary schools of which 1730 were Lower Primary Schools, 225 Junior Basic Schools and I Nursery School. The number of scholars during the same year was 123687 of whom 104360 were reading in the Lower Primary Schools, 19295 in the Junior Basic Schools and 32 in the Nursery Schools.

By 1969-70, the number of Lower Primary Schools in the district rose to 2113 and Nursery Schools to 7 but the strength of Junior Basic Schools declined to 214. However, the enrolment in the above categories of schools showed a continuous rising trend and the number of scholars during the same year was 177397 of whom 154663 were in Lower Primary Schools, 22535 in Junior Basic Schools and 199 in Nursery Schools.

As stated earlier, primary education in the past was divided into Lower and Upper standards but in course of time Upper Primary Schools were abolished in the district along with the rest of Assam. The course of the Primary Schools, till recently was for five years and the classes consisted of A, B, I, II, and III. From 1973 primary education in the State has been reorganised and the classes now consist of I, II. III and IV.

Basic Schools : Basic education in the district has been introduced by the State Govt. as per recommendations of the Central Advisory Board of Education. There are two kinds of Basic Schools—Junior Basic and Senior Basic. In 1960-61. there were 225 Junior Basic Schools and 37 Senior Basic Schools with 18790 and 6612 students respectively. The Basic Education Act of 1954, envisages conversion of all Primary schools to Junior Basic Schools depending, however, upon the availability of trained teachers and basic materials. The following table shows the number of Primary Schools in the district during 1874-75 to 1969-70.

Year	Lower Primary schools		Nursery schools		Junior Basic schools		Total	
	Schools	Scholars	Schools	Scholars	Schools	Scholars	Primary Schools	Scholars in Primary schools.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1874-75	58	1582	—	—	—	—	58	1582
1880-81	53	1703	—	—	—	—	53	1703
1890-91	97	2351	—	—	—	—	97	2351
1900-01	202	4184	—	—	—	—	202	4184
1949-50	1114	58640	—	—	—	—	1114	58640
1959-60	1536	112905	1	18	227	18790	1764	131713
1960-61	1730	104360	1	32	225	19295	1956	123687
1961-62	1822	116027	1	60	225	19621	2048	135708
1962-63	1901	113132	2	55	206	20576	2109	133763
1963-64	2032	129541	4	40	222	21008	2258	150589
1964-65	1971	133034	2	71	220	20597	2193	153702
1965-66	1971	133851	3	97	217	20660	2191	154608
1966-67	2089	141210	6	154	216	21090	2311	162454
1967-68	2097	149555	6	165	215	21725	2318	171445
1968-69	2115	151805	7	192	215	21883	2337	173880
1969-70	2113	154663	7	199	214	22535	2334	177397

The Director of Public Instruction, Assam is responsible for promoting general education and deals with all matters pertaining to it. Under the Directorate there are four Deputy Inspectors of Schools, two in Dibrugarh district and two in Lakhimpur district posted at Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, North Lakhimpur and Dhemaji. Their main task is to inspect and supervise the administration of Lower Primary Schools, Junior Basic Schools and Middle Schools situated within their respective jurisdictions. Under each Deputy Inspector of Schools there are a number of Sub-Inspectors and Assistant Sub-Inspectors of Schools to assist them in carrying out inspections of the Primary Schools. There is also one Assistant Sub-Inspector for Social Educaton.

With a view to make Primary Education universal and compulsory, the control of primary education in the plains districts of Assam, has been transferred to a statutory body under the Assam Elementry Education Act 1962, which envisages the establishment of State Board of Elementry Education with a Regional Board under it in each sub-division. The Deputy Inspector of Schools of each subdivision functions as its ex-officio Secretary. All the Primary Schools were taken from the Local bodies and transferred to these authorities. Under the Assam Primary Education Act, 1947, primary education was made compulsory in some selected areas in the State. Compulsory education in the district was introduced in some selected areas during 1948 to 1959. At first it was introduced in the Dibrugarh subdivision and the total number of school going children in the area covered by this scheme was 34078 in 420 schools. Similarly, compulsory primary education was introduced in North-Lakhimpur sub-division during the period from 1-2-49 to 1-3-59 and the total number of schools covered by the scheme was 404 with 27893 students.

Secondary Schools : The history of secondary education in the district is not very old. In fact except for a few high schools, most of the schools were established only after 1947. Before Independence the alien rulers did not give proper attention to the spread of Secondary Education in this forntier district. But it is to be admitted that the establishment of the first school at Dibrugarh in 1849 and at North Lakhimpur in 1842 gave much impetus to the people for setting up similar institutions in other parts of the district. In fact, "the expansion of secondary education has been so rapid that it has outpaced completely the supply of teachers."[15]

In 1901, the district had only 13 Secondary Schools with an enrolment of 1243 students. During the next five decades ending 1951 the the number of Secondary schools rose to 106 with an enrolment of

15. S. C. Mazumdar, *Education of Assam*, pp 24-25

19748 ; in the subsequent two decades there was more than five fold increase in the number of schools and the enrolment during the period increased almost six times. In 1969-70, there were 540 Secondary Schools with an enrolment of 100148 students. The Secondary Schools in the district may be grouped into : (1) High Schools, (2) Higher Secondary Schools, (3) Middle Schools and (4) Senior Basic Schools. As discussed earlier, the Senior Basic Schools play an important part in Basic education. Out of 540 Secondary Schools there were 8 Higher Secondary Schools, 164 High Schools, 306 Middle Schools and 62 Senior Basic Schools with enrolments of 5918, 47547, 36886 and 9797 respectively. A few Secondary Schools are run by the Government while the rest are managed by the Managing Committees of each school. The funds of these institutions are augmented with the help of direct grants from the State Government. There are a few private schools which are not entitled to Government grants ; but they are subject to inspection by the Inspecting Officers of the Department of Education of the Government of Assam and are required to follow the prescribed syllabus and curriculum.

Formerly the Inspector of Schools, Upper Assam Circle, Jorhat was the inspecting officer in respect of the high schools and higher secondary schools in both the sub-divisions of the undivided district. With the creation of the Northern Assam Circle at Tezpur in 1960, the sub-division of North-Lakhimpur was attached to Northern Assam Circle, Tezpur and the sub-division of Dibrugarh continued to be under the Upper Assam Circle. In 1965, a new circle was opened for the whole of the undivided district. With the bifurcation of the old Lakhimpur district on 2nd October 1971, a separate Circle of the Inspector was opened at North-Lakhimpur comprising the whole of the newly constituted Lakhimpur District and the Inspectorate at Dibrugarh continued to have jurisdiction over the newly constituted Dibrugarh district. The Middle Schools in the two districts are managed under the supervision of the respective Deputy Inspectors of Schools. The headquarters of these officers are located at North-Lakhimpur and Dhemaji in Lakhimpur district and Dibrugarh and Tinsukia in Dibrugarh district. The table below shows the position of the Secondary Schools and the total enrolment from 1949-50 to 1969-70.

Year	Middle Schools ME and MV.		Senior Basic Schools		Higher English Schools		Higher Secondary Schools		Total	
	Schools	Scholars	Schools	Scholars	Schools	Scholars	Schools	Scholars	Schools	Scholars
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1949-50	80	9346	—	—	26	10402	—	—	106	19748
1960-61	217	21965	37	6612	91	28046	2	1786	347	58409
1961-62	222	18409	39	6703	101	29161	3	2316	365	56589
1962-63	239	21141	42	7364	121	32784	4	2965	406	64254
1963-64	261	22565	45	6488	134	36372	6	3973	446	69398
1964-65	213	23337	52	7920	125	39265	7	5026	397	75548
1965-66	229	15865	53	8231	125	39893	8	5797	415	69786
1966-67	253	28638	62	8858	133	42419	8	5766	456	85681
1967-68	271	31185	62	9557	144	43642	8	5706	485	90090
1968-69	296	34456	62	9673	151	45518	8	5809	517	95456
1969-70	306	36886	62	9797	164	47547	8	5918	540	100148

Colleges : The history of general collegiate education in the undivided district is of very recent origin. It was only in 1945 that the first college of the district was established at Dibrugarh and this continued to be the only institution of higher education till 1952 when another college was established at North Lakhimpur. Till the sixties the progress of collegiate education may be described as 'tardy.' Since the beginning of the seventies a number of colleges have been established in the district. The Dibrugarh University which came into being in 1965-66 provided a fresh fillip to the expansion of higher education in the district. The progress of collegiate education in the undivided district since 1961-62 has been shown below in tabular form.

Year	No of Colleges	No. of Scholars
1	2	3
1961-62	4	2002
1962-63	5	2864
1963-64	6	3217
1964-65	9	3848
1965-66	11	4721
1966-67	12	5614
1967-68	14	6690
1968-69	14	7020
1972-73	15	9434

Descriptive accounts of some of the colleges of the undivided Lakhimpur district are given below :—

1. **Monohari Devi Kanoi Girls' College, Dibrugarh :** The establishment of a separate Girls' college at Dibrugarh in July 1963 fulfilled the long cherished dream of the public of Dibrugarh. The foundation stone of this college was laid on the fifth day of July, 1963 by Dr. K. L. Srimali, the then Union Minister of Education. It is in memory of the wife of late H. B. Kanoi, the donor and is the only Girl's college at Dibrugarh. It is affiliated to the University of Dibrugarh and imparts education upto the three-year Degree Course with provision for teaching in all subjects under the 'Humanities group.' In September, 1967 there were 352 students with 22 members in the teaching staff.

2. **Dibrugarh H. S. Kanoi College :** This is one of the premier colleges of Upper Assam and was established in 1945. It had served as the nucleus of the D. H. S. K. Commerce College and the M. D. K. Girls' College. It also co-sponsored the Kanoi Law College and also the Dibrugarh University Project. The College has both under-graduate and Post-

graduate departments. The Post-graduate classes in Sanskrit, History and Economics were started in 1962. The college is situated within the town and its compound covers an area of about 51 bighas of land. It has a beautiful two storeyed building, one science building and one laboratory for Botany. Most of the buildings of the college were donated of by H. B. Kanoi and the main building was inauguraated in 1958 by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, the then Vice-President of India.

The statement below shows enrolment of students (class wise and faculty wise) during 1972-73.

Class	Male	Female	Total
1	2	3	4
P. U. (Arts).	234	46	280
T. D. C. 1st year	109	23	132
T. D. C. 2nd year	250	31	281
T. D. C. 3rd year	146	30	176
P. U. (Science)	132	21	153
T. D. C. 1st year	78	29	107
T. D. C. 2nd year	94	32	126
T. D. C. 3rd year	50	23	73
Total :—	1,093	235	1,328

The college provides facilities for the study of both Arts and Science subjects and it is affiliated to the University of Dibrugarh. There were 73 teachers in the college in different subjects in 1972-73.

3. **North Lakhimpur College :** This is the premier Government Aided College of the present Lakhimpur district and was established through public donation in 1952. It offers facilities for study in Arts and Science upto the degree standard and is affiliated to the University of Dibrugarh. The College is managed by a duly constituted governing body and the institution is located within the town area of North Lakhimpur. In 1972-73 there were 40 teachers and 1149 students (940 male and 209 female) in the college.

4. **Tinsukia College :** The Tinsukia Government Aided Degree College in Arts, Science and Commerce was established in 1956. The college is managed by a duly constituted governing body and is situated at Parbatia, within the town area. It has 18 bighas of land with permanent buildings. Hostel accommodation and library facilities are being provided for the benefit of the students. In 1972-73, there were 60 teachers and 1504 students (1314 male and 190 female) in the college. It is affiliated to the University of Dibrugarh.

5. **Dhemaji College :** The Dhemaji college is located in the sub-divisional headquarters at Dhemaji and was started through public donations in 1965. It is a rural college and its students are mostly tribals or Other Backward Classes of Dhemaji. It is an Arts college upto the Degree standard and is affiliated to the Dibrugarh University. In 1972-73, the strength of the teaching staff and the number of students in the college were 14 and 350 respectively.

6. **Madhabdev College, Narayanpur :** This college is named after Sri Madhabdev, the chief disciple of Sri Sri Sankardev. It is believed that Sri Madhabdev was born nearby Narayanpur. Madhabdev College, Narayanpur within North Lakhimpur sub-division, is situated at Panbari about 1½ miles from Narayanpur on the Bihpuria-Narayanpur road. In 1967, there were 244 students including 25 girls. There were 11 teachers in the college.

7. **Dibrugarh H. S. K. Commerce College :** The Dibrugarh H. S. K. Commerce College began funtioning as a full-fledged Commerce College from October, 1960 and prior to that year, Commerce was a section of the D. H. S. K. college Dibrugarh. Now, this is a premier commerce college of Assam imparting education upto B. Com. with (Honours) standard. Honours Courses are taught in Accountancy, Business Management, Labour Economics and Banking.

It is a Government Aided institution and is affiliated to the University of Dibrugarh. For the management of the college there is one governing body approved by the Government. The college has its own two-storeyed building. It is situated by the side of the D. H. S. K. College. In 1972-73, there were 33 teachers and 890 students including one girl student.

8. **Digboi College, Digboi :** The new Digboi College was established on the 15th July, 1965 to fulfill the long felt need for an institution for higher education in the oil town at Digboi. Prior to this, there was a college at Digboi for a short period upto 1963. In the initial stage the new college was purely an Arts College but in 1967, Science subjects in Pre-Uuniversity classes were introduced. In 1967, there were 28 teachers and 710 students in the college. A special feature of the college is that about 60% of the students belong to the fair sex.

In addition to the above mentioned colleges there are seven affiliated colleges in the districts of Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh providing education upto the degree standard in Arts, Science and Commerce.

The district-wise accounts of these seven colleges as in 1972-73 have been furnished in a tabular form below :—

District	Name of the college Arts/Science/Commerce/ Combined.	Year of establish- ment	No. of teachers	Total No. of students.	Male Students.	Female students
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Lakhimpur District	Dhakuakhana College (Arts)	1966	13	215	180	35
Lakhimpur District	North Bank College, Ghilamara (Arts).	1961	14	359	316	43
Dibrugarh District	Dibru College, Dibrugarh (Combined).	1963	44	863	792	71
Dibrugarh District	Doom Dooma College, (Arts)	1967	15	419	280	139
Dibrugarh District	Duliajan College, Duliajan (Arts) and P.U. in Science.	1969	15	216	175	41
Dibrugarh District	Naharkatiya College, (Arts)	1964	16	410	322	88
Dibrugarh District	Women's College, Tinsukia (Arts).	1966	23	425	—	425

In 1972-73, three more colleges in Dibrugarh district viz., the Chabua College, the Tengakhat College and the Dibrugarh Night College obtained permission from the University of Dibrugarh to start Pre-University classes in Arts subjects.

The Dibrugarh University : The Dibrugarh University Bill was passed in the State Assembly on 3-6-65 and it became an Act in the same year. The jurisdiction of the University extends to Sibsagar, Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh districts of Upper Assam. According to the original Act this University covered only two districts namely Sibsagar and Lakhimpur (undivided). In the initial stage the University office was started in the D. H. S. K. Commerce College, Dibrugarh and was shifted to its permanent site in August 1967.

The establishment of the University at Dibrugarh is expected to provide impetus for the spread of education at all levels in Upper Assam. The University of Dibrugarh, located at Rajabheta in a rural setting embodies the hopes and aspirations of about four million people. The region of the University is rich in tea, mines and minerals, and it is expected that the University would acquire and disseminate knowledge that would assist exploration of the rich potentialities of the area. Particular emphasis is laid on research. There is ample scope for research on Social Anthropology as historically the area was the domain of the Ahom, the Chutia, the Moran and the Kachari kings—remnants of whose kingdoms are scattered over the region and are yet to be explored, preserved and studied. Besides, the neighbouring area is inhabited by people of various hill tribes whose colourful social life, habits and culture are to be fully studied. The synthesis of culture which took place in this region and helped to evolve the present Assamese Society and literature seems to be a subject worthy of intensive investigations.*

In order to achieve the above goals the Dibrugarh University is carrying out research in various fields. In 1973 there were 17 research scholarships of which 12 were offered by the University Grants Commission and 5 by the University. The Departments of Economics, Sociology and Anthropology are also carrying out research in various spheres. The Sociology Department publishes a research journal regularly. Two Departments namely Applied Geology and Petroleum Technology were started by the University in 1970-71. The former is a three year M. Tech. course and the latter is a one year Diploma course. These Departments are the specialities of this University. At present teaching in the University campus at Rajabheta is imparted in 15 subjects. Subject to the approval of the University Grants Commission, the University proposes to introduce Botany, Geology and Geography with an emphasis on their applied aspects.

* Address by V. C. on the occasion of the Third Convocation of the Dibrugarh University on 10. 3. 73.

In 1973 there were 40 Colleges affiliated to the University. Sixteen of these Colleges including one Medical College belonged to the undivided Lakhimpur district. After bifurcation of the Lakhimpur district on 2nd October 1971, out of the total 16 affiliated Colleges under this University 11 Colleges including the Assam Medical College fell in Dibrugarh district and the remaining 5 in Lakhimpur district.

The University of Dibrugarh has switched over to Assamese as the medium of instruction in the two year Pre-University course with effect from 1972 and will do so in the B. A. course from 1974. For this purpose a Co-ordination Committee for Text Book Production has been set up under the University and the Committee has already published 31 text books in Assamese for the Pre-University course. Twenty six more text books are under publication. Similar measures for the B. A. course are under consideration.

(d) **Professional and Technical Schools and Colleges :-**

The Assam Medical College, Dibrugarh : The first Medical School at Dibrugarh was established in 1900 to provide much needed medical education in Assam. The school was named after John Berry White, the Brigadier Surgeon, who donated Rs. 50,000/- for the establishment of the school. The school functioned creditably for 46 years and turned out a large number of physicians and pharmacists. This school formed the nucleus of the present Medical College which was established in 1947. The Assam edical College is located on an erstwhile tea-estate at Barbari, Dibrugarh, and extends over an area of three hundred acres. During the Second World War there functioned on this site an Allied Military Hospital with well-equipped operation theatres, wards, clinical laboratories, electrical plants and water supply systems. After the war the buildings and equipments were acquired by the Government and were utilised for the newly established Medical College.

The college is a residential one and staff and students live in the campus. The first batch of students appeared in the final M. B. B. S. Examination in 1951 and since then the college has been turning out medical graduates every year. The total number of medical graduates who have emerged from this institution upto September, 1967, was 1359. Most of them are now members of the State ealth Service, Army Medical Corps, Arunachal and Nagaland Health Service and in industrial concerns of Assam and other States. Some have also been absorbed in different teachers' posts in the three Medical Colleges of Assam.

In 1967, the teaching staff of the college comprised 180 members. The Assam Medical College is a State institution and is affiliated to the University of Dibrugarh. The pattern of education imparted in the college for under-Graduate and post-Graduate studies is in the line of

the recommendations of the Medical Council of India. The College provides facilities of study upto the degree level (M. B. B. S. Course) in the following subjects :-Anatomy, Physiology, Pharmacology, Pathology, Social and Preventive Medicines, Medicine, Surgery, Opthalmology, Chemistry, Bio-Chemistry, Anasthesiology, Radiology etc. Facilities for Post-Graduate study are available in the college in Medicine, Surgery, Opthalmology, Obstetrics and Gynaecology. The college also provides the follwoing facilities for study :- Diploma in Pharmacy (Dipl. Pharm), Senior Nurses' Training and Auxiliary Nurses' Training Courses, Radiographers' Courses, Sanitarians' Courses and Laboratory Technicians' courses.

To meet the increasing demand for more medical personnel to run hospitals, dispensaries, primary health units and family planning centres in the State, the annual admission of students in the pre-medical section has been raised to 150. It may be mentioned here that in 1961, there were only 562 students including 69 girl students and one foreign student. In 1969-70, the number of students further rose to 1085.

The following statement shows the budgetary position of the Assam Medical College, Dibrugarh for the year 1970-71 and 1971-72. This is exclusive of Medical College Hospital receipts and expenditures.

Items	Year		
	Budget estimate 1971-72	Budget estimate 1970-71	Budget estimate 1969-70
	(in Rupees)		
1	2	3	4
1. Pay of Officers	810600	808490	800781
2. Pay of Establishment	153420	127070	155395
3. Allowances and honoraria	243200	243200	265553
4. Contingencies	388000	363500	805416
5. Contribution Grants-in-aid etc.	20000	20000	20000
Total	1615220	1562260	2047145

A two-year Pharmacists' Course (Diploma in Pharmacy) has been introduced in place of the former one-year Compounder's Course in the Old Berry White Medical School building since 1960 with an annual admission of 50 students.

Law Colleges : The Kanoi Law College, Dibrugarh established in 1965, was the first institution for imparting legal education in the undi-

vided disrtict of Lakhimpur. It offered instructions in a two-year LL.B. Course under the Dibrugarh University. But in 1967, when law classes were started in the University campus, the Law College functioning at the Kanoi College premises was merged with the University and the previous two-year Course was converted into a three-year Degree Course on the basis of resolution No. 2/1966 of the Bar Council of India.

A Law College has also been started recently at North Lakhimpur to fulfill the needs of legal education in the newly created Lakhimpur district.

Dibrugarh B. T. College (Institute of Education) : This institution meant for the training of teachers of High and Higher Secondary Schools was established in September, 1965. The irstitution is affiliated to the University of Dibrugarh.

Teachers' Training Schools : In 1969-70 the undivided district had four teachers training schools of which three schools imparted training to teachers in basic education and one in pre-primary education. The total enrolment in both types of schools was 319 in 1969-70. The following table shows the enrolment in both types of schools since 1960-61.

Type of School	1961-62	1962-63	1963-64	1964-65	1965-66
1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Basic Training Schools.	158	287	288	344	244
2. Non-Basic Training Schools (Pre-primary)	—	33	26	18	24
Total	158	320	314	362	268

Type of School	1966-67	1967-68	1968-69	1969-70
1	7	8	9	10
1. Basic Training Schools	280	221	192	298
2. Non-Basic Training Schools (Pre-primary)	20	31	22	21
Total	300	252	214	319

Technical Institutions : Till very recently, the undivided district of Lakhimpur was lagging behind in technical institutions. However, this shortcoming was overcome with the establishment of a Polytechnic School at Lohoal, near Dibrugarh. This was the first technical institution in the undivided district. But before this, one Engineering School was also opened at Dibrugarh by the endowment of Mr. Williamson, a tea planter of Sibsagar. But this school subsequently closed down. In 1970, one Industrial Training Institute for imparting training in different technical crafts was established at Tinsukia. The institution will meet he demand for skilled personnel in the industrial sector.

Besides the above institutions, there are training centres under the Development Blocks where training is imparted in carpentry, blacksmithy embrodiery and allied subjects in different Blocks of both the districts.

CHAPTER—XVI

MEDICAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

(a) Survey of Public Health in early times :

Information is meagre about public health conditions and medical facilities of early times in the undivided district of Lakhimpur. There is no doubt that Ayurvedic and other indigenous systems of medicine were prevalent in the past amongst different communities. It is also ertain that some of these verged on quackery. There were physicians in the Ahom Court who were well-versed in Ayurvedic lore. These were *bez* (a physician) *ojha* (a man who purports to cure by incantations) and *Kaviraj* practising Ayurvedic system of medicine. The Ahom kings conferred the title of Bezbarua on the Chief medical officer of the State. The Assamese *Nidan puthis* deal with the nature and treatment of diseases and describe various medicinal herbs and indigenous a phrodisiacs. In this context, it may also be noted that pharmaceutics was first prevalent amongst the village folk who had acquired knowledge about the medicinal efficacy of trees, creepers, grasses, leaves, fruits, flowers, barks and roots of tress. Notwithstanding the tremendous progress of modern medical facilities use of indigenous drugs and lotions is still very popular in the rural areas. The main reason for this is not far to seek. The medical facilities provided by the Government in rural areas are not adequate and the shortage of qualified practitioners is filled up by those who claim to cure either by chanting *mantras* or by using herbs which are locally available. Use of *Maduli* (amulet), *Tabiz* (an armlet, an amulet), *Jhap* is still common in the rural areas where life jogs within the periphery of traditional beliefs and disbeliefs. These pieces purified by chanting *mantras* are believed to have some magical powers to ward off the evil spirits that occasionally cast evil glances on the ill-fated people. The Ayurvedic literature of Assam both in Assamese and Sanskrit is also considerable.

Several treatises on animal diseases and their treatment compiled during the days of the Ahom rule have come to light. Amongst these he *Ghora-Nidhana*, the *Hastividyarnava* and the *Senar Vyadhi* reveal the richness and variety of the Assamese pharmacopoeia. The *Ghora-Nidhana* is a treatise on horses, the *Hastividyarnava* is on elephants and the *Senar Vyadhi* is on training and treatment of hawks.

In the past there was no survey of medical facilities available in the undivided district. Even the early Census Reports from 1891 to 1931 do not contain adequate information about the prevalence of various diseases, such as cholera, small pox, malaria etc., in the undivided district. However, these throw some light about the prevalence of infirmities such as insanity, deafness, muteness, blindness and leprosy.

The following statement shows the number afflicted with these four infirmities per 100,000 of the population (both male and female) at each of the five Censuses commencing from 1891 to 1931 in the undivided district of Lakhimpur.

Infirmities	Year				
	1931	1921	1911	1901	1891
1	2	3	4	5	6
Insane	58	50	39	22	54
Deaf mute	150	124	172	170	252
Blind	126	122	127	126	127
Leper	107	102	123	150	271

The Census Report of 1931 admits that the figures on infirmities are not reliable. Their only merit is that they give some indication of the distribution of infirmities and their quantitative variation at successive Censuses. In subsequent Census Reports assessments have been made about the loss of human lives due to cholera, small-pox, plague etc. These have been discussed under appropriate sections of this Chapter.

The allopathic system of medicine made its way into Assam with the advent of the British during the last century and in due course became the predominant system under Government patronage. The credit of having the first medical school in Assam for teaching the western system of medicine goes to Lakhimpur. In 1897, Dr. John Berry White, the Chief Medical Officer of Behiating Tea Estate made a donation of Rs. 50,000/- to provide for medical relief to the State and accordingly the Berry White Medical School was established at Dibrugarh in 1900. The school soon became popular although it could turn out only L. M. Ps (Licentiate Medical Practioners). It established a good record during nearly half a century of its existence. Doctors turned out from this School rendered great benefit to the people of Assam. The school was maintained by the Government and was under the management of the Civil Surgeon of the then District of Lakhimpur. It functioned from 1900 to 1947 when it was closed and the Assam Medical College at Dibrugarh was established in its place.

(b) **Vital Statistics** : The practice of maintaining vital statistics became common in the district during the British days. Vital statistics were prepared on the basis of reports of births and deaths submitted by the *Gaonbura* or village headman to the *mandal* of the Circle. In theory, they submitted the report every 2nd week but in practice they

were received at much longer intervals, as the *Goandura* was an unpaid servant of the Government not amenable to discipline. Hence, vital statistics so maintained in the past were not accurate. Now-a-days vital statistics are collected in the village level by the *Goandura* who in turn submits it to the lot mandal or to the Mauzadar who compiles a monthly return and submits it to the District Medical Officer of Health. In the urban areas such statistics are received from the Chairmen, Municipal Boards and Town Committees. Registrations in tea gardens are compulsory and the Manager of each tea garden maintains registers of births and deaths and submits monthly returns to the District Medical Officer of Health. In the oil industry the Chief Medical Officer is the collecting agency and he submits such statistics to the Civil Surgeon of the district. Finally, the Civil Surgeon submits the statistics of the whole district to the Director of Health Services, Assam, Shillong for compilation on monthly and yearly basis. Station Masters also keep registers of births and deaths in the railways. These are submitted to the Chief Medical Officer of the Railways who makes a monthly return to the Director of Public Health.

However, the collection of registration was admitted to be defective by the Director of Public Health.[1] The figures indicating the natural increase of population based on vital statistics do not tally with those of the Census. Natural increase of population is not fully reflected in the vital statistics figures. It has been observed in the Census Report of 1951 that births are more often omitted than deaths. Sometimes, this omission in urban areas went up to 40% per cent. One more defect of vital statistics collected in Assam is the meagre or wrong classification of causes of death. The following two tables show the figures of births and deaths and number of deaths from selected causes.

1. *Census of India*—Vol. XII-I-A, Report 1951. P.382.

Table No. 1.

Number of births and deaths as reported in the district during the period 1951-1971.

Year	Total births	Total deaths	Total (+) Increase of births over deaths	Percentage Increase of births over deaths
1	2	3	4	5
1951	16,598	7,295	+ 9,303	56.05
1952	17,439	6,989	+10,450	59.92
1953	18,686	6,904	+11,782	63.05
1954	21,806	6,423	+15,383	70.54
1955	15,148	5,829	+ 9,319	61.52
1956	14,738	4,320	+10,418	70.69
1957	19,727	8,121	+13,750	69.70
1958	21,186	8,121	+13,065	61.67
1959	10,775	4,819	+ 5,956	55.28
1960	13,879	5,226	+ 8,387	61.31
1961	12,988	4,901	+ 7,887	60.72
1962	11,314	3,683	+ 8,231	72.84
1963	12,056	3,301	+ 8,755	72.62
1964	10,314	2,847	+ 7,467	71.42
1965	5,829	1,612	+ 4,217	72.34
1966	9,466	2,700	+ 6,766	82.04
1967	10,817	3,141	+ 7,676	70.96
1968	9,357	2,639	+ 6,718	71.79
1969	11,848	3,232	+ 8,616	72.72
1970	11,247	3,228	+ 8,019	71.29
1971	11,000	2,970	+ 8,030	73.00
Total	2,86,218	97,701	+1,90,195	66.45

Table No. 2.

Death from some selected causes during the period 1951-1960 in the district :-

Year	Cho-lera	Fever	Small pox	Dysen-tery & Diarr-hoea	Pla-gue	Respi-ratory diseases	Suicide	Child birth	Malaria	Kala-azar	Tuber-culosis	Snake-bite	Leprosy	Cancer
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1951	4	1,334	46	622	..	802	5	94	184	1	21	7	4	5
1952	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
1953		2,709	4	671	..	619	13	107	335	6	21	1	4	20
1954	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
1955	..	1,423	1	600	..	412	20	55	240	..	3	1	8	24
1956	..	1,099	..	488	..	541	3	89	29	1	13	4	5	74
1957	..	1,403	..	558	..	640	22	209	9	3	10	6	5	74
1958	..	2,576	..	805	..	734	8	145	100	..	6	..	14	15
1959	..	1,484	..	519	..	370	5	48	144	1	16	2	7	18
1960	..	1,282	..	749	..	508	4	56	209	..	70	2	2	9
Total	4	13,310	51	5,012	..	4,626	80	803	1,250	12	160	23	49	139

.. Indicates data not available.

It is reflected in the above statements that the birth rate in the district exceeds the death rate. The death rate was more or less stable during the years from 1951 to 1961. As revealed in the old Gazetteer, more than seven decades ago, the undivided district of Lakhimpur was a healthy district in comparison with central or lower Assam. "The cold weather is extremely fresh and bracing and is prolonged to a much later date than is usual in most parts of India, the rainfall is abundant, and the mean temperature of the year distinctly low"[2].

According to the **Annual Land Revenue Administration Report** of Lakhimpur of 1950-51, the general condition of health of the entire district was not bad till then in comparison with central and lower Assam. The great earthquake of 1950 which brought devastating floods and epidemics in its wake caused untold misery to the people. Timely precautionary measures adopted by the Public Health Department averted a major catastrophe by effectively bringing under control the out-break of epidemics in the district.

The important causes of mortality are fever, dysentery, respiratory diseases, malaria, accident etc. In the past small-pox and cholera were also not less responsible for high mortality in the undivided district. Mortality among women and infants was also considerable. Untimely death of women generally took place at child-birth as no qualified medical assistance was available. The following passage from the old Gazetteer of Lakhimpur depicts the state of affairs prevalent in the past. "In the absence of medical aid, and this aid is seldom to be obtained, the mother in such cases generally dies. The confinement sometimes takes place in a small hut which has been specially constructed for the purpose, and the patient's bed generally consists of an old mat laid on the floor. The unfortunate mother receives practically no assistance; if the labour is a natural one all is well, but if complications arise, the case has usually a fatal termination. Many lives are also lost owing to a disregard of the rules of cleanliness which are of such paramount importance in these cases. The nucleus of a professional mid-wife class is, however, to be found in the *bejinis* or female doctors, women who receive a small remuneration for attending cases and practise beyond the limits of their own villages."[3]

Fortunately, the above descriptive account does not hold good at present. Now-a-days medical facilities extend even to remote areas and mortality at child-birth has decreased.

2. B. C. Allen,—*Assam District Gazetteers*, Vol. VII, *Lakhimpur*,1905. p. 282.
3. *Ibid* p.285.

(c) **Common diseases :** Common diseases are many in the district such as diarrhoea, dysentery, fever, influenza, measles, chickenpox, skin diseases etc. Tuberculosis, malaria and small-pox are also prevalent in Lakhimpur. Although leprosy and cancer are not absent in the district, their number in the district is not very high. Diabetes, afflictions due to nutritional deficiencies, and hook-worm are also common in the district.

The hook-worm is specially common in the rural areas where the standard of sanitation is very low. Influenza generally breaks out following a spell of continuous rains and floods. Malaria which was one of the dreaded diseases of the country that seriously affected the people often causing set-backs in agricultural and industrial out-puts has been brought under control. The National Malaria Eradication Programme undertaken by the Government since 1953 has brought about remarkable results in reducing the incidence of the disease. Among the epidemic diseases in the district mention may be made of dysentery, diarrhoea, cholera, small-pox etc.

In this connection a brief reference may be made to the small-pox epidemic that took place in 1961-62 in the Dibrugarh Sub-division of the district. The first case of small-pox was notified by the Manager, Jalani Tea Estate on 2nd September, 1961. The source of infection was Jalibasti near Anandbari Tea Estate. It was reported that a small-pox affected Nepali woman came from Darjeeling in August, 1961. She developed the disease and died within a few days. Later on, this disease spread among the workers of Anandbari and Mohanbari Tea Estates. Subsequently, it was noticed in several places including Digboi, Lengri, Nowgong (near Makum), Naharkatiya etc. In Tinsukia also this disease took a very severe turn and the total number of deaths was about 23. According to the Civil Surgeon's report about one lakh fifteen thousand and sixty people were vaccinated in the area including Dibrugarh and Tinsukia towns and the tea garden areas.

In Dibrugarh town this disease was first noticed in the Santipara area on 6.12.62. It was reported that the area affected was a slum area and the source of the disease was Tinsukia. The first case of chicken-pox in Dibrugarh town was reported from the slum areas namely Kalibari, Loharpatty and Akborpatty. At the initial stage superstition prevailed and people were reluctant to get themselves vaccinated. In the affected areas about 14 people died. Later on, the disease took the form of an epidemic within the town area and about 71 persons died in a few months. However, it was brought under control by mass vaccination.

Plague first appeared in the Brahmaputra valley in May, 1903. From the old Gazetteer of Lakhimpur we find that the disease first

occurred in a portion of the Dibrugarh bazar which was inhabited by Marwari merchants who stored large quantities of imported food-grains. It was believed that through these grains the plague bacillus was brought into the town. A special medical officer was appointed in charge of preventive operations, vigilance committees were formed in Dibrugarh and every endeavour was made to gain the sympathy and co-operation of the people.[4]

Cholera broke out in epidemic form several times in the past and it has taken the maximum number of lives amongst epidemic diseases. But prompt preventive measures adopted by the Government now-a-days have reduced the number of deaths considerably.

(d) **Public Hospitals and Dispensaries :**

Organisational set up of the Medical Department : Formerly the Inspector General of Civil Hospitals with his headquarters at Shillong was the head of the Medical Department in the province of Assam and the Civil Surgeons and Subdivisional Medical Officers were responsible for the districts and sub-divisions respectively. The head-quarters of the Civil Surgeon of the undivided district were at Dibrugarh, whereas the headquarters of the Subdivisional Medical Officer were located at North Lakhimpur town.

In 1944, the Public Health Department was reorganised and it was placed under the Director of Public Health with his headquarters at Shillong. Later on, to offer more medical facilities especially in the rural areas of the province, two posts of Assistant Directors of Public Health were created, one for the lower Assam districts with headquaters at Gauhati and the other for the upper Assam districts with headquarters at Jorhat. Under them there was one District Medical Officer of Health and one Sub-divisional Medical Officer of Health for each district and Subdivision respectively.

But in 1958, both the Departments, i. e., Medical and Public Health were amalgamated and designated as the Directorate of Health Services. The Director of Health Services with his headquarters at Shillong became the head of the amalgamated Department.

After amalgamation, at the district level the Civil Surgeon as Head of the District office is responsible for both curative and preventive aspects of the set-up. Thus, the key post at the district level to supervise the Civil Hospitals, Public Health Units and dispensaries of the district is the Civil Surgeon. At the Sub-divisional level, there is one Subdivisional Medical and Health Officer and this officer is recruited

4. *Ibid.*, p.284.

from Senior Assistant Surgeons I. Under each Subdivisional Medical and Health Officer there are two Assistant Surgeons one for preventive and the other for curative works.

Public Hospitals and Dispensaries : In 1904, there were only seven public dispensaries at Dibrugarh, Tengakhat, Tinsukia, Sadiya, Dibrumukh, North Lakhimpur and Dhakuakhana and one Civil Hospital at Dibrugarh. Beside, there was a hospital attached to the Berry White Medical School at Dibrugarh. There were also some tea garden hospitals and dispensaries providing facilities for treatment of the labourers and employees.

Medical facilities though expanded during the latter part of the British rule, fell far short of the needs of the people in the rural areas of the undivided Lakhimpur district. It was only after Independence that a network of dispensaries was set up in the rural areas approximately one within a radius of every five miles. These dispensaries which were initially raised under the administrative control of the Local Boards have been taken over by Government after introduction of the Panchayat-Raj. Since then these have been termed as State Dispensaries and placed under the control of the Civil Surgeon. The number of Public Hospitals (known as Civil Hospitals) also increased proportionately in the undivided district. The hospital which was formerly attached to the Berry White Medical School at Dibrugarh was merged with the newly established Assam Medical College Hospital, Dibrugarh, in 1947. The Assam Medical College Hospital, Dibrugarh, stands on a different footing as it is under the Principal of the college instead of the Civil Surgeon. Thus, in addition to it four Public Hospitals located at Tinsukia, Margherita, Chapakhowa (Sadiya) and North Lakhimpur and one Railway Hospital, one Police Hospital, one Jail Hospital, and one T. B. Hospital (Barbari) at Dibrugarh were functioning prior to bifurcation of the old district. Yet another welcome feature of the organisation providing both curative and preventive treatment is the opening of *Ayurvedic* cells in the public Hospitals as well as setting up of *Ayurvedic* Dispensaries. Further some Employee's State Insurance Dispensaries have also been established for the benefit of the employees.

The following is the list of existing Public Hospitals, Public Health Centres and State Dispensaries of the two districts during 1972.

Dibrugarh District.

Name of Hospitals.

1. Sadiya State Hospital. (Chapakhowa)
2. Margherita Civil Hospital.
3. Digboi State Hospital.
4. Tinsukia S. J. Hospital.
5. Police Hospital, Dibrugarh.
6. Jail Hospital, Dibrugarh.

Name of Primary Health Centres (Public Health Centres)

1. Ketalang Primary Health Centre.
2. Tengakhat Primary Health Centre.
3. Kakapathar Primary Health Centre.
4. Naharani Primary Health Centre.
5. Panitola Primary Health Centre.
6. Barbaruah Primary Health Centre.
7. Na-Sadiya Primary Health Centre.
8. Hapjan Primary Health Centre.

Name of State Dispensaries.

1. Saikhowaghat State Dispensary.
2. Dangari State Dispensary.
3. Doom Dooma State Dispensary.
4. Phillobari State Dispensary.
5. Tirapgate State Dispensary.
6. Inthem State Dispensary.
7. Kathalguri State Dispensary.
8. Tingkhong State Dispensary.
9. Joypore State Dispensary.
10. Sessabakulani State Dispensary.
11. Kacharipather State Dispensary.
12. Naharkatiya State Dispensary.
13. Ghoramara State Dispensary.
14. Dibrugarh State Dispensary.
15. Jamirah Travelling Dispensary.
16. Modhupur State Dispensary.
17. Khowang State Dispensary.
18. Moran State Dispensary.
19. Lengeri State Dispensary.
20. Hilputa State Dispensary.

Name of E. S. I. Dispensaries.

1. Dibrugarh E. S. I. Dispensary.
2. Makum E. S. I. Dispensary.

3. Tinsukia E. S. I. Dispensary.
4. Joypur E. S. I. Dispensary.

Name of Ayurvedic Dispensaries.

1. Dibrugarh Ayurvedic Dispensary.
2. Makum Ayurvedic Dispensary.

Lakhimpur District.

Name of Hospital.

1. Lakhimpur State Hospital.

Name of Primary Health Centres

1. Dhemaji Primary Health Centre.
2. Ghilamara Primary Health Centre.
3. Bihpuria Primary Health Centre.
4. Noubaicha Primary Health Centre.
5. Dhalpur Primary Health Centre.

Name of Dispensaries.

1. Jonai State Dispensary.
2. Ramdhan State Dispensary.
3. Sissi-Borgaon State Dispensary.
4. Deurighat State Dispensary.
5. Boginadi State Dispensary.
6. Azad State Dispensary.
7. Panigaon State Dispesnsary.
8. Gorchiga State Dispensary.
9. Laluk State Dispensary.
10. Islampur State Dispensary.
11. Kherajkhat State Dispensary.
12. Narayanpur State Dispensary.
13. Bordaloni State Dispensary.
14. Machkhowa State Dispensary.
15. Dhakuakhana State Dispensary.
16. Simaluguri State Dispensary.
17. Matmora Ayurvedic State Dispensary.
18. Lakhimpur Ayurvedic Dispensary.

The following table shows the number of indoor and outdoor patients treated in the hospitals and dispensaries excluding the Assam Medical College Hospital, Dibrugarh in the undivided district of Lakhimpur during 1959-1961.

Year	No. of indoor patients treated (Rural)	No. of indoor patients treated (Urban)	No. of outdoor patients treated (Rural)	No. of outdoor patients treated (Urban)
1959	17,476	9,986	1,39,062	84,720
1961	25,901	15,292	2,11,954	1,03,392

The following table indicates the number of patients treated in the Assam Medical College, Dibrugarh during the years from 1967-1972.

Year	Indoor patients				Outdoor patients			
	Male	Female	Children	Total	Male	Female	Children	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1967	7085	6195	995	14275	59019	23178	10179	92376
1968	7570	6851	1111	15532	60710	27473	11188	99371
1969	10921	6990	1965	19876	68990	39626	13580	122196
1970	7863	7602	1908	17373	70611	43068	12595	126274
1971	48289	7391	1960	57620	71920	44021	13400	129347

Doctors : At present the doctors in the State Hospitals and Dispensaries are classified into two categories viz., Assistant Surgeon I and Assistant Surgeon II, recruitment to the former being primarily made from persons possessing M. B. B. S. degrees and partly by promotion from the Assistant Surgeons II who were recruited from persons possessing the L. M. P. or L. M. S. diplomas. The total number of doctors serving in the State Hospitals (excluding the Assam Medical College Hospital), Dispensaries, Public Health Centres, etc., in 1961 under the control of the Civil Surgeon of the undivided district was 46 of whom 24 were graduate doctors without foreign qualifications and the rest were licentiates.

Provision for surgical operations is available in all the State Hospitals of the districts. In 1961, 1575 surgical operations were performed—47 on indoor patients and 1528 on outdoor patients. Till then there was no specialist in the Government hospitals and dispensaries except in the Assam Medical College Hospital, Dibrugarh. The total number of doctors and professors (including specialists) in 1964 in the said Medical College was 133.

Nurses : There is a shortage of nurses in the hospitals and dispensaries of the State. Thus, in the undivided district upto 1960 there were only 8 qualified nurses excluding the auxiliary nurses, mid-wives and *dhais* working in such institutions. But since then the position has improved with the joining of qualified nurses and midwives who were trained in the Assam Medical College, Dibrugarh and at the Saint Luke's Hospital, Chabua. During 1960-61, 32 students (5 with honours) passed the general Nursing Examination and 11 students (4 with honours) passed the Mid-wives Examination and 14 students (1 with honours) passed the Auxiliary Mid-wives Examination from the Assam Medical College.

Primary Health Units : In recent years Primary Health Centres have been established in the rural areas for dealing with the preventive and curative aspects of diseases with emphasis on the latter. During 1972 eight such centres at Ketalang, Tengakhat, Kakapathar, Naharani, Panitola, Barbaruah, Na-Sadiya, and Hapjan of the present Dibrugarh district and five centres at Dhalpur, Dhemaji, Naoboicha, Ghilamara and Bihpuria of the present Lakhimpur district were in operation. These units have been established as per recommendations of the Bhore Committee (Health and Survey Committee) and the observation of the World Health Organisation that there should be integrated health care through Primary Health Centres in rural areas. Each Primary Health Unit, provides a few beds for maternity cases. Each unit has 2 to 3 sub-centres to look after the curative and preventive aspects of diseases. Maternity cases, Child Welfare and Family Planning services are also dealt by the Sub-centres. The Medical Officer in charge of the

Public Health Centre supervises the sub-centres and he is assisted by a group of qualified personnel like Sanitary Inspectors, Lady Health Visitors, Mid-wives etc.

Maternity and Child Welfare Centres : In 1965 such centres existed at Dibrugarh, Tengakhat, Khowang, Panigaon, Lengeri and Boginadi. Dibrugarh and Tengakhat centres are staffed with one Lady Health Visitor and two Mid-wives each. Members of this staff visit the houses of expectant mothers of the neighbourhood and give advice to such women. They render free ante-natal and post-natal services. Mention must be made of one Baby Clinic attached to the Paediatric section under the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine of the Assam Medical College, Dibrugarh.

Family Planning Services : The Family Planning Programme was introduced in the undivided district along with the rest of Assam in 1958-59. Five Family Planning Centres have been opened in the two districts namely at Chabua, Dibrugarh, Margherita, Tinsukia and Bihpuria. Besides advice given to those in need about family planning, these centres also provide for insertion of loops and distribution of contraceptives free of cost. Recently, a District Family Planning Officer has been posted at Dibrugarh to give proper publicity about the necessity of Family Planning. For intensifying the Family Planning Programme, Family Planinng Units have been established at Dispensaries located in the rural areas of the district.[5]

RURAL AND URBAN-WISE PERFORMANCE OF I. U. C. D. AND STERILISATION IN LAKHIMPUR DISTRICT (UNDIVIDED) DURING—1968-69.

No. of I. U. C. D. (Loops) inserted			No. of Sterlisations		
(a) Rural	..	3,447	(a) Rural	..	1,463
(b) Urban	..	244	(b) Urban	..	734
(c) Total	..	3,691	(c) Total	.	2,197

Tuberculosis Services : One T. B. Hospital with 50 beds under the control of the Assam Medical College was opened at Barbari in 1958. T. B. cases are also treated in some other hospitals of the district. Thus in the Ledo Hospital (Private) there is a wing with 30 beds for the treatment of tuberculosis patients of the coal fields.

Ayurvedic Treatment : As in other districts of the State this old system of treatment is quite popular in Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh districts. There is an outpatient *Ayurvedic* dispensary attached to the town Dispensary at Dibrugarh. There are also *Ayurvedic* dispensaries at Makum, Metmara and Lakhimpur.

5 *Statistical Hand Book of Assam*, 1969, *Deptt. of Economics & Statistics, Govt. of Assam*. p. 33.

Homeopathic Treatment : The Homeopathic system of treatment has gained popularity specially in the towns. The number of pharmacies and Homeopathic practioners is increasing in most of the towns of the district.

Allopathic Subsidised Dispensary : In 1957 there were only four Subsidised Dispensaries in the district and Medical officers of the dispensaries rendered part-time medical and Public Health services in their respective jurisdictions. Specialists in the field of Dentistry and Opthalmology have opened a number of clinics in Dibrugarh town.

Employees' State Insurance Scheme : The Employees' State Insurance Scheme has been implemented in Assam since August 1958. Three dispensaries at Dibrugarh, Makum and Tinsukia are functioning for providing medical benefit to the insured labour population. Two Mobile Dispensary vans have also been provided for Dibrugarh and Makum.

Medical Facilities in the Rural areas : Before Independence the provision of medical facilities in the rural areas of the district was very meagre and naturally majority of the people had to leave the world without the assistance of a doctor. For want of medical facilities specially in the villages people had to depend upon the village physicians popularly known as '*Bej*' in combating various serious diseases and as such mortality among the villagers was very high. The position was no better in the rural areas during the First Five Year Plan period as revealed by the Sample Survey of Rural Economic Conditions in Lakhimpur conducted in 49 villages by the Department of Economics and Statistics, Government of Assam and published in 1954. The medical facilities then prevalent proved quite inadequate to fight and control the incidence of common diseases such as malaria, dysentery, small-pox, cholera, worms and various other skin diseases. As per that Sample Survey Report about 58 per cent of the villages in the undivided district had no dispensary within a radius of 5 miles and had to depend upon the indigenous system of treatment and on mercy of adjacent tea garden hospitals in times of emergency. However, there has been much improvement in medical facilities in the rural areas during the last fifteen years. Thus in 1950-51 there were only 13 dispensaries in the district but this number increased steadily thereafter. In 1955-56 there were 22 dispensaries and in 1968 there were 49 in the district. This increase in the number of dispensaries has brought more trained medical personnel such as doctors, pharmacists and nurses to the rural areas.

In addition to the medical staff of the dispensaries there are 21 Rural Health Inspectors and 18 Health Assistants. The main function of these officers is to give inoculation against cholera, and

disinfecting water supply etc., in the rural and urban areas. There are also 84 vaccinators in the district.

(e) **Private Hospitals and Dispensaries** : The people of the district of Lakhimpur especially those of Dibrugarh Sub-division have been immensely benefited by a large number of private hospitals and dispensaries. These hospitals and dispensaries are mostly located in the tea gardens and other industrial establishments of the district. They render both preventive and curative treatment to labourers and other employees of the concerns. The names of some of the important hospitals are given below :

(1) Joyhing Central Hospital (under North Bank Medical practice), (2) Dibrugarh Medical Practice—Maijan, (3) Central Hospital, Panitola (under principal Medical Officer, Jokai, Assam Tea Co.), (4) Thanai Medical Association (Balijan North Tea Estate), (5) Central Hospital Longsoal (under Assam Frontier Tea Co.,) (6) Central Hospital, Doom Dooma Tea Co. (Bisa Kupi Tea Estate), (7) Jaipur Medical Association, (under Principal Medical Officer, Namrup), (8) Digboi Hospital, (under Assam Oil Company), (9) Assam Railways and Trading Company Hospital, Margherita, (10) Powai Central Hospital, etc. In addition to these there is also an American Missionary Hospital (Saint Luke's Hospital) at Chabua. There is also one Mission Hospital at North Lakhimpur. The Ram-Krishna Seva Samittee also renders medical treatment at North Lakhimpur and at Dibrugarh. In recent years the Oil India Limited and the Fertilizer Corporation of India have established hospitals at Duliajan and Namrup respectively.

The individual accounts of some of the important private hospitals are given below :

Assam Oil Company Hospital, Digboi : This hospital which has been functioning since 1903 provides at present 200 beds including those in its isolation block. Free medical and surgical facilities are provided to employees of the company and their dependents. It is a well-equipped hospital with special clinics, such as Surgical, E. N. T., Eye, Gynaecological, Paediatric, Orthopaedic and Chest. Immunisation of children against diptheria, whooping cough and tetanus (Triple Antigen) is carried out regularly as public health measures.

Moreover, the Company has one Maternity Hospital with 20 beds. The Company also maintains two out-patient dispensaries at Digboi and one out-patient dispensary at Tinsukia with 4 emergency beds.

Assam Railway and Trading Company Hospital, Margherita : This old industrial establishment at Margherita has one Central Hospital

which is well equipped for Surgical and Obstetrical cases as also for other emergencies. There are 85 beds. The employees and their dependants are entitled to free medical services. The hospital is provided with an air conditioned and well furnished operation theatre, an upto-date clinical laboratory, an X-Ray installation and Physiotherapy Unit equipped with short wave Diathermy, Ultraviolet and Infra-red Rays.

Ledo Hospital : Besides the Central hospital there is a 130 bed hospital at Ledo for the coal mine workers. A tuberculosis treatment centre approved by the Coal Mines Welfare Organisation has been functioning here since 1960 and 30 beds in this hospital are reserved for the treatment of tubercular patients.

There are two other hospitals one with 40 beds at Tipang Colliery 14 miles away from Margherita and the other with 20 beds at Namdang Colliery 4 miles away from Margherita. Out-door dispensary services are run by the Company in every work centre. Altogether there are 8 such dispensaries.

All the hospitals and all but two branch dispensaries are provided with qualified doctors. Altogether there are 12 doctors, 8 qualified nurses and 15 pharmacists. Vaccination against small-pox is regularly given to the employees and their dependants. An antirabic treatment centre has been functioning at Margherita Central Hospital for a long time.

(f) Medical and Public Health Research Centres and Institutions :

Although important research works are being carried out in the Assam Medical College, Dibrugarh there is no centre or institution which is exclusively devoted to medical research in the two districts. In the Chabua Heatlh Centre training is imparted to students on sanitation and hygiene and orientation training is given to the auxiliary nurses. The Civil Surgeons of Assam are also given a short orientation training here. The Chabua Rural Health Training Centre is an integral part of the Assam Medical College, Dibrugarh. This centre is situated at a distance of 18 miles from Dibrugarh. The training courses conducted in this centre are as follows :-

(i) Orientation course for Medical Officers for 3 months, (ii) course for Sanitary Inspectors for 9 months, (iii) course for Nurses and Auxiliary Nurse Mid-wives for 3 months and (iv) course for Inservice training for Auxiliary Nurse Mid-wife teachers for 1 month. The services offered by the centre include, *interalia*, Maternity, Child Health and Family Planning, limited Medical care, referring cases to Assam Medical College, Laboratory Services, Immunisation in Communicable

Diseases, Improvement of Environmental Sanitation, Health Education and School Health Services.[6]

This training centre at Chabua was started by the State Government of Assam in 1957 with assistance from the Central Government. The training programmes are carried out under the technical guidance of the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine, Assam Medical College. In February, 1958, the training centre was visited by three international experts from World Health Organisation and U. N. I. C. E. F. and it was agreed that the scope of training in this centre could be further extended to include various categories of work in the field of Public Health.

The Chabua Rural Health Training Centre is one of ten such training centres in India which get the benefit of a special assistance for deveolpment from U. N. I. C. E. F. It has two Sub-centres. In executing the training programmes, the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine, Assam Medical College also obtains the assistance of one W. H. O. Medical Officer, two W. H. O. Nurses and one W. H. O. Sanitarian. During the year 1960-61, 23 Medical Officers, 22 Nurses, 32 Sanitarian Students, 10 Auxiliary Nurse Midwives teachers and 12 Sanitary Inspectors received training.

Pre-registration clinical Assistants were put on duty in this centre, for the first time in 1961, as required by the University Regulations in order to give them a bias for medical practice in the countryside.

Auxiliary Health Services (Pharmacists training Centre) : A two-year Pharmacists course has been introduced in place of the one-year compounders course in the old Berry White Medical School building at Dibrugarh since 1950. It has an annual roll of 50 students. This course of training has been proposed in the light of Education Regulations recommended by the Pharmacy Council of India. The Professor of Pharmacology is in over-all charge of the course. The first batch of students appeared in the Final Examination in December, 1961. Arrangements are being made to open Physics, Chemistry, Botany and Zoology Laboratories in the old Berry White Medical School.

(g) **Sanitation** : Not much attention was paid in the past to matters relating to sanitation in the district. The old Gazetteer of Lakhimpur observed, "Sanitary arrangements there are none; the rubbish is swept up into a corner and allowed to rot with masses of decaying vegetation, and the complete absence of latrines renders the neighbourhood of the village a most unsavoury place. The water-supply is generally bad, and is drawn either from shallow holes, from rivers, or from tanks in which the villagers wash their clothes and persons."[7] Happily, the present picture has improved from the one described above,

[6] *Annual Report of the Directorate of Health Services, Assam*,—1960.

[7] *B. C. Allen, Assam District, Gazetteers Lakhimpur*, 1905 p 281

thanks to the emphasis given in the 5 year plans to improve sanitary conditions in both urban and rural areas. Prior to 1958, rural sanitation in Lakhimpur was controlled by Local Boards through Local Board Dispensaries. For vaccinations Local Board employees were assisted by the State Public Health staff. Now all Primary Health Units and State Dispensaries in rural areas treat infectious diseases and are responsible for disinfection of water supply. Moreover, the Public Health propaganda-cum-Mobile Dispensary Units are utilized in rural and urban areas for imparting health education among the masses. Public health propaganda is also made as usual by means of exhibitions, leaflets, posters, etc. In recent years *Panchayats* (both *Gaon* and *Anchalik*) have spent considerable amounts in rural areas of the district for improvement of sanitation and health.

Measures taken by the *Panchayats* for improvement of rural sanitation include the opening and regulating of cremation grounds, regulating places for disposal of animal carcass and other offensive matters ; sinking tube wells and ring wells and construction and maintenance of public latrines.

In urban areas, the Municipal Boards and Town Committees take necessary measures for sanitation in consultation with the District Health Officer whenever necessary. Matters relating to conservancy, water-supply, clearance of latrines, prevention of adulteration of food stuff and taking preventive measures against infectious diseases like Cholera and Small-pox are some of the important functions of the Municipal Boards.

The Municipal authorities at Dibrugarh, Tinsukia and North Lakhimpur maintain their own sanitary staff for the purpose. The sanitary staff maintained by them generally consists of a Health Officer, some Sanitary Inspectors, and a large number of conservancy staff and labourers. In industrial areas of the district like Digboi, Margherita and Duliajan the management concerned provides for sanitation with its own staff. But the Civil Surgeon of the district is the over-all authority in matters of sanitation both in urban and rural areas.

In conclusion it may be remarked that the over-all position of sanitation in the districts-both in urban and rural areas—has improved considerably especially after Independence. But much remains to be done even now. The need for implementing vigorous sanitation measures has become more acute in view of the ever-increasing population. Although inoculation has been successful in preventing the out break of epidemics there is scope for improvement in matters relating to general cleanliness and water-supply in rural areas. Absence of proper drainage

and sewerage systems is a noticeable factor in all towns of both the districts except for the oil town of Digboi. Schemes prepared by the Town and Country Planning Units at Dibrugarh and Tinsukia in consultation with the respective Municipal Boards are healthy signs for the future.

Anti-Malarial Measures : As in the rest of the State, Malaria was a common disease in the undivided district also. Malaria has now been more or less controlled by spraying of D. D. T. under the National Malaria Eradication Programme carried out by the Assistant Malaria Officer, who controls the entire project under direct supervision of the State Malaria Officer. To undertake the different anti-malarial measures in the district two important Malaria control centres have been functioning since 1951. Generally, the authorities in charge of malaria centres collect blood slides from fever cases and when found positive, necessary treatment is rendered. This system known as surveillance operation was introduced in the district in 1961. In the said year, 16, 154 blood slides were collected and out of them 82 were found positive. Necessary treatment was given in these cases. Similarly 42 cases were found positive out of 13,162 blood slides collected upto 31st July, 1962.

CHAPTER—XVII

OTHER SOCIAL SERVICES

(A) Labour Welfare : Organisational set up and activities :

The Labour Departments of the Central and State Governments shoulder the responsibility of labour welfare in the districts of Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh. The departments have been armed with a number of labour legislations passed by the Indian Parliament and the State Assembly. The legislations so far enacted cover both public and private sector establishments. The employers have been brought under the purview of the legislations and are expected to adopt necessary welfare measures in their establishments. Some of these acts and regulations are : The Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923 ; The Indian Trade Union Act, 1926 ; The Tea District Emigrant Labour Act, 1934 ; The Payment of Wages Act, 1936 ; The Assam Maternity Benefit Act, 1944 ; The Industrial Employment (Standing orders) Act, 1946 ; The Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 ; The Factories Act, 1948 ; The Assam Shops and Establishments Act, 1948 ; The Minimum Wages Act, 1948 ; The Coal Mines Provident Fund and Bonus Scheme Act, 1948 ; Employees Fund Act, 1948 ; Employees State Insurance Act, 1948 ; The Motor Transport Workers Act, 1951 ; The Plantation Labour Act, 1951 ; The Working Journalists (Condition of service) and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1955 ; The Assam Tea Plantations Provident Fund Scheme Act, 1955 etc.

These Acts and Regulations cover a wide range of labour welfare measures such as housing, medical, education, nutrition (establishment of canteens etc.) rest and recreation day nurseries, sanitation, holidays with pay and maternity and sickness benefits.

For the enforcement of the above Acts and rules framed thereunder and to deal with other matters of labour welfare, the Assistant Labour Commissioner, Dibrugarh, is the district head of the Labour Department, and is under the administrative control of the Commissioner of Labour of the State Govt. He is assisted by Labour Officers posted at Dibrugarh and Tinsukia who in turn are assisted by a number of Labour Inspectors. The Labour office at North Lakhimpur is under the control of the Junior Labour Officer who works under the guidance of the Assistant Labour Commissioner, Tezpur. There is also one Inspector of Labour of the Govt. of India at Dibrugarh.

Under the Factories Act, 1948, there is one Inspector of Factories at Dibrugarh who works under the administrative control of the Chief Inspector of Factories, Assam. His main function is to ensure that the provisions of the Factories Act are strictly observed.

The enactment of the Plantation Labour Act in 1951 has brought much improvement in the working conditions of the plantation workers in Assam. It is a comprehensive piece of legislation and has put employers under obligation to provide various facilities to their employees. The Act is applicable to all tea, coffee, rubber and cinchona plantations with an area of 25 acres or more and employing 30 or more persons. It can be extended to other plantations by the State Govt. It provides for creation of inspecting staff by the State Govt. and imposing penalties for contravention of provisions of the Act. Under this Act, the employers are required to provide drinking water, sufficient latrines and urinals for men and women, canteens in every plantation where 150 or more workers are employed, and creches where 50 or more women are employed. Employers are also to make arrangements for proper medical and educational facilities for the workers and their children. Providing standard type housing accommodation for the workers and their families is also the responsibility of the employer. Besides maternity and sickness benefits, the workers are allowed leave with wages. Children below 12 years are not to work in plantations and night work between 7 P.M. and 6 A.M. is prohibited for women and adolescents. Welfare officers are to be appointed in every plantation where 300 or more workers are employed.

In pursuance of this Act free education upto the Lower Primary Standard is provided by the management in most of the tea estates in the State. In 1962 out of 256 schools in tea estates of the undivided district 225 schools with 260 teachers were maintained by the management. By the end of December 1968, in the tea plantations of the Dibrugarh Zone alone, there were 213 schools with 250 teachers. The enrolment during the same year was 10,802. The Govt. of Assam are also instituting a Central Education Board for the removal of illiteracy among the tea garden population along with other welfare measures.

To provide for medical facilities to the workers of the tea plantations in 1968, there were 154 hospitals and 70 dispensaries with a provision for 4,374 beds. The medical staff in these hospitals and dispensaries comprised 157 doctors, 167 visiting doctors, 211 compounders, 129 midwives, 149 nurses, 107 *Dhais*, 82 health assistants and 152 dressers. Besides, special arrangements were made for the medical treatment of serious cases in other hospitals. In 1968, such arrangements were made for the treatment of 3,952 cases in Jakai Central Hospital, Bessakopie Central Hospital, Longsoal Central Hospital, Assam Railways and Trading Company Hospital, St. Luke's Hospital and also in the Assam Medical College Hospital. Dibrugarh. Sickness benefits amounting to Rs. 8,40,496 were extended to 1,26,742 persons.

In tea plantations houses are provided free of charge. In the early thirties and forties 90% of the houses in the tea plantations of Assam were *Kacha* houses made of mud walls and thatched roofs. These houses were devoid of sanitary provisions. There were no latrines, windows or *verandahs* in any house. Labourers were required to get their houses repaired themselves. Even access to labourers' quarters was prohibited to all except workers' friends and relatives on grounds of right to private property. The Royal Commission in 1929 objected to this and "recommended that all the plantation areas should be thrown open to the public and there should be Boards of Health and Welfare to determine minimum requirements of housing".[1]

The problem of providing improved housing accommodation came up for discussion at the first Tripartite Plantation Conference held at New Delhi in January, 1947. Later on, it was discussed at the Second Session of the Industrial Plantations Committee held in April, 1948 and again at the Standing Plantation Committee meeting held in September, 1949 and November, 1950. The Indian Tea Association drew up certain minimum housing specifications which were accepted by the Govt. of Assam.[2] With the enactment of the Plantation Labour Act 1951, responsibility for making necessary houses for the worker and his family, now lies upon the employer of respective tea estates. In pursuance of this Act some progress no doubt, has been made but still much remains to be done especially in uneconomic and small tea gardens. The following table shows the total number of houses of approved standard required and the houses actually built by the managements during 1968 in the tea plantations of the Dibrugarh Zone.

	Labour			Staff		
	Pacca	Semi-*pacca*	*Kacha*	*Pacca*	Semi-*pacca*	*Kacha*
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Total No. of houses of approved standard	32,035	8,391	5,998	3,166	303	147
Total No. of houses of approved standard built during the year 1968.	537	18	76	176	32	2

1. R. C. Saxena : *Labour Problems and Social Welfare*, p.214.
2. Ibid p.227.

The introduction of the Assam Tea Plantations Provident Fund (And Pension Fund) Scheme Act, 1955 has ushered in a new era of socio-economic upliftment for the plantation workers in the State of Assam.[3] It extends the statutory guarantee of social justice and social security to the working class of the plantations in the State.

The scheme of Provident Fund under the Act is applicable to (a) plantations having 25 or more acres of land under tea with productions of more than 456 lbs. of tea per acre, and (b) plantations having 50 or more acres under tea irrespective of the rate of production. In pursuance of the provisions of the Assam Tea Plantations Provident Fund Scheme (Amendment) Act, 1958, some small and uneconomic plantations have been exempted from the purview of the scheme. Out of 790 tea gardens in the State, the scheme was in force in 708 tea gardens on March 31, 1973. The two districts of Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh have 236 tea gardens. Of these 217 have been brought within the purview of the scheme.

The benefits of the Contributory Provident Fund are compulsorily extended to all categories of employees barring personnel of managerial and executive cadres and other employees whose total (cash) emoluments exceed Rs. 1,000/- per month per head. The employees in the tea plantations are classified in three broad categories viz. staff, adult labour and adolescent and children but the Fund recognises no such classification for its membership. The rate of contribution to the provident fund has been raised from 6¼% to 8% of the wages of the workers both from the employers and employees.

The scheme provides for advances, refundable and non-refundable to the members from their provident fund accumulations on specific grounds. Refundable advances are made available for marriage and death ceremony in a member's family and non-refundable advances are available for building a dwelling house, payment of life insurance premia, purchase of shares of co-operative societies and subsistence when famine conditions prevail due to natural calamities and unemployment occurs due to closure of gardens. The following table shows the extent of the scheme in the State as well as in the undivided district of Lakhimpur since 1968.

3. Compiled from the *Annual Reports of the Working of the Assam Tea Plantations Provident Fund and Pension Fund Scheme for years* 1968-69 *to* 1971-72 *and Facts About Assam Tea Plantations Provident Fund and Pension Fund Scheme* published by the Board of Trustees, Assam Tea Plantations Provident Fund Scheme, Shillong.

Assam State.

Year	Lakhimpur District (As an undivided district)							
as on 31 st March.	No. of tea gardens covered by the scheme	MEMBERS					No. of tea gardens covered by the scheme	MEMBERS			
		Staff	adult	Adolescent & children	Total			Staff	adult	Adolescents & children	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1968	217	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	180682	708	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	461,490
1969	217	3,984	168,346	5,571	177,901	708	11,931	432,826	13,363	458,120
1970	217	3,980	167,440	5,471	176,891	708	11,916	429,813	13,183	454,412
1971	217	3,930	166,536	5,413	175,879	708	11,802	427,179	13,059	452,040
1972	217	3,900	166,036	5,343	175,279	708	11,693	426,141	12,585	450,419
1973	217	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	175,279	708	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	449,106

The scheme is administered by the Board of Trustees with its head office at Shillong and the cost of administration is met from a separate fund created by contributions by the employer @2.25% of the gross collection.

Since the introduction of the scheme, its functions and scope have been considerably expanded by adopting other ancillary schemes viz. Life Insurance Scheme through Provident Fund, Old Age Pension Scheme and Family Pension Scheme.

Life Insurance through Provident Fund was introduced in 1963 with a view to rendering financial protection to the family of the deceased member. While extending this additional benefit it was ensured that no additional financial burden was put upon the member on that account. The lives of the Provident Fund members in the age group of 18 to 40 years are insured for Rs. 1000/-, Rs. 500/- and Rs. 250/- in respect of the clerical staff, male labourer and female labourer respectively at their option. According to the scheme, all the insurance policies are assigned to the Board of Trustees who keeps these in its custody and prefers claims as and when necessary on the Life Insurance Corporation. This obviates the medical examination or age-proof of individual members and direct payment of premia by employees. The amount of premium is paid by the Board of Trustees from the Provident Fund contributions of a member annually and the balance is credited to his Provident Fund Account. However, on the amount paid off as premium, no interest is paid by the Board of Trustees. The cost of administering the scheme is very economical and it is met from the commission earned on the policies from the Life Insurance Corporation of India. Since the introduction of the scheme about one lakh eighty thousand members have been insured.

The Pension Scheme which provides for old age pension to the workers after retirement was introduced with effect from 2.10.67 covering the entire Provident Fund members. Its benefits are in addition to the benefit of the contributory Provident Fund and insurance without entailing any extra financial burden on the employees and employers. The fund for the pension scheme was created by diverting the surplus interest earnings from the investment of Provident Fund contributions.

The benefits under the scheme are as follows :-

(a) $7\frac{1}{2}$% of the Provident Fund credit balance of a member who has put in 25 or more years of membership in Provident Fund on the date of his retirement or death annually for a period of 7 years.

(b) 5% of the Provident Fund credit balance of a member who has put in 10 or more years of membership in the fund on the date of his retirement or death annually for a period of 5 years.

(c) Additional interest of 1% on the credit balance of a member who ceases his membership in the Fund prior to completion of 10 years of membership.

(d) Facility of commutation.

The scope of the pension scheme has been much widened since 1.4.72 to provide family pension to the family of a member in the event of his death while in service. The benefit under the old age pension scheme would continue in respect of the members who retired or died prior to 1.4.72 while the revised pension scheme including family pension has been made applicable in respect of the member who dies or retires on or after 1.4.72. Under the new scheme family pension is granted @ Rs. 40/- p.m. for life or till remarriage and lump sum of Rs. 1,000/- to the family of the deceased member who dies while in service.

The Family Pension Fund comprises the annual contribution made by the Govt. of India and the amount annually transferred from the General Pension Fund @11.6% and 21.3% of the wages of the employee covered under the scheme respectively. Besides, the Govt. of India have agreed to bear the entire administrative cost of the Family Pension Scheme.

The enactment of the Assam Tea Plantations Employees Welfare Fund Act, 1959 is another land mark in the history of welfare legislation for the tea employees in the State of Assam.[4] Under the provisions of this Act a Fund is to be constituted out of all fines realised from the employees in the course of management of the plantation ; all unpaid accumulations ; all grants from the State or Central Govt. or the Tea Board ; any voluntary donation ; any sum borrowed under section 8 of the Act and any sum unclaimed or forfeited in the provident fund account of the employees. The Fund shall vest in the Board of Trustees constituted by the State Govt. and shall be applied to meet the expenditure in connection with measures which in the opinion of the State Govt. are necessary for promoting the welfare of the employees employed in the State of Assam. Without prejudice to these general provisions the Fund may be utilized by the Board of Trustees to defray expenditure on adult education ; community and social education centres including reading rooms and libraries ; community necessities ; games and sports, excursions, tours and holiday homes ; entertainment and other forms of recreation ; home industries and subsidiary occupation for women and unemployed persons ; corporate activities of a social nature ; cost of administering the Act including the salaries and allowances of the staff appointed for the purposes of the Act and such other objects as

4. Compiled from the *Annual Report of the working of the Assam Tea Plantations Employees Welfare Fund Act* 1959 *for* 1970.

would in the opinion of the State Govt. improve the standard of living and ameliorate the social condition of the employees provided that the Fund shall not be utilised in financing any measure which the employer is required under any law for the time being in force to carry out.

Besides there are some labour welfare institutions managed by the Govt. and other agencies doing welfare works in the tea gardens of the undivided district. These have been described in Chapter V. Labour Welfare measures in the coal, oil and petroleum industries and some public undertakings have also been described in Chapter V.

In the matter of industrial disputes, the labour Department endeavours to promote industrial harmony through peaceful settlement of disputes. The Industrial Disputes Act of 1947 is applicable to all industrial establishments in the State. In a case where conciliation fails, it is referred to the Industrial Tribunal for adjudication. To try industrial dispute cases, the State Govt. has two Industrial Tribunals one for Upper Assam with headquarters at Dibrugarh and the other for Lower Assam including Cachar with headquarters at Gauhati. Similarly two labour Courts have also been set up one at Dibrugarh and the other at Gauhati.

B. PROHIBITION :

(i)**Opium** : References have been made in various accounts to the consumption of opium by the people of the Brahmaputra Valley. Captain Welsh in 1772 reported to Lord Cornwallis that the king Gaurinath Sinha was intoxicated with opium. Its wide-spread use and consumption were reported by Robinson and other writers including Mills who in 1853 said that "three fourths of the population are opium eaters, and men, women and children alike use the drug".[5] The *Burkandazes* that were brought to Assam, were said to be addicted to opium. They after creating a reign of terror in Kamrup for sometime remained with the Koch kings at Beltola near Gauhati where they grew the opium poppy for the first time in the history of Assam, during Lakshmi Sinha's reign about the year 1795. A.D.

In the petition of Moniram Dewan presented on behalf of himself and others to A. J. Moffat Mills, Judge of Sadar Court in Calcutta on his visit to Assam in 1853 and incorporated in *Mills' Report on The Province of Assam*, 1853, occurs the following passage which is worth mentioning.

"In Lukhmee Sing Rajaha's days poppy seeds were first introduced from Bengal and first cultivated at Beltullah, but during his time opium was used only by a few respectable persons and not by the lower orders".[6]

5. E. Gait : *A History of Assam*, 1967 p.382.
6. *Mills : Report on the Province of Assam*, 1853 p.ixxvi.

Captain Butler in his book *Travels and Adventures in the Province of Assam* published in 1855 writes that opium was first introduced into Assam in 1794, when the British troops assisted the Rajah against the Muttocks.

It is proved therefore, that cultivation of poppy was practically unknown in Assam before it was introduced by the Rajput troops who were brought into Assam either by the Koch chiefs or by the British. It was, however not so widely cultivated then as in later years. Its cultivation, was however, put down with a very strong hand by the high officers of the Ahom rulers. This suppression of poppy cultivation at the beginning of the nineteenth century was effected by an imposition of tax of Rs. 12 per *pura* of land under poppy cultivation.

When finally the British in 1826 took possession of Assam, they first turned their attention to the establishment and consolidation of their power. From 1826 to 1860 they practically followed a policy of drift on the question of opium for revenue purposes in order to undersell the indigenous product. Government opium was sold at Rs. 5 per *seer* in 1835. The new administration did nothing to check the opium habit or even the cultivation of the opium poppy. It allowed the terrible evil to spread among the people, who had just come under their power after nearly a century of feuds and internecine wars. This attitude of indifference continued for about thirty years till the publication of Mr. Moffat Mills' report of 1853. Mr. Mills though emphatic in his condemnation of the opium habit was not inclined towards total prohibition. According to him "its use has, with many, almost become a necessary of life and in a damp climate like Assam, it is perhaps beneficial if taken with moderation". As such he recommended that its home cultivation should be prohibited in Assam and opium should be sold from treasuries at a price which would act as a deterrent to those who indulged in its excessive consumption. However, nothing was done till 1860 when its cultivation was prohibited and the drug also came to be issued through the treasury.

Even in those remote days, Indian leaders of prominence denounced the indifferent attitude of the Govt. At the same time they did not countenance the establishment of a Government monopoly in opium. In his petition to the Government in 1853 Moniram Dewan gave expression to contemporary opinion on the subject in the following words. "The introduction of the Government opium into the province will have to be put a stop to and the people allowed to grow their own drug. But some method ought to be invented by the *Mohamuntree Saheb* (i. e., king's representative) for the eventual eradication of opium cultivation by gradual reduction at the rate of one in twenty per annum".

7. E. Gait : *A History of Assam* p.382.

About the same time, Anandaram Dhekial Phukan, another patriotic Assamese leader of the time wrote thus : "The extensive introduction of Government opium, however, leads us to conclude that the measure will be productive of consequences other than the extirpation of the drug from the country". The introduction of Government opium and the effort to undersell the local product did indeed have consequences other than extirpation of the evil. In answer to arguments for a monopoly, Anandaram Dhekial Phukan had said "that by abolishing the production of opium in the country and rendering it dearer to the people, the use will be rendered less universal". But he adds : "We would beg to submit that the people will never shrink from the use of the drug as long as they continue to obtain supplies of it ; and whatever be the price put upon it they would seldom consider themselves too poor to purchase it".[8] Inspite of these protests Government monopoly was introduced and poppy cultivation as stated above was abolished in 1860.

Thus the first restriction on opium was imposed in 1860. This took the shape of prohibition of cultivation and manufacturing ; prohibition of unlicensed sale ; imposition of duty ; prohibition by imposing licence fee ; and gradual reduction of retail shops in opium.

The first issue price of opium from treasury was Rs. 12 per *seer*. It was subsequently raised to Rs. 20 in 1862, Rs. 22 in 1863, Rs. 23 in 1873, Rs. 24 in 1875, Rs. 26 in 1879, Rs. 32 in 1883 and Rs. 37 in 1890. Inspite of sixty per cent rise in issue prices of opium and other restrictions there was not any marked decline in consumption of opium. The total consumption of opium in Lakhimpur in the year 1873-74 was 383 *maunds* and it came down to 329 *maunds* in 1879-80 but rose again to 359 *maunds* in 1889-90 and 374 *maunds* in 1899-1900.

Assam was declared a black spot in the Geneva Convention and it was from 1925 that the pass system was first introduced. In 1928, a further cut of 10% in the opium ration was effected and finally the Congress coalition government in 1939 introduced total prohibition of opium in the Dibrugarh Sub-division of the Lakhimpur district and the Sibsagar Sub-division of the Sibsagar District. So long the opium offences were dealt under the provisions of the Opium Act of 1878 but with the enactment of the Assam Opium Prohibition Act of 1947, a total prohibition of opium was introduced throughout the State. The Act prohibits the production, manufacture, possession, exportation, importation, transportation, purchase, sale, consumption and use of this narcotic, except on medical grounds.

In pursuance of the Assam Prohibition Act 1947, five Opium Addicts Treatment Centres were established in the undivided district of

8. Mills : *Report of the Province of Assam* p.xivii.

Lakhimpur. These centres are located at Lekhapani, Chabua, and Tingkhong in the present Dibrugarh district and Dhemaji and North Lakhimpur in the present Lakhimpur district. For smooth functioning of these centres there is one Opium Prohibition Committee attached to each centre. The following statement shows the number of opium addicts treated and cured in each of the centres during 1968 and 1969.

Opium addicts treatment Centre.	No. of addicts treated		No. of addicts cured	
	1968	1969	1968	1969
Dhemaji Centre	30	15	29	15
Chabua Centre	216	232	160	153
Tingkhong Centre	338	69	311	64
Lekhapani Centre	333	252	311	227
N. Lakhimpur Centre	28	16	24	20

(ii) **Liquor** : Consumption of liquor is quite common among the tribal population and tea garden labourers of the district. People of other sections of society partake liquor, but among them drunkenness earns social disapprobation. The excise revenue rose rapidly during the period 1879 to 1900. In 1879-80, there were only 11 shops and the revenue was Rs. 4,814. During the next two decades ending 1889-90 and 1899-1900, the number of shops increased to 22 and 25 and the revenue rose to Rs. 40,056 and Rs. 1,57,720 respectively. In 1902-03 the number of shops increased to 26 and the revenue further rose to Rs. 2,10,793. During the next year, the number of liquor shops decreased to 25 and the amount of revenue also declined to Rs. 1,98,955. Out of these shops only 5 shops were in the North Lakhimpur Sub-division and remaining 20 shops in Dibrugarh Sub-division. During the same year revenue derived from liquor shops in North Lakhimpur Sub-division was Rs. 8,667 only and Dibrugarh Sub-division contributed an amount of Rs. 1,90,288. The following account from the old District Gazetteer gives an idea of consumption of liquor in the district in the later part of the 19th century.

"The revenue is raised by putting up the right to manufacture and sell liquor at a particular shop to auction. If there is no competition, the vendor obtains this license cheap, and his profits are enormous. Where there are several persons anxious to embark upon the business, the price of the license is run up, and a portion of the profits of the liquor trade is diverted from the pockets of the vendor into the exchequer of the State. The publican has little opportunity of pushing the sale of his liquor, and it is doubtful whether, if the license fees were abolished or reduced, the consumption of spirit would be in any way diminished.

It cannot be denied that, in the neighbourhood of some liquor shops, drunkenness and disorderly conduct are not uncommon, and the attention of the Administration, has been more than once directed to the most effective measures for the mitigation of this evil. One of the most serious obstacles to improvement, lies in the fact that, if the supply of licensed liquor is cut off, rice beer and spirit can be readily manufactured by the people. That this is no imaginary difficulty, is shown by the fact that complaints have more than once been received of excessive drunkenness on tea gardens, which were situated far beyond the reach of any licensed liquor shop. The outstill system has admittedly many drawbacks, and will be replaced, as soon as circumstances admit of it, by a system of central distilleries. The following measures have recently been introduced, with the object of reducing as far as possible the evils attendant on the liquor trade. A special excise establishment has been entertained, the vendor is required to arrange for an abundant supply of good drinking water near his shop, and his license can be withdrawn if he is twice conivcted of allowing drunkenness and disorderly conduct near the still.

Country spirit is manufactured by native methods, and generally in what is known as the open still. The apparatus employed consists of a large brass or copper retort which is placed over the fire, to the top of which is fitted the still head, a compound vessel, part of which is made of earthenware and part of brass. The wash is placed in the retort, and, as it boils, rises in the form of vapour into the still head, over the outer surface of which a stream of cold water is continually kept flowing. As the vapour cools, it is precipitated in the form of liquid, and is carried off by a bamboo tube into a vessel placed at the side. The mouth of this tube is open, and the spirit trickles from it into the vessel beneath, so that the outer air has access by this channel into the still head and retort in which the process of distillation is going on. In the closed still, the vapour passes down two tubes into two receivers where it is cooled and condenses into liquid. These tubes are so fixed to the receivers that the air cannot have access to the spirit, and, though distillation does not proceed so rapidly, the liquor produced is stronger than that obtained from the open still.

The material employed is generally the flower of the *mohwa* tree (*bassia latifolia*), which contains a very large proportion of sugar, but its place is sometimes taken by molasses and rice. The following are the proportions in which these ingredients are generally mixed—*mohwa*

30 *seers* and water 60 *seers*, or *mohwa* 25 *seers*, molasses 5 *seers*, and water 60 *seers*, or boiled rice 20 *seers*, molasses 10 *seers*, and water 80 *seers*. *Bakhar*, a substance composed of leaves, roots and spices, whose actual ingredients are not divulged by the villagers who manufacture it, is frequently added to the wash, which is put to ferment in barrels. Fermentation takes three or four days in summer and a week in the cold weather, and the wash is then considered to be ready for the still.

The process of distillation takes about three hours. A retort of 40 gallons yields two gallons of spirit in an hour and three quarters, three gallons in two hours and a quarter, and four gallons in three hours. The best and strongest spirit comes off first, and in the case of a brew of 30 seers of *mohwa* the first 3½ gallons will be classed as *phul*, if they are at once drawn off from the receiver. If they are allowed to remain while two more gallons are distilled, the whole 5½ gallons will be classed as *bangla*. The exact proportions vary, however, at the different shops, some distillers taking 4¼ gallons of *phul* or 5¼ gallons of *bangla* from 30 seers of *mohwa*. Occasionally only two gallons of spirit are distilled from 30 seers of *mohwa*, and the liquor is then called *thul*, is very strong, and is sold for one or two rupees a quart. *Thul* is also sometimes made by redistilling *bangla*. Only one kind of liquor is generally taken from each distillation, as, if the *thul* or *phul* were removed, the spirit subsequently distilled would be not only weak but impure. Strong liquor watered to reduce it to a lower strength is not considered palatable, and it seems to be the usual practice to distil the liquor at the actual strength at which it will be sold. One disadvantage of the cheaper kind of liquor is that it will not keep, and in four or five weeks it is said to lose all it's spirituous qualities. The largest and most important liquor shops are those situated at Doomdooma, Margherita, Bhati Bazar in Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Balijan Siding, and Graham Bazar in Dibrugarh."[9]

Laopani or rice beer, is the national drink of the tribal people. It is also largely used by the tea garden labourers if they fail to obtain country spirit. The following is the usual system of manufacture of Laopani. "The rice is boiled and spread on a mat, and *bakhar* is powdered and sprinkled over it. After about twelve hours it is transferred to an earthen jar, the mouth of which is closed, and left to ferment for three or four days. Water is then added and allowed to stand for a few hours, and the beer is at last considered to be ready. The usual proportions are 5 *seers* of rice and 3 *chatttaks* of *bakhar* to half a *kulsi* of water, and the liquor produced is said to be much stronger than most European beers. Liquor is often illicitly distilled from laopani or boiled rice, by the following simple method.

9. B. C. Allen : *Assam District Gazatteers, Lakhimpur*, 1905 pp.262-66.

An earthen pot with a hole in the bottom is placed on the top of the vessel containing the *laopani* or rice, and the whole is set on the fire. The mouth of the upper pot is closed by a cone shaped vessel filled with cold water, and a saucer is placed at the bottom of the pot over the hole. The vapour rises into the upper of the two jars, condenses against the cold cone, with which the mouth is closed, and falls in the form of spirit on to the saucer beneath. Care must of course be taken to see that the various cracks are closed against the passage of the spirituous vapour, but this can easily be done with strips of cloth."[10]

The State Government has enacted the Assam Liquor Prohibition Act, 1952, but prohibition of liquor has not yet been introduced in the two districts of Dibrugarh and Lakhimpur.Presently in the two districts there are 45 country liquor shops, 14 Foreign liquor shops and 2 wholesale shops.

(iii) **Ganja and Bhang** : *Ganja* and *Bhang* are primarily used by a section of people who are devotees of Lord *Siva*. The wild *ganja* grows very freely in the district, but it is not relished by the inveterate *ganja* smokers. *Ganja* is usually mixed with water, kneaded till it becomes soft and cut into small strips and smoked. Preparation of *ghota* a delicious beverage served on the *Shivaratri* night contains some quantity of *Bhang*. The Assam Ganja and Bhang Prohibition Act, 1958 prohibits possession and consumption of *ganja* and *bhang* and its smoking apparatus except for social, religious, medical and scientific purposes. The following table shows the prohibition offences relating to *ganja* and *bhang* from 1963 to 1969.

Year	Opium		Ganja		Bhang	
	No. of cases reported	No. of cases disposed of	No. of cases reported	No. of cases disposed of	No. of cases reported	No. of cases disposed of
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1963-64	303	262	202	195	74	68
1964-65	221	191	159	150	134	134
1965-66	87	43	156	107	46	40
1966-67	158	60	235	133	72	43
1967-68	322	132	268	166	192	162
1968-69	110	84	134	111	155	116

10. Ibid, pp.266-67.

(c) **Advancement of Backward Classes :-**

The description 'backward classes' is commonly applied to the following four sections of community :-

(a) Scheduled Tribes.

(b) Scheduled Castes.

(c) Communities formerly described as criminal classes.

(d) Other socially and educationally backward classes.

There is no community known as criminal tribe in Assam. According to the Census of 1961, the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes population constituted an important segment of the total population of the undivided Lakhimpur district as shown below :-

	POPULATION		
	Male	Female	Total
1	2	3	4
Scheduled Castes	37,651	31,386	69,037
Scheduled Tribes	48,470	45,025	93,495

People belonging to *Kaivartta* or *Jaliya*, *Brittial Bania* or *Bania*, *Bhuimali* or *Mali*, *Hira*, *Jalkeot*, *Namasudra*, *Sutradhar*, *Muchi*, *Jhalo-Malo*, *Dhubi Banspher*, *Dugla* or *Dholi*, *Mahra*, *Mehtar* or *Bhangi* and *Patni* are regarded as scheduled castes. *Kaibaratta* or *Jaliya* (30,500) and *Namasudra* (24,684) constitute an overwhelming majority of the Scheduled Caste population. Scheduled tribes people are *Miris* (mainly concentrated on the North bank of the undivided district), *Kacharis* including *Sonowal*, *Deoris*, *Boro-Baro Kacharis*, *Lalung* (mainly concentrated in the Dhemaji circle). The *Kacharis* including *Sonowals* with a population of 44,306 and the *Miris* with a population of 33,791 constitute about two-thirds of the total Scheduled tribes population of the district. The most predominant other backward classes are *Ahoms*, *Chutiyas*,, *Koches*,, *Jogis* (Nath), *Kamars*, *Napits*, besides the tea garden labourers and tribes. It is not possible to give the relative strength of these communities as no census figures are compiled for them. The people of these communities also lag behind their brethren belonging to more advanced communities but, during the British period they were left to their own devices. Proselytization carried out by the Christian missionaries among the backward classes of the district opened the flood-gate of progress for the converts, particularly in the field of education.

It was only after Independence that attempts were made to bring an all round development to the standard of living of the people belonging to backward classes. One of the Directive Principles of State Policy of the Constitution of India solemnly declares that the State shall promote with special care educational, social and economic interests of the weaker section of the people and in particular of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and exploitation. Article 275 of the Constitution of India provides for grants-in-aid from the Consolidated Fund of India to meet the cost of development schemes taken up for the welfare of the backward classes. Some steps taken to ameliorate the condition of the backward classes since 1947 are briefly described below :-

(i) Reservation of seats in the Legislative Assembly and *Panchayats* : Out of the sixteen Assembly constituencies in the district, Naoboicha is reserved for the Scheduled Castes and Dhakuakhana and Dhemaji are reserved for the Scheduled Tribes. In the *Anchalik* and *Gaon Panchayats* also a number of seats are reserved for the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes to secure their fair representation in those elective bodies.

(ii) Reservation of posts in Government Services : In pursuance of the provisions of Articles 16(4) and 335 of the Constitution of India, the Government of Assam decided that there would be reservation of vacancies for members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in making appointments to services in connection with the affairs of the State Government as indicated below :-

(1) Scheduled Castes	7 per cent.
(2) Scheduled Tribes (Plains)	10 per cent.
(3) Scheduled Tribes (Hills)	12 per cent.

Prior to August 1963, only 5 per cent of posts were reserved for the Scheduled Castes. The policy of reservation of vacancies has been followed by all the departments in making appointments to services and posts of the State Government subject to other terms and conditions as laid down in the Notification issued on the 24th August, 1963.[11]

(iii) Education : An analysis of the level of development reached by the people belonging to the backward classes has been made earlier in Chapter XV. From the beginning of the First Five Year Plan efforts have been made to eradicate illiteracy among the plains tribals. With this end in view Primary and Middle Schools have been set up in the areas predominantly inhabited by the tribal people. The State Primary Education Board took over a large number of venture schools which

11. Assam Government Notification No. AAP. 66/63/482 dated August 24, 1963.

were set up by private initiative. A number of secondary schools and hostel buildings have been constructed for the welfare of the tribal people. The students belonging to the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward classes have been benefited by the scholarship schemes both in the secondary and collegiate stages and by free education scheme in the secondary stage. There are reservation of seats for tribal students in the technical and professional institutions of the State.

Miscellaneous : Almost all the departments of the State Government earmark a portion of their total allotment for the development of backward classes including Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The Co-operative Department offers grants-in-aid towards the share capital and expenses on management of the co-operative societies in the areas inhabited by the tribal people. In order to provide adequate medical facilities, public health units and dispensaries have been opened in those areas. The scourge of leprosy is a stigma to the nation. Its incidence is not negligible in the tribal areas. In the field of water supply grants-in-aid have been given to the tribal people of the district for installation of tube wells and digging of tanks. In the same way the Agriculture, Industry, Sericulture and Weaving departments of the Government of Assam are implementing numerous schemes in keeping with the declared policy of the Government to ameliorate the condition of the weaker section of society. Moreover, in the Fourth Plan, programmes of the Government of Assam have been redesigned so as to bring the under privileged into the fabric of enlightened community.

———

CHAPTER XVIII

PUBLIC LIFE AND VOLUNTARY SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANISATIONS

(a) Representation in the State and Union Legislatures :

The undivided district of Lakhimpur played no small part in the public life of the State. Assam in pre-Independence days had a large number of European tea Planters. These generally represented the forces of conservatism and imperialism as against the progressive political ideas of Indian leaders, especially those of the Indian National Congress. The planters even opposed Assam's inclusion in the Reforms Scheme of 1919.

The only important political organisation of Assam in the first two decades of the century was the Assam Association. A delegation of the Assam Association proceeded to London and pleaded successfully before the Lord Selbourne Committee for giving Assam the status of a major province under the reforms. The delegation consisted of *Karmabir* Nabin Chandra Bordoloi and Prasanna Kumar Barua, a distinguished citizen of Dibrugarh. Notwithstanding the presence of the Planting Group in the State Legislature constituted under the Acts of 1919 and 1935 and even with their influence on the labour vote the district returned some patriotic members to the State Assembly in all the subsequent general elections. Two distinguished speakers of the Assembly, were late Mir Faiznur Ali and late Laksheswar Barua from Dibrugarh.

(i) **Legislative Assembly** : The First General Elections of Independent India were held in 1952. Lakhimpur district was divided into eleven Legislative Assembly Constituencies. These viz Bihpuria, North Lakhimpur, Moran, Dibrugarh West, Dibrugarh East, Tinsukia North, Tinsukia South, Bordubi, Jeypore, Doom Dooma and Digboi were to elect thirteen representatives to the State Legislature which was unicameral. Of these eleven constituencies, North Lakhimpur and Digboi constituencies were double-membered. In each of these a seat was reserved for the Scheduled Tribes. In the Second General Elections of 1957, the number of constituencies remained the same but they were delimited and renamed as North Lakhimpur, Moran, Dibrugarh, Lahowal, Tengakhat, Jeypore, Bogdung, Tinsukia, Digboi, Doom Dooma and Saikhowa. North Lakhimpur and Moran were made double-membered constituencies in each of which a seat was reserved for the members of the Scheduled Tribes.

The Two Member Constituencies (Abolition) Act 1961, was enacted with a view to abolishing two member Parliamentary and Assembly constituencies in place of which single-membered constituencies were created.

The two-member constituencies of North Lakhimpur and Moran were each spilt up into two single membered constituencies of Bihpuria and North Lakhimpur and Moran and Dhakuakhana respectively. The constituencies of North Lakhimpur and Dhakuakhana were made reserved constituencies for members of the Scheduled Tribes. Thus in the Third General Elections of 1962, the district of Lakhimpur had thirteen constituencies namely, Bihpuria, North Lakhimpur (S. T.), Dhakuakhana (S. T.), Moran, Dibrugarh, Lahowal, Tengakhat, Jeypore, Bogdung, Tinsukia, Digboi, Doom Dooma and Saikhowa.

The constituencies were again delimited and increased to sixteen in the Fourth General Elections of 1967. One constituency of Naoboicha was reserved for the Scheduled Castes and two constituencies of Dhakuakhana and Dhemaji were reserved for the Scheduled Tribes. The other thirteen constituencies in the district were as follows : Bihpuria, North Lakhimpur, Moran, Dibrugarh, Lahowal, Tengakhat, Tingkhong, Jeypore, Bogdung, Tinsukia, Digboi, Doom Dooma and Saikhowa. The extent of the territorial jurisdiction of each Legislative Assembly Constituency in the district is given in Appendix 'A'.

(ii) **House of the People** : For the purpose of elections to the House of the People **(Lok Sabha)** the undivided district formed part of two Lok Sabha constituencies of which one was confined within the boundary of the undivided district. The Dibrugarh Lok Sabha constituency which was confined within the district, comprised the eight Legislative Assembly constituencies of Dibrugarh West, Dibrugarh East, Tinsukia North, Tinsukia South, Bordubi, Jeypore, Doom Dooma and Digboi in the General Elections of 1952. The Legislative Assembly constituencies of Bihpuria, North Lakhimpur and Moran formed part of the Sibsagar-North Lakhimpur Parliamentary constituency. In the General Elections of 1957, Dibrugarh Lok Sabha constituency comprised Dibrugarh, Lahowal, Tengakhat, Jeypore, Bogdung, Tinsukia, Digboi, Doom Dooma and Saikhowa and the rest of the *Vidhan Sabha* constituencies of the district were included in the Sibsagar Lok Sabha constituency. In the third General Elections of 1962, the number of Legislative Assembly Constituencies was increased to thirteen. No change was however effected in the constitution of Dibrugarh Lok Sabha constituency and the Legislative Assembly constituencies of Bihpuria, North Lakhimpur, Dhakuakhana and Moran formed part of the Sibsagar Lok Sabha constituency along with the Legislative Assembly constituencies of Amguri, Nazira, Sonari, Thowra and Sibsagar of the neighbouring Sibsagar district. For the Fourth General Elections of 1967, the Parliamentary constituencies were again delimited under Sub-section (i) of Section 10 of the Delimitation Commission Act of 1962 (61 of 1962) vide Delimitation Commission's Notification dated 20th April, 1966.

According to this notification, the Dibrugarh Lok Sabha constituency comprised the Legislative Assembly constituencies of Dibrugarh, Lahowal, Tengakhat, Jeypore, Bogdung, Tinsukia, Digboi, Doom Dooma and Saikhowa. In place of the former Sibsagar-North Lakhimpur Parliamentary Constituency, a constituency known as Lakhimpur constituency was newly created. This constituency comprised Bihpuria, Naoboicha, North Lakhimpur, Dhakuakhana, Dhemaji, Moran, and Tingkhong of Lakhimpur district and Mahamara and Sonari Legislative Assembly constituencies of Sibsagar district.

(b) **Political parties and their hold in the district as reflected in the elections** : (i) Legislative Assembly : The elections to the Legislative Assembly and the Lok Sabha indicate that the Indian National Congress party has dominated the political scene of this district throughout. Other parties such as the Communist Party of India, the Socialist Party and some newly created parties like the Krishak Mazdoor Praja Party and the Jana Sangha have also contested in some elections but their success has been very limited in comparison to those of the Indian National Congress. No regional party has so far been able to win a seat. The Independents have secured votes in every election in almost every constituency. Analysis of the performance of various political parties in different elections is given below.

In the General Elections of 1952, of the thirteen elected representatives, twelve belonged to the Indian National Congress and one was an Independent candidate. All the seats were contested and the main contesting political parties in the district were the Indian National Congress, Socialist Party, Krishak Mazdoor Praja Party and the Communist Party of India besides a number of Independent candidates. The Indian National Congress secured 6717, 20972, 7955, 6248, 13204, 10922, 10253, 7602, 8081, 17428 and 32518 votes out of the total valid votes of 17027, 58139, 20374, 14214, 21398, 14665, 16342, 13708, 17013, 21599 and 54974 polled in the constituencies of Bihpuria, North Lakhimpur, Moran, Dibrugarh West, Dibrugarh East, Tinsukia South, Bordubi, Jeypore, Doom Dooma, and Digboi respectively. The Socialist Party which contested in all the constituencies except two was unable to get a single candidate elected. The Krishak Mazdoor Praja Party contested in five constituencies, while the Communist Party of India unsuccessfully contested in one constituency. There were also independent candidates in all the constituencies except in Doom Dooma. One Independent candidate from Moran constituency was elected. The Independent candidate secured 10,221 votes and defeated his nearest Congress rival by a margin of 2,266 votes. The following table shows the results of the 1st General Elections of 1952 in all the Legislative Assembly constituencies of the district.

RESULTS OF THE GENERAL ELECTIONS OF 1952 FOR THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCIES OF THE DISTRICT

Sl. No.	Name of the constituency	No. of seats	Reserved for S. C. or S. T.	Electorates	Valid votes polled	Invalid votes
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	Bihpuria	1	—	36,579	17,027	2
2.	North Lakhimpur	2	1 (S.T.)	1,70,142	58,139	3,613
3.	Moran	1	—	40,373	20,374	1
4.	Dibrugarh West	1	—	32,864	14,214	385
5.	Dibrugarh East	1	—	45,732	21,398	313
6.	Tinsukia North	1	—	34,039	14,665	8
7.	Tinsukia South	1	—	37,479	16,342	484
8.	Bordubi	1	—	37,698	13,708	9
9.	Jeypore	1	—	40,703	17,013	5
10.	Doom Dooma	1	—	38,069	21,599	598
11.	Digboi	2	1 (S.T.)	1,61,348	54,974	4 5

(continued)

(*Continued*)

Sl. No.	Name of the constituency	Votes secured by the political party					Name of the political party winning the seat.
		Congress	Socialist party.	K. M. P. P.	C. P. I.	Independent	
1	2	8	9	10	11	12	13
1.	Bihpuria	6,717	2,560	2,096	—	5,654 (3)	I.N.C.
2.	North Lakhimpur.	20,972(2)	12,894 (2)	2,973	—	21,300 (7)	I.N.C.
3.	Moran	7,955	—	2,198	—	10,221 (1)	Independent
4.	Dibrugarh West	6,248	—	—	—	7,966 (4)	I.N.C.
5.	Dibrugarh East	13,204	1,562	—	5,839	793 (1)	I.N.C.
6.	Tinsukia North	10,922	1,956	—	—	1,787 (2)	"
7.	Tinsukia South	10,253	1,455	586	—	4,048 (3)	"
8.	Bordubi	7,602	2,763	—	—	3,343 (2)	"
9.	Jeypore	8,081	4,846	1,083	—	3,003 (1)	"
10.	Doom Dooma	17,428	4,171	—	—	—	"
11.	Digboi	32,518 (2)	5,373 (2)	—	—	16,083 (5)	"

Note :—In column 12, figure within brackets indicates the number of Independent candidates contesting election in the constituency.

(2) Columns 8 and 9 indicate the total votes polled by the candidates in the double membered constituencies.

During the Second General Elections held in 1957, the major parties in the district were the Indian National Congress, Communist Party of India, Praja Socialist Party of India and the Socialist Party of India. The first three parties were recognised by the Election Commission as all-India Parties. Of these political parties, the Indian National Congress continued to maintain its supremacy in the district. Out of the thirteen members elected from the eleven constituencies in the district, twelve belonged to the Indian National Congress and one seat was bagged by the Communist Party of India. Even this seat was wrested by the Indian National Congress in the by-elections held in 1961. In the two double-membered constituencies of North Lakhimpur and Moran, the four successful Congress candidates polled respectively 26.58%, 29.58% 32.28%, and 31.10% of the total valid votes in these constituencies. In the rest of the constituencies of Lahowal, Tengakhat, Jeypore, Bogdung, Tinsukia, Digboi, Doom Dooma and Saikhowa, the successful Congress candidates secured respectively 50.50%, 69.49%, 62.18%, 84.21% 61.10%, 65.59%, 86.63% and 64.19% of the total valid votes. In the Dibrugarh constituency there was a straight fight between the Congress and the Communist Party candidates. The Congress candidate could secure only 42.78% and conceded the seat to his Communist rival who polled 57.22% of the total valid votes. The Communist Party was, however, unseated from this constituency in a by-election held in the constituency in 1961.

It may not be out of place to mention here that public opinion still favoured the Congress party. In eight out of the eleven constituencies in the district Congress candidates won the seats with a thumping majority, polling between 50.50% and 86.63% of the total valid votes. The Communist Party of India, which secured the seat in the Dibrugarh constituency, failed to muster strong support for its candidates in other constituencies of North Lakhimpur, Tinsukia and Digboi. The Socialist Party unsuccessfully contested in six constituencies of Tengakhat, Jeypore, Bogdung, Tinsukia, Digboi and Doom Dooma. It secured only 7.69%, 37.72%, 15.79%, 10.19%, 6.66%, and 8.19% respectively of the total valid votes in the constituencies mentioned above. The Praja Socialist Party put up candidates only in the two constituencies of Lahowal and Tengakhat, and polled respectively 27.19% and 13.85% of the total valid votes. Besides the candidates of these political parties, there were a number of Independent candidates in all the constituencies except in Dibrugarh, Jeypore and Bogdung but none of them was returned. The results of the Legislative Assembly constituencies in the Second General Elections of 1957 are given in Appendix 'B' at the end of this Chapter.

In the Third General Elections of 1962, the double membered constituencies were abolished under the Two Member Constituencies (Abolition) Act, 1961 and the number of Legislative Assembly Constituencies in the district was increased from eleven to thirteen. The Indian National Congress won all the thirteen seats, including the two seats reserved for the Scheduled Tribes. Its candidates polled 8,152 ; 10,633 ; 10,972 ; 9,796 ; 11,588 ; 6,231 ; 7,969 ; 8,361 ; 8,586 ; 15,228 ; 12,417; 13,745 and 7,777 votes out of the total valid votes of 23,999 ; 22,536 ; 27,013 ; 20,793 ; 20,150 ; 14,138 ; 16,369 ; 17,361 ; 15,214 ; 29,501 ; 26,569 ; 16,218 and 14,225 respectively in the constituencies of North Lakhimpur (S T.), Dhakuakhana (S. T.), Moran, Dibrugarh, Lahowal, Tengakhat, Jeypore, Bogdung, Tinsukia, Digboi, Doom Dooma, and Saikhowa. The clean sweep of the Congress party in this election was, however, not without paradoxes. The polling trend indicated a slackening of its hold over the electorate as in eight constituencies, its candidates secured less than 50% of the total valid votes and it was partly because of the multicornered contest and division of votes among the other political parties and Independents, that it had an edge over other parties.

The other political parties which participated in the Third General Elections in the district were the Socialist Party of India, Communist Party of India, Praja Socialist Party, Sarvadal Sramik Sabha and Jana-Sangha. The Socialist Party of India put up candidates in seven constituencies of Moran, Tengakhat, Jeypore, Bogdung, Tinsukia, Digboi, and Saikhowa. The SPI candidates polled respectively 1,234 ; 3,513 ; 5,546 ; 6,628 ; 2,339 ; 1,264 and 1,115 valid votes. The Communist Party of India contested in six constituencies of Bihpuria, North Lakhimpur (S. T.), Dhakuakhana (S. T.), Dibrugarh, Tinsukia and Digboi. Though the CPI was unsuccessful its poll percentage improved considerably in some constituencies. In the above constituencies this party polled 4,602 ; 9,601 ; 5,692 ; 6,438 ; 8,353 and 5,437 valid votes respectively. The Praja Socialist Party contested in North Lakhimpur (S. T.), Moran, Lahowal and Tengakhat. It failed as it could secure only 2,303 ; 361 ; 642 and 1,918 votes. Jana Sangha and Sarvadal Sramik Sabha made their maiden appearances in the political scene of the district and put up candidates in the constituencies of Tinsukia, Digboi and Moran. They obtained only 1,411 ; 3,319 and 1,881 votes in these constituencies. Besides the above candidates of political parties there were 25 unsuccessful Independent candidates in all the constituencies except in North Lakhimpur (S. T.) and Bogdung. The details of the results of the Third General Elections of 1962 of the Legislative Assembly constituencies appear in Appendix C at the end of the Chapter.

During the Fourth General Elections of 1967 the number of Legislative Assembly constituencies increased to sixteen. Two of these were reserved for the Scheduled Tribes and one for the Scheduled Castes. The

district returned sixteen representatives from these constituencies. The Congress party no longer enjoyed its former hold and lost some seats to other parties. Only ten seats were won by the Congress Party. The polling trend indicated a further decline in its hold over the electorate. Congress candidates could secure more than 50% of the votes only in two constituencies compared to 5 and 8 contituencies in the General Elections of 1962 and 1957 respectively. The polling percentages of the successful Congress candidates were ; North-Lakhimpur-41.62 ; Moran-50.97 ; Dibrugarh-38.29 ; Lahowal-41.07 ; Tengakhat-44.29 ; Bogdung-49.70 ; Tinsukia-48.53 ; Digboi-36.20 ; Doom Dooma-64.52 and Saikhowa-48.40. In the rest of the constituencies which the Congress party conceded to its rivals, the percentages of votes polled by its candidates were Bihpuria-28.25 ; Naoboicha (S. C.)-34.75 ; Dhakuakhana (S.T.)-25.74 ; Dhemaji-(S. T.)-29.73; Tingkhong-41.10 and Jeypore-35.13.

The Samjukta Socialist Party and the Swatantra Party which made their debut in the General Elections of the district, captured two and one seat respectively. The Samjukta Socialist Party put up candidates in seven constituencies of the district. Two of the S. S. P. candidates from the constituencies of Tingkhong and Jeypore were returned. They defeated their nearest Congress rivals by polling 49.09% and 49.33% of the total valid votes. The percentages of poll of the other unsuccessful candidates of the Samjukta Socialist Party in the constituencies of Dibrugarh, Lahowal, Tengakhat, Bogdung and Doom Dooma were respectively 26.86 ; 23.38 ; 40.22 ; 38.42 and 10.57.

The Swatantra Party which contested in six constituencies, could secure only the seat of Dhemaji (S. T.) by a narrow margin of 1.16% over the nearest Congress rival who polled 29.73% of the votes. The polling percentages of the Swatantra Party in some other constituencies were very poor viz. Bihpuria-5.09 ; Digboi-2.32 ; Saikhowa-13.97 ; Moran—17.95 and Dhakuakhana-19.16.

The Communist Party of India which entered the election arena in four constituencies, captured one seat and came out third in the rest of the three constituencies. It won the Dhakuakhana (S. T.) constituency seat by polling 55.11% of the total valid votes. In the other three constituencies its percentages of poll were, North-Lakhimpur-24.42 ; Tinsukia-17.71 and Digboi-21.70.

Out of the 31 Independent contestants in the 14 constituencies (leaving aside two constituencies of Dhakuakhana (S. T.) and Lahowal from where there was no Independent candidate), the district this time returned two Independent candidates to the State Legislature. In the constituency of Bihpuria, it was a neck to neck fight between two

Independent candidates. The successful candidate polled 33.42% while his rival secured 33.24% of the total valid votes. The other successful Independent candidate annexed the seat of Naoboicha (S. C.) constituency in a multicornered contest, by defeating his nearest Congress rival by polling 58.12% of the total valid votes.

The other political parties which unsuccessfully contested the Fourth General Elections in the district were, the Bharatiya Jana Sangha, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the Praja Socialist Party. Next to the Congress the Bharatiya Jana Sangha put up the maximum number of candidates but could secure no seat. Its poll percentages were very poor in most of the constituencies. This is indicated from the following poll percentages of the Bharatiya Jana Sangha : Lahowal-3.33 ; Jeypore-3.70 ; Tengakhat-4.80 ; Dhemaji-6.56; Bogdung-6.75 ; Doom Dooma-6.82 ; Dibrugarh-19.29 ; Tinsukia-22.64 and Digboi-27.40. The Communist Party of India (Marxist,) put up candidates only in two constituencies of Dhemaji,(S. T.) and Tinsukia and secured respectively 16.38% and 8.42% of the total valid votes. The Praja Socialist Party appeared to be on the verge of losing its hold in the district and contested only in the constituency of Lahowal. It polled only 11.75% of the total valid votes. The details of the results of the Fourth General Elections of 1967 of the Legislative Assembly constituencies appear in Appendix 'D' at the end of the Chapter.

(ii) **House of the People** : As stated earlier, the district of Lakhimpur comprises two Lok Sabha constituencies of which one is confined within the district and the other is shared with the neighbouring district of Sibsagar. In the Dibrugarh Lok Sabha constituency there was a four cornered contest among the Indian National Congress, Socialist Party of India and two Independents. The Congress candidate won the seat by an overwhelming majority of votes. The votes polled by the four contestants were : Congress-93,554 ; Socialist-22,844 and two Independents 19,276 and 13,038 out of the total valid votes of 1,48,712. In the Sibsagar-North Lakhimpur constituency (later on known as Sibsagar Lok Sabha constituency) also there was a four cornered contest among the Indian National Congress, Socialist Party of India, Krishak Mazdoor Party and one Independent and the seat was annexed by the Congress which secured 90,279 votes out of the total valid votes of 1,69,015 polled in the constituency. As in the Dibrugarh Lok Sabha constituency, the votes polled by other candidates in this constituency were not impressive. They respectively polled 29,049 ; 18,071 and 31,615 out of the total valid votes.

In the Second General Elections of 1957 both the Lok Sabha constituencies of Sibsagar and Dibrugarh were retained by the Indian National Congress. In both the constituencies there were multi-cornered

contests. The polling pattern indicated a growing popularity of the Congress. In the Dibrugarh Lok Sabha constituency, the percentages of poll of the different parties were : Indian National Congress-69.31 ; Praja Socialist Party-18.70 and Socialist Party-11.99. There was no Independent candidate in the Dibrugarh Lok Sabha constituency. Only two political parties, the Indian National Congress and the Praja Socialist Party contested in Sibsagar Lok Sabha constituency. The Socialist Party refrained from the contest although it had contested the previous elections. There were two Independent candidates who polled only 19.83% and 6.31% of the total valid votes. The percentages of poll of the Indian National Congress and the Praja Socialist Party were 56.12 and 17.74 respectively.

In the General Elections of 1962, there was a three cornered contest in the Dibrugarh Lok Sabha Constituency. The Indian National Congress, the Communist Party of India and the Socialist Party of India respectively polled 98,687 ; 32,441 and 41,857 out of the total valid votes of 1,72,985 in the constituency. In the Sibsagar Lok Sabha constituency, four political parties contested. The votes secured by the different political parties were : Indian National Congress-1,01,746 ; Communist Party of India-47,282 ; Revolutionary Socialist Party of India-33,488 and Praja Socialist Party-2,581.

In both the Lok Sabha constituencies there were multi-cornered contests in the Fourth General Elections. Two of the seats were again retained by the Indian National Congress. In the Lakhimpur Lok-Sabha constituency, the polling percentages of the different political parties were : Indian National Congress-50.86 ; Communist Party of India -24.28 ; Swatantra Party-14.21 and one Independent-10.65. In the Dibrugarh Lok Sabha constituency, the contesting political parties were the Indian National Congress, Samjukta Socialist Party and the Bharatiya Jana Sangha which respectively polled 38.16%, 26.91%, and 11.71% of the total valid votes polled in the constituency. Besides, the above political parties, there were two Independent candidates who polled 20.24% and 3.52% of the total valid votes.

The Fifth General Elections of the Lok Sabha were held a year ahead of their term due to its dissolution by the President of India in December, 1970. In Assam these mid term elections were for Lok Sabha-constituencies only. One important event which had wide repercussions in various spheres of our national life since the Fourth General Elections was the division of the Indian National Congress in 1969 into two. One faction i.e., Congress(R) was led by Shri Jagjivan Ram and the other Congress(0) by Shri S. Nijalingappa. As a result, the Dibrugarh Lok Sabha constituency came under the Congress(0) and that of Lakhimpur under the Congress(R). But in the Fifth General Elections

which were held in the State of Assam on 1st and the 4th March 1971, both the seats were won by the Congress(R). In the Dibrugarh Lok Sabha constituency, there were 4,22,229 voters and 2,12,165 exercised their franchise. 14,849 votes were found invalid. The Congress(R) candidate who annexed the seat from the sitting Congress(0) candidate, secured 1,15,921 votes. The poll secured by other political parties were: Communist Party of India-24,913 ; Samjukta Socialist Party-16,543 and Congress(0) 13,721. Besides there were four Independent candidates in the constituency who polled 11,010 ; 9,005 ; 3,220 and 2,923 votes respectively. The Lakhimpur Lok Sabha constituency had an electorate of 4,34,779 voters of which only 2,20,043 cast their votes. There were six contestants in the constituency and the Congress(R) retained the seat. The votes in favour of the different candidates in the constituency were as follows : Congress (R)-89,067 ; Ujoni Asom Rajya Parishad-45,357 ; Plains Tribal Council-28,023 ; Communist Party of India-24,610 ; Independent-14,458 and Swatantra Party-7,033. The last three had their deposits forfeited The details of the results of Lok Sabha constituencies of the Fifth General Elections are given in Appendix 'E'.

Newspapers :

The history of publication of newspapers and periodicals from Dibrugarh is more than 90 years old. It is interesting to note that a renaissance in Journalism came to Assam with the publication of **The Times of Assam** from Dibrugarh in 1885. This journal was brought out by Radhanath Changkakati who took a leading part in setting up an influential organisation for the wide circulation of this paper. This weekly contained news, views, advertisements, literary articles and information on trade and commerce and social events. The paper was of great help to the tea industry for circulating various advertisements and notices. The publication of the paper stopped during the Second World War. For many years since the days of Changkakati, Basambad was the genius behind the paper. Lakshmi Nath Phookon, Tilok Chandra Sarma, Kedarnath Goswami, Indu Bhusan Chakravarty were its editors at different times. The paper was revived as a bi-weekly by Jiwan Ram Phookon in 1947-48 but with his death **The Times of Assam** stopped publication. **The Times of Assam** served as the training ground for many young men, who became outstanding journalists of Assam in later years. The main editorials were written by Mr. Basambad Mitra, a leading lawyer of Dibrugarh Court. Mr. Mitra was intimately associated with the paper as its leading writer and legal adviser.

The next important paper was the **Eastern Herald** which was printed from Dibrugarh. The first issue was published in 1902. The paper's editor was Basambad Mitra. The **Citizens** was started in

1904 by Kalinath Roy. Both the **Citizens** and the **Eastern Herald** were short lived. A series of thought provoking articles by Mr. Mitra appeared in these papers. These articles were later published in the form of a book **Thoughts Eastern and Western**. During this time Mathura Mohan Barua an outstanding Assamese journalist attempted to bring out a number of papers. It was largely due to his ceaseless efforts that the **Assam Chronicles** was published from Dibrugarh in 1905. But the **Assâm Chronicles** lived only for a few months. Besides these, literary magazines in Assamese like **Bijuli, Dipti, Alochani, Asom Bandhab, Kavita Lata**, were published at this time.

A landmark in Assamese journalism was the publication of the **Asamiya** in 1918. This was a weekly paper published from Dibrugarh. Founded by the poet Chandra Kumar Agarwalla, it was edited by notories like Sadananda Duarah and Nilmoni Phookon before it was shifted to Gauhati. The paper was finally closed down in 1958-59. The introductory article in vigorous prose in the first issue of the paper was written by Chandra Kumar Agarwalla. An eight page paper with hardly any advertisement, it had a circulation of only 500 copies at the beginning. It was owned by a Joint Stock Company with limited liability, but when it continued to make losses most of the share holders broke away from it. **Alochani**, an Assamese magazine was published from Dibrugarh from 1910-16 under the editorship of Prasanna Kumar Barua and Radhanath Changkakati.

Founded by Shri Radha Gobinda Barua in 1939 and edited by Lakhshmi Nath Phookon, another English Weekly **The Assam Tribune** also shifted to Gauhati and came out as a daily from 1946. **The Assam Tribune** was originally owned jointly by Mr. Someswar Borooah, of Tinsukia and Mr. R. G. Borooah, the present proprietor of the paper. It began as a weekly from Dibrugarh and from the start became a formidable rival of **The Times of Assam**. The latter soon disappeared from the scene leaving the field entirely to **The Assam Tribune**. It made valuable contributions to the freedom movement. The attainment of Independence brought new hopes to the only English daily in Assam at that time.

The number of papers and other periodicals published from this district is rather few at present. Almost all the papers originally published from Dibrugarh are either not in existence or have finally shifted to Gauhati. However, the following papers and periodicals published from the Dibrugarh Sub-Division deserve notice :-

(1) **Bir Jowan** an Assamese fortnightly, was brought out after the Chinese aggression of India. (2) **Akela**, a Hindi weekly published from Tinsukia ; (3) **Asom Prodeep**, an Assamese fortnightly

published from Dibrugarh ; (4) **Sangam**, an Assamese quarterly from Dibrugarh. Two more papers **Mazdoor** and **Rodali** in Assamese are also published from the sub-division. Mention may also be made of two commercial and professional journals, the **Digboi Batori** and **Oil News**. These are house-journals published by the Assam Oil Company, Digboi and Oil India Ltd., Duliajan respectively. Over and above these, a number of school and college magazines have also been published from the different educational institutions of the district. But in the North Lakhimpur sub-division no local newspaper is published. Among the widely read newspapers in the district are : **The Assam Tribune Natun Asamiya, Asam Bani, Asam Batori**, and **Nilachal**. Some papers from Bengal such as The **Hindusthan Standard** ; The **Amrit Bazar Patrika**, the **Jugantar**, and **The Statesman**, also have a good circulation throughout the district. The **Blitz** also has a good following.

(d) **Voluntary Social Service Organisations :-**

Saboti Kalyan Ashram :- The Saboti Welfare Centre was started in the month of August, 1951, for the welfare of people who were affected by the earthquakes and floods of 1950. The centre is also meant for the welfare of the children of hills and plains tribals, ex-tea garden labourers and other backward classes. Spread of education among the poorer tribal students is an important objective of this centre. Late B. K. Bhandary, the then Chief Worker of the G. A. E. R. F., North Lakhimpur, was the founder of the centre. The centre is situated near the Lilabari Air Field at a distance of 4 Kms. from North Lakhimpur town. It is run under the guidance of the Assam Seva Samiti, Gauhati. In 1964, there were 24 students in the Ashram. 12 of the students belonged to plains and hill tribes and the rest were children of ex-tea garden labourers. There were 13 Tribal students from N. E. F. A., but for want of funds they had to leave the centre. The centre has its own building constructed by the boarders on self-help basis. Two grants, one received from the Central Government and the other from the ecretary, G. A. E. R. F. (Government of Assam Earthquake Relief Fund), Shillong, financed the Centre. But the Earthquake Relief Fund was closed from 31st April, 1959.

Now the Saboti Welfare Centre has been converted into Saboti Kalyan Ashram where only 10 students are being maintained with a stipend of Rs. 13/- each. The staff includes the *Parichalak* and the *Chowkidar*. The centre has a plot of land measuring 8 *bighas*. This is not sufficient for cultivation. Students are taken to the neighbouring villages for social service works ; (where necessary under the supervision of the *Parichalak*.) Besides the stipend holder students, there are also five other students belonging to tribal and other backward classes.

Ramkrishna Seva Samiti : The Ramkrishna Seva Samiti was first started in Dibrugarh in 1928 with a view to acquainting the general public with the teachings and ideals of Shri Ramkrishna Paramahamsa and Swami Vivekananda. Shri Nandeswar Chakravarty, a local tea planter and industrialist donated a plot of land to the Seva Samiti for construction of its buildings. It was first started in a rented house and was subsequently shifted to Santipara Puja land where a night school for Harijans was also established by the Samiti.

There is one Charitable dispensary started by the Samiti in 1959 with both Homoeopathic and Allopathic sections. The number of patients treated in the Charitable dispensary has been increasing every year. During 1961 and 1962, the total number of patients treated were 12,270 and 14,176 respectively. A Student's Home was also opened in 1962 and there were four regular boarders and one free student from a backward community, whose entire expenses including books, stationery and tuition fees were borne by the Samiti since 1959.

The unprecedented floods of 1962 caused havoc in Lakhimpur district and the Seva Samiti workers rendered useful service in the affected areas. They rescued several families and sheltered them at the Samiti premises for a few days. They also started inoculation against Typhoid and Cholera. Besides, the Seva Samiti maintains libraries, reading rooms, study circles etc., and arranges religious and philosophical discussions, lectures, music conferences etc. It also distributes warm clothings, rice doles and free medical aid in the tribal areas during floods or other natural calamities.

Sri Sarada Sangha : Sri Sarada Sangha, Dibrugarh, is a branch of the All India Sri Sarada Sangha, with its headquarters in Calcutta. It was founded in the name of the holy mother **Sri Sarada Devi**, the Divine consort of Shri **Ramkrishna Deva.** It was established on 31st August, 1958 when Smt. Subhadra Haksar, General Secretary of All India Sarada Sangha came to Dibrugarh in course of an organisational tour of Assam.

The **Sangha's** chief aim is to spread the ideals and teachings of **Shri Ramkrishna Paramahamsa Deva** and **Shri Sarada Devi**. It also does valuable welfare work among the people. The establishment and maintenance of educational institutions, hospitals and orphanages are important aims of the Sangha. Every year the Sangha renders some relief in the form of distribution of clothes (old and new) to the needy on the Holy Mother's birth day. The Sangha organised Relief Funds for the affected people of Assam and Bengal in 1959. It also helps the needy and meritorious students by gifts in the form of tuition fees, books etc.

During the Chinese aggression of 1962, the members of the Sangha tried to provide essential things to the Jawans such as jumpers, scarves, socks, pillow covers, and bed sheets. It also rendered voluntary service to the Arunachal evacuees. The Sangha, has now undertaken the construction of a two storied building at Purnananda Road, Dibrugarh. The activities of the Dibrugarh Branch of the Sangha are controlled by an Executive Committee consisting of not more than 20 members, exclusive of the office bearers, elected annually in the General Meeting of the members.

Dibrugarh Mahila Silpanusthan Co-operative Ltd. The Mahila-*Silpanusthan* was started on 4.2.51 at Dibrugarh with 50 members. The main aim of the institution is to provide employment to the unemployed women of the locality. The institution obtains regular grants-in-aid both from Government and from local bodies including the Central Social Welfare Board, Delhi.

The institution is now running three branches viz., Weaving, Spinning of *Endi* and *Muga* and Tailoring. During the Chinese aggression, the President of the institution donated to the Deputy Commissioner's Emergency Fund various articles including long cloth, blankets, bed sheets, and some cash.

District Reception Centre for Females : For the welfare of destitute women, a centre was started with 25 such women at South Amalapatty in Dibrugarh in 1960. The women are accommodated in the centre and provided with free food and shelter. They are also trained in handicrafts.

Mahila Samiti : For the welfare of women branches of Mahila Samiti have been opened not only in the sub-divisional towns but also in many rural centres. Various Mahila Samities have also been formed under the different Community Development Blocks.

Mahila Samities have a tremendous influence on the life of the rural as well as urban women folk. They have provided opportunities to the women folk in general for the widening of their educational, cultural and religious outlook. Sewing, weaving, embroidery, leather work and cooking sections are reported to be functioning under some of the Mahila Samities in the district.

Ramkrishna Sevasram : The Ramkrishna Sevasram was established at Digboi in 1930. The various activities of this organisation include arranging free medical treatment for deserving cases, nursing of patients and rendering relief during natural calamities. It has also contributed Rs. 46,466.75 paise in different relief and humanitarian works. The

present Vivekananda Vidyalaya, a Govt. Aided Higher Secondary and Multipurpose School, is a remarkable achievement of the Sevasram. Originally it was started in *Natyamandir* with 220 pupils in order to provide education to the children of the uprooted and diseased families. Senior monks are invited to attend the annual celebrations, who by their speeches and discourses bring home to the people the ideals of Sri Ramkrishna and Swami Vivekananda, and thereby keep the people in touch with Hindu religion and culture. Annual *Utsavas* like *Durga Puja*, *Kali Puja*, *Saraswati Puja* etc., are also observed in the Sevasram.

Digboi District Council of Child Welfare : This welfare centre at Digboi was started on 29th April, 1953. It is maintaining two nursery schools for the age group 2½ to 6 years and altogether 65 children are enrolled in these two nursery schools. The Council is maintaining a well equipped play ground for children. Nearly 100 children come here daily. There is a small children's library in the local *Bal Bhavan*. Till 1963, the council was running milk distributing centres for children at four places in Digboi. This project had to be discontinued because of powder milk shortage in the area. Exhibitions of arts and crafts for children are a regular feature of the Council's activities. These exhibitions are greatly enjoyed by the children.

Lions Club, Duliajan : This club was formed in 1964 and is known for its remarkable work among the poor. A free eye treatment camp was organised by this club in collaboration with Sreemanta Sankar Mission of Nowgong in August, 1964. During the 15 days camp, 231 patients were treated of whom 21 were admitted as indoor patients. Operations were carried out for cataract, gloucoma, etc., and all of them were successful. All patients were given free medicines and prescriptions for future use. Expenses for food, accommodation, nursing etc., of the patients and also of the hospital staff were borne by the Lions Club.

There are several other social organisations like Bharat Sevak Samaj, Indian Red Cross Society etc., engaged in humanitarian works in the district. Over and above these social and welfare organisations, there are also certain religious societies functioning in the district. The following Churches in the district of Lakhimpur deserve mention.

1. Lakhimpur Parish Chaplin's House, Choulkhowa, P.O. Lahowal, Assam.
2. Atlabari Parish, P. O. Mohanbari, Upper Assam.
3. Chabua Parish, P. O. Chabua, Upper Assam.
4. Diglihula Parish, P. O. Dikom, Upper Assam.
5. Jaypore Parish, Rangalipathar, P. O. Naharkatiya.
6. Sering Pathar Parish, P. O. Dangari, Lakhimpur district.
7. North Lakhimpur Parish, Dubi, P. O. Laluk, Assam.

APPENDIX 'A'

Extract from Delimitation Commission Notification dated New-Delhi, the 20th April, 1960 showing the extent of territorial jurisdiction of each Legislative Assembly Constituency in the district of Lakhimpur.

Sl. No.	Name of the constituency	Extent
1	2	3
1.	Bihpuria	Bihpuria *thana* (excluding Laluk *mauza* in North Lakhimpur Sub-Division.
2.	Naoboicha (S.C.)	Laluk *mauza* in Bihpuria *thana*, and Naoboicha and Kamalabari *mauzas* in North Lakhimpur *thana* in North Lakhimpur Sub-division.
3.	North Lakhimpur	North Lakhimpur *thana* (excluding Naoboicha and Kamalabaria *mauzas*) in North Lakhimpur Sub-division.
4.	Dhakuakhana (S.T.)	Dhakuakhana *thana* in North Lakhimpur Sub-Division.
5.	Dhemaji (S.T.)	Dhemaji *thana*, Paik-Mahal and Luluk *mauzas* in Dibrugarh *thana*, in Dibrugarh Sub-Division.
6.	Moran	Moran *thana* Dibrugarh Sub-Division.
7.	Dibrugarh	Dibrugarh town, Dibrugarh and Jamirah *mauzas* in Dibrugarh *thana* in Dibrugarh Sub-Division.
8.	Lahowal	Dibrugarh *thana* (excluding Dibrugarh town, Paik-Mahal, Dibrugarh, Jamira and Larua *mauzas*) in Dibrugarh Sub-Division.
9.	Tengakhat	Tengakhat, Kheremia and Gharbandi (part) *mauzas* and the villages in Tipling *mauza* specified in item (20) of the Appendix in Bardubi *thana* ; Chabua—Pulunga *mauza* in Chabua *thana* ; and Gharbandi (part) *mauza* in Tinsukia *thana* in Dibrugarh Sub-Division.

Sl. No,	Name of the constituency	Extent
1	2	3
10.	Tingkhong	Tingkhong and Sessoni *mauzas* and the villages in Jeypore *mauzas* specified in item (21) of the Appendix in Jeypore *thana* in Dibrugarh Sub-Division.
11.	Jeypore	Fakial *mauza* and Jeypore *mauza* (excluding the villages specified in item (21) of the Appendix in Jeypore *thana*, and Tipling *mauza* (excluding the villages specified in item (20) of the Appendix in Bardubi *thana* in Dibrugarh Sub-Division.
12.	Bogdung	Bogdung (part) *mauza* in Chabua *thana* ; and Bogdung (part), Rangagora and Hapjan (part) *mauzas* and the Reserved Forests in Tinsukia *thana*, in Dibrugarh Sub-Division.
13.	Tinsukia	Tinsukia and Tingrai (part) *mauza* in Tinsukia *thana* Tingrai (part) *mauza* in Digboi *thana* ; and Tingrai (part) *mauzas* and the villages in Hapjan (part) *mauza* specified in item (22) of the Appendix in Doom Dooma *thana* in Dibrugarh Sub-Division.
14.	Digboi	Margherita *thana* ; and Makum (part) *mauza* in Digboi *thana* in Dibrugarh Sub-Division.
15.	Doom Dooma	Doom Dooma *mauza* and Hapjan (part) *mauza* (excluding the villages specified in item 22 of the Appendix) in Doom Dooma *thana* ; and Buridihing and Tirap (part) *mauzas* in Digboi *thana* in Dibrugarh Sub-division.
16.	Saikhowa	Sadiya *thana* ; and Saikhowa *mauza* in Doom Dooma *thana* in Dibrugarh Sub-division.

Appendixes referred to above

Appendix 20 : Villages in Tipling Mauza in Bordubi *thana* included in Tengakhat Assembly Constituency.

(i) Bordubi town, (ii) Konwaripathar gaon, (iii) Bishphutia gaon, (iv) Barjangaon, (v) Kakajangaon, (vi) Mankhuligaon, (vii) Hungrijan Pahailabari T. E., (viii) Hengrijan Requisition, (ix) Kehong T. E. (W. L. No. 16), (x) Bordubigaon, (xi) Mankushi T. E. (No. 304), (xii) Chautal Basti.

Appendix 21 : Villages in Jeypore mauza in Joypore thana included in Tingkhong Assembly Constituency.

(i) Juria pukhuri, (ii) Rajgarh Rongali Pathar, (iii) Sanaguri gaon, (iv) H. B. Hills Grant, (v) Betaniham Habigaon, (vi) Ghinai Gaon, (vii) Umatara T. E., (viii) Harishpur T. E., (ix) Asaham T. E., (x) (x) Disam T. E., (xi) Namrup T. E., (xii) Namrup, (xiii) Namrup requisition Grant.

Appendix 22 : (i) Longsoal T. E., (ii) Hukanguri T. E., (part) (iii) Pabhajan T. E., (iv) Hilika T. E., (v) Doidam T. E., (vi) Chamoguri gaon, (vii) Hatijan gaon, (viii) Amgurigaon, (ix) Holowrup gaon.

APPENDIX 'B'

STATEMENT SHOWING THE RESULTS OF SECOND GENERAL ELECTIONS OF 1957 IN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCIES IN THE DISTRICT.

Sl. No.	Name of the constituency	No. of contesting candidate after retirement	No. of electors	Total No. of valid votes polled in the constituency.	Percentage of col. 5 to col. 4	Votes polled		
						Congress		
						Total votes	percentage	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
1.	North Lakhimpur (2 seats ; one reserved for scheduled tribes).	5	1,85,574	66,179	35.66	17,589 19,570	26.58 29.58	
2.	Moran (2 seats ; one reserved for scheduled tribes).	6	1,64,710	63,589	38.60	20,525 19,779	32.28 31.10	
3.	Dibrugarh (General)	2	34,971	14,845	42.44	6,351	42.78	
4.	Lahowal (General)	5	42,760	16,794	39.27	8,481	50.50	
5.	Tengakhat (General)	4	40,873	15,729	38.48	10,930	69.49	

Sl. No.	Name of the constituency	by the political parties								Name of the political Party winning the seat.
		P. S. P.		Communist		Socialist		Independent		
		Total votes	P.C.	Total votes	P.C.	Total votes	P.C.	Total votes	P.C.	
1	2	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1.	North Lakhimpur (2 seats; one reserved for scheduled tribes	—	—	11,555 12,055	17.46 18.22	—	—	5,399	8.16	(2) Congress
2.	Moran (2 seats; one reserved for scheduled tribes.	—	—	—	—	—	—	3,113 10,507 6,914 2,751	4.90 16.52 10.87 4.33	(2) Congress
3.	Dibrugarh (General)	—	—	8,494	57.22	—	—	—	—	Communist
4.	Lahowal (General)	4566	27.19	—	—	—	—	980 1979 782	5.84 11.78 4.66	Congress
5.	Tengakhat (General)	2,179	13.85	—	—	1,209	7.69	1,411	8.97	Congress

Sl. No.	Name of the constituency	No. of contesting candidate after retirement	No. of electors	Total No. of valid votes polled in the constituency.	Percentage of col. 5 to col. 4	Votes polled	
						Congress	
						Total votes	percentage
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
6.	Jeypore (General)	2	41,171	13,488	32.76	8,387	62.18
7.	Bogdung (General)	2	38,715	12,103	31.26	10,192	84.21
8.	Tinsukia (General)	5	41,318	16,155	39.09	9,870	61.10
9.	Digboi (General)	5	38,913	16,617	42.70	10,899	65.59
10.	Doom Dooma (General)	3	36,777	19,247	52.33	16,674	86.63
11.	Saikhowa (General)	3	31,036	12,108	39.01	7,772	64.19

Sl. No.	Name of the constituency	by the political parties								Name of the political Party winning the seat.
		P. S. P.		Communist		Socialist		Independent		
		Total votes	P.C.	Total votes	P.C.	Total votes	P.C.	Total votes	P.C.	
1	2	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
6.	Jeypore (General)	—	—	—	—	5,101	37.72	—	—	Congress
7.	Bogdung (General)	—	—	—	—	1,911	15.79	—	—	Congress
8.	Tinsukia (General)	—	—	3,487	21.58	1,647	10.19	226 925	1.40 5.73	Congress
9.	Digboi (General)	—	—	3,057	18.40	1,107	6.66	1,187 367	7.20 2.21	Congress
10.	Doom Dooma (General)	—	—	—	—	1,576	8.19	997	5.18	Congress
11.	Saikhowa (General)	—	—	—	—	—	—	2,646 1,690	21.87 13.96	Congress

P S. P. :—Praja Socialist Party

STATEMENT SHOWING THE RESULTS OF THE THIRD GENERAL ELECTIONS OF 1962 IN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCIES IN THE DISTRICT OF LAKHIMPUR.

Sl. No.	Name of the constituency	No. of contesting candidates	Electorates			No. of voters who voted			No. of valid votes polled	No. of rejected ballot papers	P. C. of poll
			Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	Bihpuria	7	31,435	24,189	55,624	22,016	3,630	25,646	23,999	1,647	46.10
2.	North Lakhimpur (S.T.)	3	36,033	29,376	65,409	20,533	3,420	23,953	22,536	1,417	36.62
3.	Dhakuakhana (S.T.)	5	35,104	29,091	64,195	24,459	4,076	28,535	27,013	1,522	44.45
4.	Moran	6	26,094	21,798	47,892	13,817	8,225	22,042	20,793	1,249	46.02
5.	Dibrugarh	3	24,716	13,483	38,199	14,134	6,806	20,940	20,150	790	54.81

Sl. No.	Name of the constituency	P.C. of rejection	Votes polled by the political parties							Name of the political party winning the seat	Number of polling stations in each constituency
			I.N.C.	C.P.I.	P.S.P.	S.P.I.	S.S.S.	Independent.	J.S.		
1	2	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
1	Bihpuria	6.42	8.152	4,602	—	—	—	5,237 4,589 948 244 227	—	— I.N.C.	63
2.	North Lakhimpur (S.T.)	5.91	10,633	9,601	2,302	—	—	—		I.N.C.	78
3.	Dhakuakhana (S.T.)	5.33	10.972	5,692 —	—	—	—	5,345 4,789 215		I.N.C.	70
4.	Moran	5.67	9.796	—	361	1,234	1,881	5,208 2,313		I.N.C.	55
5.	Dibrugarh	3.77	11,588	6,438	—	—	—	2,124		I.N.C. (Women)	44

Sl. No.	Name of the constituency	No. of contesting candidates	Electorates			No. of voters who voted			No. of valid votes polled	No. of rejected ballot papers	P.C. of poll
			Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
6.	Lahowal	4	21,555	19,741	41,296	10.232	5,135	15,367	14.138	1,229	37.21
7.	Tengakhat	5	26,070	19,349	45,419	11.709	5,741	17,450	16,369	1,081	38.42
8.	Jeypore	5	27,018	19,986	47,004	12,588	6,063	18,651	17,261	1,390	39.68
9.	Bogdung	2	20,245	16,780	37,025	10,647	5,732	16,379	15,214	1,165	44.24
10.	Tinsukia	5	38,675	22,299	60,954	20,157	11,817	31,974	29,501	2,473	51.46
11.	Digboi	7	31,243	17,962	49,205	16,074	10,389	28,463	2,6569	1,894	57.85
12.	Doom Dooma	2	21,092	16,023	37,115	10,490	6,879	17,369	16,218	1,151	46.80
13.	Saikhowa	4	19,071	15,276	34,347	9,904	5,394	15,298	14,225	1,073	44.54

I. N. C.:—Indian National Congress.
C. P. I. :—Communist Party of India.
P. S. P. :—Praja Socialist Party.
S. P. I. :—Socialist Party of India.
S. S. S. :—Sarvadol Sramik Sabha.
J. S. :—Jana Sangha.

APPENDIX 'C' (Contd.)

Sl. No.	Name of the constituency	P.C. of rejection	Votes polled by the political parties							Name of the political party winning the seat	Number of polling stations in each constituency
			I.N.C.	C.P.I.	P.S.P.	S.P.I.	S.S.S.	Independent.	J.S.		
1	2	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
6.	Lahowal	8.0	6,231	—	642	—	—	5,567 1,698	— —	I.N.C.	46
7.	Tengakhat	6.19	7,969	—	1,918	3,513	—	1,861 1,108	— —	I.N.C.	48
8.	Joypore	7.45	8,361	—	—	5,546	—	254 642 458	— — —	I.N.C	50
9.	Bogdung	7.11	8.586	—	—	6,628	—	—	—	I.N.C.	41
10.	Tinsukia	7.73	15,228	8,353	—	2,339	—	2,170	1,411	I.N.C.	64
11.	Digboi	6.65	12.417	5,437	—	1,264	—	1,126 1,845 1,161	3.319 — —	I.N.C.	53
12	Doom Dooma	6.63	13.745	—	—	—	—	2,473	—	I.N.C.	38
13	Saikhowa	7.01	7,777	—	—	1,115	—	3.236 2.097	— —	I.N.C.	41

APPENDIX 'D'

STATEMENT SHOWING THE RESULTS OF THE FOURTH GENERAL ELECTIONS OF 1967 IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCIES OF THE DISTRICT OF LAKHIMPUR.

Sl. No.	Name of the constituency	Electors	Votes polled		Valid votes	Rejected votes		Votes polled by the political parties					
			Total	P.C.		Total	P.C.	I. N. C.		B.J.S.		S.S.P.	
								Total	P.C.	Total	P.C.	Total	P.C.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1.	Bihpuria	41,135	24,615	59.84	22,945	1,670	6.78	6,481	28.25	—	—	—	—
2.	Naoboicha (S.C.)	47,529	26,850	56.49	24,461	2,389	8.90	8,500	34.75	—	—	—	—
3.	N. Lakhimpur.	44,768	23,225	51.88	21,667	1,558	6.71	9,017	41.62	—	—	—	—
4.	Dhakuakhana (S.T.)	46,386	24,652	53.15	23,351	1,301	5.28	6,010	25.74	—	—	—	—
5.	Dhemaji (S.T.)	50,186	2,537	50.29	23,600	1,637	6.49	7,017	29.73	1,547	6.56	—	—
6.	Moran	40,119	19,206	47.87	17,730	1,476	7.69	9,037	50.97	—	—	—	—

APPENDIX E (Contd.)

Sl. No.	General Elections	Name of the H.P. Constituency.	polled by the different political parties									
			S. P. I.		K. M. P.		P. S. P.		C. P. I.		R. C. P. I.	
			Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
1	2	3	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
1.	General Elections of 1952	Dibrugarh (H.P.)	22,844	N.A.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
		Sibsagar N. Lakhimpur (H.P.)	29,049	N.A.	18,071	N.A.	—	—	—	—	—	—
2.	General Elections of 1957	Dibrugarh (H.P.)	16,484	11.99	—	—	25,712	18.70	—	—	—	—
		Sibsagar	—	—	—	—	29,202	17.74	—	—	—	—
3.	General Elections of 1962	Dibrugarh (H.P.)	41,857	N.A.	—	—	—	—	32.441	—	—	—
		Sibsagar (H.P-)	—	—	—	—	25,801	N.A.	47,282	—	33,488	—

APPENDIX E (Contd.)

Sl. No.	General Elections	Name of the H.P. Constituency,	S. S. P.		B. J. S.		S. W. A.		Independent	
			Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
1	2	3	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
1	General Elec ions of 1952	Dibrugarh (H.P.)	—	—	—	—	—	—	19,276 13,038	N.A. N.A.
		Sibsagar, N. Lakhimpur (H.P.)	—	—	—	—	—	—	31,616	N.A.
2.	General Elections of 1957	Dibrugarh (H.P.)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
		Sibsagar (H.P.)	—	—	—	—	—	—	32,633 10,392	19.83 6.31
3.	General Elections of 1962	Dibrugarh (H.P.)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
		Sibsagar (H.P.)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Sl. No.	General Elections	Name of the H.P. Constituency.	Electorates in H.P.Constituency.	Votes polled in the constituency.		Invalid or Rejected votes		Valid votes		Number of votes I. N. C.	
				Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
4.	General Elections of 1967.	Dibrugarh (H.P.)	3,99,041	2,19,091	54.90	15,594	7.12	2,03,497	N.A.	77,657	38.16
		Lakhimpur (H.P.)	3,97,099	2,13,392	53.74	11,370	5.33	2.02,022	N.A.	1,02,739	50.86
										I.N.C.	(R)
5.	General Elections of 1971.	Dibrugarh (H.P.)	4,22,229	2,12,155	N.A.	14,849	N.A.	1,97,306	N.A.	1,15,921	N.A.
		Lakhimpur (H.P.)	4,34,779	2,20,043	N.A.	14,495	N.A.	2,08,548	—	89,067	N.A.

Abbreviations :-
I. N. C. :- Indian National Congress.
I. N. C. (R) :- Indian National Congress presided over by Shri Jagjivan Ram.
I. N. C. (O) :- Indian National Congress presided over by Shri S. Nijalingappa.
S. P. I. :- Socialist party of India.
K. M. P. P. :- Krishak Mazdoor Praja Party.
P. S. P. :- Praja Socialist Party.
C. P. I. :- Communist Party of India.

Sl. No.	General Elections	Name of the H.P. Constituency	Polled by the different political parties									
			S. P. I.		K. M. P.		P. S. P.		C. P. I.		R. C. P. I.	
			Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
1	2	3	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
4.	General Elections of 1967	Dibrugarh (H.P.)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
		Lakhimpur (H.P.)	—	—	—	—	—	—	49,053	24.28	—	—
			I.N.G.	(O)	U. A. R. P.		P. T. C.					
5.	General Elections of 1971	Dibrugarh (H.P.	13,721	N.A.	—	—	—	—	24,913	N.A.	—	—
		Lakhimpur (H.P.)	—	—	45,357	N.A.	28,023	N.A.	24,610	N.A.	—	—

C. P. I. (M) :- Communist Party of India (Marxist).
R. C. P. I. :- Revolutionary Communist Party of India.
S. S. P. :- Samjukta Socialist Party of India.
B. J. S. :- Bharatiya Jana Sangha.
S. W. A. :- Swatantra Party.
U. A. R. P. :- Ujani Asom Rajya Parishad.
P. T. C. :- Plains Tribal Council.

APPENDIX E (Contd.)

Sl. No.	General Elections	Name of the H.P. Constituency	S. S. P.		B. J. S.		S. W. A.		Independent	
			Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
1	2	3	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
4.	General Elections of 1967	Dibrugarh (H.P.)	54,760	26.91	22,721	11.17	—	—	(1) 41,190 (2) 7,169	20.24 3.52
		Lakhimpur (H.P.)	—	—	—	—	28,711	14.21	(1) 21,519	10.65
5.	General Elections of 1971	Dibrugarah (H.P.)	16,543	N.A.	—	—	—	—	(1) 11,010 (2) 9,005 (3) 3,220 (4) 2,973	N.A. N.A. N.A. N.A.
		Lakhimpur (H.P.)	—	—	—	—	7,033	N.A.	14,458	N.A.

CHAPTER—XIX

PLACES OF INTEREST

(The names of the places have been arranged in alphabetical order).

Badati : Badati, situated about 11 kms from Bihpuria, on the bank of the river *Luhit Suti* is a steamerghat. The place has excellent communication facilities.

Badula Atar Thar : It is a sacred *Than* built in the memory of Badula Ata, a propagator of *Sankari Vaishnavism*. It is situated in Narayanpur area and is looked after by one *Adhikar Goswami*. Pilgrims belonging to the *Mahapurushia* sect visit this place.

Basudev Than (*Naruwa Satra*) : This famous Basudev *Vishnu Than* is situated near the Champara river in Gohaingaon *Mauza*. There is a big image of *Basudev* which can hardly be lifted by fifteen persons. It is an image carved with remarkable dexterity on a black stone. Reference is to be found in copper plates about its worship during the time of Lakshminarayan in 1323 *Saka*. In the *Kalika-Puran* it is mentioned that worship of Basudev was prevalent in Dikkarabasini region. Dr. Wade in his book **A descriptive Account of Assam** has mentioned that in the place known as Naruwa there was a temple or *Thakurbari* and every year many people including those from Nepal visited this temple of *Basudev*. It is known from the *Thakur Charit* a manuscript in *Sanchi* leaves that king Jayadhavaj Sinha installed this image at Naruwa *Than* after bringing it from Kundil (Sadiya).[1]

Bathowati Dol : There is a *devalaya*, Bathowati by name situated at a distance of about two kms south-east of the town of North Lakhimpur in the Tinkuria *Mauza*. There is a *Devi's* idol in the temple. But the temple itself is said to be in a a dilapidated condition.

Bihpuria : Bihpuria lies on the bank of the Dikrong river at a distance of about 35 kms to the south of North Lakhimpur town. A town Committee has been functioning at Bihpuria since 1961. Its urbar area in 1961 was 1.30 square miles or 3.37 square kms. In the next Census of 1971, its urban area increased to 5.36 square kms. The population of the town according to the 1971 census was 5,256. It is an important centre of trade and commerce.

Boragi Than : The *Boragi than* is situated by the side of the Kundil river on the road to Arunachal Pradesh. King Gadadhar Sinha kept the second *Satradhikar* Keshavdev of Auniati *Satra* in a forest

1 Maheswar Neog : Pavitra Asom pp 14-15

near Sadiya as a punitive measure. But during his exile he imparted religious instructions to the Sonowal Kacharis and the place came to be regarded as a *Than*. A branch was also established at Mankatta near Dibrugarh town. But as difficulties were experienced in running it separately, it was reverted to the original *Than*. The tribal people pay homage at the Boragi *than* on every important occasion.

Bormahara Satra : The *Satra* is situated at a distance of about 3 kms. to the west of North Lakhimpur town. It has no landed property of the days of the Ahom Kings.

Borpukhuri : The pool is situated in Bahuagaon village of Dhalpur *Mauza*. It was dug during the reign of king Narnarayan. It comprises an area of about 30 *bighas*.

Budha Bapuchang : There are two *Bapuchangs* one at Gosaibari in Narayanpur Kherajkhat *Mauza* and the other at Borkhamati village which is situated in the upper part of old Dikrongghat. After the suppression of the Khamti revolt in 1843, the British Government in order to reduce the power of the Khamtis established in about 1845, one colony with a Khamti prince by the side of the river Dikrong at Narayanpur. Since then the Buddhist Khamtis began to settle there. Buddhist pilgrims visit the Bor-Khamti village and the Gosaibari *Bapuchang* from even Burma and Ceylon.

Bura-Buri temple : The Bura-Buri temple is situated at a distance of about 16 kms. to the north east of Sadiya near the confluence of the Dikrong and Deopani rivers. It is a very old temple. According to the Hindus, this temple is of Madhava and according to Col. Hannay it is a Buddhist temple. But so far as its history can be traced it appears that the worshippers of the temple are not orthodox Hindus, but Deuris. They call it *Gerasi-Geri*.

Chapakhowa : This is the present headquarters of Sadiya Transferred Area and is located at a distance of about eleven kms. from the old historic Sadiya. The great earthquake of August 15, 1950 caused extensive damage to Sadiya and Saikhowaghat. The Sadiya town was totally wiped out by recurring floods and all Government offices previously located at Sadiya were shifted to Chapakhowa.

The town is named after the nearby village of Chapakhowa. It can be reached from Dibrugarh and Tinsukia by crossing the Brahmaputra at Saikhowa Ferryghat. Rainfall is heavy at Chapakhowa from April to October with moderate temperature throughout the summer. It is cold in winter.

There are now a few Government offices notably the Assistant Political Officer's Court at the new township. Mention must be made of the Government High School, Civil Hospital, the beautiful Dak Bungalow and a tribal rest house in the township. Chapakhowa is a picturesque place which delights visitors.

Deka Than : It is a sacred place for both Hindus and Muslims and is situated in Dhakuakhana village of Kamalabari *Mauza*.

Deughar : Near the Murabhaga *dol* there is a *Devi Than* known as Deughar. There is trace of an old road which leads to the Deughar. People now-a-days call the road Deughar Ali.

Dhakuakhana: Dhakuakhana is becoming an important trade centre in the Dhemaji sub-division of the present Lakhimpur district. It is predominantly inhabited by plains tribal people. It is the headquarters of Dhakuakhana Community Development Block and has some P. W. D. offices, a Police Station, an Inspection Bungalow and a new college.

Dhemaji: Dhemaji situated on the north bank of the Brahmaputra was declared as a separate Civil Sub-division on 15th August, 1970. Prior to this, Dhemaji area was under Dibrugarh Sub-division. On bifurcation of the district, on 2nd October, 1971, Dhemaji Sub-division was included in the present Lakhimpur district.

It is one of the most flood affected areas of Assam and is inhabited by Lalungs, Miris and people of other communities and tribes. Communication to this place was difficult but the opening of the railway line has to some extent eased the situation.

Dibrugarh : Dibrugarh, (27°29' N, 94°58 E) ranks only next to Gauhati in importance from the point of commerce and industry in Assam. The town is the nerve-centre for all trade and commerce connected with tea, coal and oil. It is the headquarters of the Dibrugarh district and is surrounded by lovely tea gardens. At the time of the establishment of the headquarters of the undivided Lakhimpur district at Dibrugarh in 1842, a large part of the present Dibrugarh district was known as the Matak Country as it was predominantly inhabited by members of that community.

The word "Dibrugarh" is formed from the combination of two words 'Dibru' and 'Garh' which together mean the fort on the bank of the river Dibru. This fort was built by the British to repel any invasion by the hill tribes. Originally this town was situated on the bank of the Dibru river but the latter subsequently merged with the mighty Brahma-

putra. After the great earthquake of 1950, the Brahmaputra eroded a vast area of the town and some important landmarks disappeared. However, erosion has been checked by constructing a number of stone and timber spurs along the bank of the river from Maijan to Mohanaghat.

Even after heavy erosion, Dibrugarh continues to be an important centre of trade and industry of the entire North Eastern region. With the establishment of the Assam Medical College at Borbari the town has expanded towards the east. There is also a rapid expansion of the town southwards, where a large number of residential quarters and other establishments are coming up. The buildings of the State Transport Station, Government Higher Secondary School, Dibru College, Indoor Stadium, Town Hall, Dak Bungalow and Government Offices, both Central and State are expansions of the town towards the southern side. In 1961 Dibrugarh town had an area of 3.12 square miles (9.12 square kms) with a population of 58,480. In the last Census of 1971, the area and population of the town have further increased to 10 square kms and 80,348 persons. The recent establishment of the second University of Assam at Rajabheta, near Dibrugarh in addition to the already existing Assam Medical College has further increased its educational importance. The construction of the All India Radio Station at Barbarooah near Dibrugarh has also added to the importance of the town.

In the field of communication, the town is well served by roads, railways and air. The nearest airport is located at Mohanbari about sixteen kms. from the town towards Tinsukia. Till 1950, ferry services along the Brahmaputra from Dibrugarh to Gauhati formed a cheap mode of transport but such services had to be discontinued after the great Earthquake of August, 1950, which caused heavy silting of the river.

Digboi : Digboi is the site of the oldest Oil Refinery in India. In 1899, the Assam Oil Company took over oil leases and built a refinery here. Later on, it was shared jointly by the Assam Oil Company and the Burma Oil Company. The Oil town is situated about 94 kms. from Dibrugarh with which it is connected by road and rail. It is a neat and clean town under the management of the Assam Oil Company. Its total population as per Census of 1971 was 15,850.

Nearby this oil town there is another small town known as Digboi under a Town Committee. The total population of this town according to the Census of 1971, was 16,538. There is one Government aided college at Digboi up to the degree standard. There are also a number of High schools.

Dinjan Moamaria Satra : Aniruddha, disciple of Gopaladev and founder of *Moamaria* sect, established the first Moamaria *Satra* in 1615 A. D. at Balikuchi village in Narayanpur *Mauza* of the present Lakhimpur district. This was later on shifted to Naharati village on the north bank of the *Luhit*. After many changes it was finally shifted in 1759 to its present site, on the bank of the Dinjan stream near Chabua in the Dibrugarh district. It is the principal *Satra* of the *Moamaria* sect. The building consists of a very big hall, the roof of which is supported by huge wooden pillars and the whole of floor space is almost bare, save for the *singhasana* or carved lectern on which the sacred book is kept. Curious paper masks and figures which are used in theatrical performances are suspended from the pillars and in one corner are some colossal drums. Its *namghar* is not very large as is found in similar other institutions. There are about thirty to forty *Bhakats* who reside in the neighbourhood and carry out worship. Its *Gossain* had a grant of 2502 *bighas* of land held at half the ordinary rate of land revenue.

Doom Dooma : This is a small but old town situated to the east of Dibrugarh. The town is surrounded by lovely tea gardens and is mainly famous for its tea and timber trade. Doom Dooma is well connected by road as well as by train with Tinsukia and Dibrugarh and the distance from Dibrugarh to Doom Dooma is about 72 kms. In 1971, its urban area was 2.59 square kms. with a population of 10,510. A town committee is also functioning at Doom Dooma.

Duliajan : Discovery of oil and natural gas in the Naharkatiya area has led to the development of another oil town named Duliajan at a place called Jalani. It is a small but well planned town mainly built to provide accommodation to the employees engaged in oil and gas industries. According to the Census of 1971 Duliajan had a population of 11,497 and an area of 2.5 sq. k.ms.

Gharmara Satra and Dol : This ancient *Satra* is situated near North Lakhimpur town. Its antiquity may be gauged from two old big tanks near one of which remains of an ancient brick temple may be seen. In the *Satra* there is a big bell of about 19 k.g. in weight on the body of which are depicted a pair of fish and *Siva* and *Parvati* (*Haragouri*).

Ghaguwa Dol : Ghaguwa *Dol* is a small brick temple near the Hahkhowa road. It is said that there was an idol of *Basudeva* inside this temple. According to another version it was the temple of Manipuri Devi of the Manipuria *Than*, located on the northern side of Ghaguwa *dol*. A legend current among local people has it that the Manipuria Devi's dol was carried to the battle fields by Ahom warriors. According to

the Settlement Group Report, the temple was erected during the reign of the Ahom King Gaurinath Sinha (1780-95) as a mark of respect to the contemporary ruler of Manipur. At present the temple is without any priest.

Harmatinagar : This is a historical place in Lakhimpur district. Harmati is believed to have been the wife of the Raja of Pratappur in Darrang district. Their son, Jitari Raja, Arimatta, built this place in memory of his mother. Harmatinagar is situated in Harmatigaon No-2 in Narayanpur *Mauza*.

Jonai : Jonai is the administrative headquarters of the Murkongsellek Transferred Area. The area is inhabited by tribal people like Abor, Miri etc. It is under the control of the Assistant Political Officer who holds his court at Jonai. After bifurcation of the district on 2nd October, 1971 the entire Jonai area has been included in the Dhemaji Subdivision of the present Lakhimpur district. Prior to the opening of the railway line from Rangapara to Murkongsellek the communication to this transferred area, was most difficult. However, in recent years communication to Jonai has improved to some extent. Small country boats also ply on the Brahmaputra between Jonai and Dibrugarh.

Kaccanabakalar Kachaikhati dol and Panchanan Devalaya : There was a *Devalaya* in the village Kaccanabakala, situated at a distance of about 4 kms. from North Lakhimpur town. In the past people called it *Kachai- Khati Than*. The image from the *Devalaya* was shifted from Kaccan village seventy to eighty years ago and was enshrined in *Panchanan Devalaya* in North Lakhimpur.

Kali Air Than : This *Than* is situated on the bank of the Brahmaputra at a distance of about eleven kms. to the west of Dibrugarh town in the Jamirah *Mauza*. Kali or Krishnadevi was the daughter of Sudarisan, the *Sattradhikar* of Badbari *Satra*. According to the *Mahanta* of the *Than*, Krishnadevi, with the consent of her father, courted voluntary death at this place to save herself from dishonour during a political revolution which took place 200 to 250 years ago. Another version is that she disappeared into the womb of the earth at this place on being insulted by her suitor because of her dark colour. The place has since been known as *Kali Air Than*. Many people visit this place to pay their respectful homage and perform *Namkirtan*. In 1959-60 the Government of Assam made a grant of Rs. 3,000 for its development.

Kundil Bazar : Kundil Bazar is situated near old Sadiya. Many people shifted to this place after old Sadiya was totally eroded. It is now a small trade centre and its wares include timber, paddy, potato *Abor-Jim* cloth etc.

Madhabar Satra : A few years ago an area between Kasikata and Rangajan was identified as the birth place of Mahapurusha Madhabdev.

However there are conflicting claims as to the actual spot of his birth. As a result two *Thans* have been established in the area, one by a batch of *bhakats* and the other by the *Gosain* of North Kamalabari.

Margherita : It is an industrial township in the present Dibrugarh district. Situated on the bank of the Dihing river, it is known for its coal fields and timber industries.

The use of trained elephants for lifting and carrying heavy logs is an interesting sight. Margherita is also the administrative headquarters of the Tirap Transferred Area. It is connected to Dibrugarh both by rail and road.

Naharani Than : The Naharani *than* is situated at a place called Kondali in the Bihpuria *Mauza*. Here *Mahapurusha* Anirudhadeva of Matak Community, founder of Moamoria Satra, was cremated. The cremation spot may still be seen in the shape of a cavern. During winter pilgrims visit this place not only from Assam but also from Sylhet. Now-a-days the place is inhabited by Moamaria *Vaishnavites*.

Naharkatiya : Naharkatiya is situated on the bank of the Buri-Dihing river about 40 km, south east of Digboi. Unlike Digboi, Naharkatiya is rather flat and less densely forested. The road from Digboi to Naharkatiya passes through picturesque country dotted with village huts and paddy fields. The Buri-Dihing zig-zags its way through the oil fields.

The discovery of oil and natural gas in the neighbourhood of Naharkatiya is of such importance that more than 50% of India's present requirements of petroleum may eventually come from the new fields.

Geophysical work in the Naharkatiya area was undertaken as early as 1923. But World War II, intervened and the Government imposed a moratorium and prohibited exploratory drilling. However, drilling of well No. 1 at Naharkatiya began on 26th May, 1952. The success of well No. 1 in finding oil at Naharkatiya gave new hope for extensive programme of geophysical survey over the entire alluvial area of Upper Assam.

After the discovery of oil, the township at Naharkatiya has been developing rapidly. The establishment of the Thermal Plant and the Fertilizer Factory at Namrup, at a little distance from Naharkatiya, also gave sufficient impetus for the rapid growth of the town.

Namrup : Namrup occupies an important place in the history of Assam. It formed the easternmost province of the Ahom kingdom. In Ahom days Namrup was covered by inaccessible jungles infested

with wild animals and as such it served as an ideal place of refuge for the fugitive Ahom kings and nobles. It was also used as a place of banishment for disaffected Ahom princes, nobles and *Gossains*. During the latter Ahom days, princes from the ruling family of Namrup also had the fortune of ascending to the Ahom throne.

The word *Namrup* in *Thai* language means 'silvery waters' which refer to the shining waters of the river Dilli flowing through it. With the establishment of Fertilizer Factory and Thermal Power Plant the place is agog with industrial activities. It is now well linked by road and rail.

North Lakhimpur : North Lakhimpur is presently the district headquarters of the newly created Lakhimpur district. It is an important historical place. It was named Lakhimpur after Lakshmi—the daughter of the Prime Minister of Arimatta—from whom ***Bara*** and ***Saru Bhuyans*** originated. Both the old and new Lakhimpur districts took names after this town. With the annexation of Purandar Sinha's territory it was made the district headquarters of the Lakhimpur district till they were shifted to Dibrugarh and Lakhimpur was reduced to the status of Sub-divisional headquarters of the North Lakhimpur Sub-division. Subsequently the town came to be known as North Lakhimpur.

According to the Census of 1971, the town covers an area of 13.74 sq. kms. with a population of 20,094. The town is connected by road, rail and air, the aerodrome being situated at Lilabari. It is the nerve centre of trade and commerce of the present Lakhimpur district.

Pishadema or Baliya Babar Than : The Deuris are *shakti* worshippers. They worship a god which is known as *Pishadema* or ***Baliya Baba***, the son of *Gerasi-Gira*. The *than* is situated near the Bura-Buri temple of the Deuris.

Sadiya : Sadiya was the headquarters of the Sadiya Frontier Tract. Once it was a flourishing town in the remotest corner of Assam and could be reached from Saikhowghat, the last North East Frontier railway terminus. Unfortunately the great earthquake of 1950, and the subsequent floods and erosion after 1951 wrought havoc to the town. Sadiya air field was also abandoned. Although in 1951 census Sadiya was shown as a town with an urban area of 0.6 square miles or, 1.55 sq. kms. with 5044 people this erstwhile town has been classified as rural area in 1961 census.

Sadiya occupied an important place in Indiar mythology. In the Epic era it was known as Kundilnagar. The love episode of Rukmini of Kundlinagar and Lord Krishna of Dwarka is well known. There are some interesting remains near Sadiya which are ascribed to the epic era. These ruins are the two forts located between the gorges of the Dikrong and Dibong and are assigned by tradition, one to Bhismaka and the other to Sisupala.

Tinsukia : Tinsukia a most important commercial centre of Upper Assam, is a junction of the N. F. Railway. It is also the headquarters of the newly created Tinsukia sub-division within Dibrugarh district. The word 'Tinsukia' seems to have been derived from the ***Tinkunia pukhuri*** (Triangular tank) excavated by the Matak kings. The tank is located at the junction of the trunk road and the Katchujan road. Another tank *Noa-pukhuri* excavated by Matak kings has now been converted into a public park known as Gandhi park.

Bengmora, was its old name and the Matak king Sarbananda Sinha established his capital here. It was at Tinsukia that Matak kings fought heroically against the Burmese invaders. The development of tea and coal industries in its neighbourhood and construction of Dibru-Sadiya Railway led to its growth as a centre of trade and industry. The discovery of oil in 1882 and the establishment of Refinery in 1899 at Digboi provided further fillip to its expansion. The linking of the railway line in 1890 to Gauhati made Tinsukia a focal point in the railway network. The commercial, industrial and other activities of the place gained momentum becaus of the development of the road and railway system. Tinsukia also played a very notable role as a transit centre during the World War.

Tinsukia and its vicinity may be regarded as the industrial belt of Assam. The Industrial Estate, plywood factories, saw mills, factories manufacturing tea garden implements and a host of engineering industries have added new dimension to Tinsukia and its suburbs.

Now Tinsukia is an important railway junction on the N. F. Railway. Tea, Coal and Oil are its main exports. The existence of the petroleum installations has increased the importance of Tinsukia as this is the only distributing centre of petroleum products produced at Digboi.

Tinsukia is about 48 kms from the district headquarters. It is well connected with Digboi, Margherita, Doom Dooma and other important places.

LIST OF PRINCIPAL TABLES

		Page
I.	Temperature ..	586—589
II.	Rainfall ..	590—599
III.	Variations in Population during last seventy years	600
IV.	Area and Population, Urban and Rural	601—604
V.	Population According to Language ..	605—610
VI.	Population According to Religion ..	611—613
VII.	Population of Scheduled Tribes according to Religion	614—619
VIII.	Area under Principal Crops ..	620—621
IX.(A)	Livestock Population ..	622
IX.(B)	Livestock Population ..	623—624
X.	Mineral Productions (Coal and Petroleum only)	625
XI.(A)	Livelihood Pattern ..	626—627
XI(B)	Livelihood Pattern ..	628—629
XII.	Literacy ..	630—631

PRINCIPAL TABLES I.

MEAN MAXIMUM AND MEAN MINIMUM TAMPERATURE IN °C
(Source :-Meteorological Department).

Name of the Station.		January		February		March		April		May		June		July	
	Year	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Dibrugarh.	1951	22.8	10.3	23.5	13.3	26.1	17.2	25.8	17.8	29.3	21.4	30.0	23.4	29.8	23.9
	1952	23.3	10.8	25.6	14.7	26.4	15.7	29.8	19.8	29.4	21.9	32.2	25.0	31.8	24.9
	1953	22.4	10.1	24.9	13.5	25.8	17.9	27.8	19.7	29.6	22.4	31.5	24.3	30.3	24.6
	1954	21.3	10.3	24.0	14.9	26.6	17.1	26.3	19.9	28.4	22.1	29.6	23.8	29.2	23.8
	1955	22.1	11.6	22.9	14.1	25.1	16.7	28.2	19.0	29.9	22.3	29.7	23.4	30.4	24.1
	1956	21.2	11.1	26.2	12.7	25.3	16.5	29.0	20.3	29.3	22.5	30.7	23.7	32.4	24.6
	1957	22.3	12.0	21.4	13.2	28.0	15.9	28.0	18.5	27.4	20.6	30.6	23.6	30.9	24.5
	1958	22.8	12.2	21.9	13.3	29.5	16.8	29.5	20.3	26.5	20.8	32.8	24.7	32.2	24.8
	1959	22.0	12.0	21.9	12.7	26.9	16.2	29.0	19.9	27.4	21.3	30.0	23.5	32.6	24.7
	1960	24.8	8.6	26.6	14.5	28.4	16.5	30.1	19.7	30.7	22.4	30.7	23.9	30.7	24.3

PRINCIPAL TABLES—I (Contd.)

Name of the Station		August		September		October		November		December		Average	
	Year	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.
1	2	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Dibrugarh	1951	32.0	25.3	31.4	23.6	29.7	21.7	26.3	16.8	24.7	11.2	27.6	18.8
	1952	31.4	24.7	29.7	23.8	29.0	22.2	26.8	17.6	24.7	12.5	28.3	19.5
	1953	32.1	25.9	29.9	24.2	28.7	20.5	27.0	15.3	24.4	12.6	27.9	19.2
	1954	29.7	24.1	30.6	24.0	27.6	21.1	26.7	15.2	22.6	11.8	26.9	19.0
	1955	30.7	24.2	32.3	24.5	29.1	21.8	28.4	16.2	23.5	10.7	27.7	19.1
	1956	31.9	24.8	32.7	23.7	29.6	21.1	25.8	16.6	23.6	11.8	28.1	19.1
	1957	31.7	24.7	31.6	24.2	29.4	20.1	28.1	16.5	24.0	12.0	27.8	18.8
	1958	29.3	23.8	32.5	24.2	29.2	21.9	28.4	16.1	23.9	12.9	28.2	19.3
	1959	32.7	25.0	31.4	23.7	28.9	21.4	27.1	15.8	26.0	11.4	28.0	19.0
	1960	32.7	25.1	31.0	24.0	31.8	21.8	28.1	15.5	25.7	13.4	29.3	12.1

Name of the Station.		January		February		March		April		May		June		July	
	Year	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min	Max	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Powai T. E.	1951	18.9	10.6	20.6	13.3	23.3	15.0	27.2	18.9	30.0	22.8	30.0	24.4	29.4	25.0
	1952	18.9	11.1	20.6	13.9	22.2	15.0	28.3	17.8	33.9	22.2	30.0	25.6	30.0	25.6
	1953	18.9	9.4	21.1	11.7	23.9	16.7	27.8	18.3	30.0	21.1	29.4	23.9	31.7	24.4
	1954	18.3	7.8	21.1	12.8	23.9	14.4	25.6	18.3	29.4	21.1	31.1	22.8	31.1	22.2
	1955	20.0	8.9	22.2	11.1	25.0	15.0	27.8	17.2	31.7	22.2	33.3	23.9	32.2	24.4
	1956	18.3	8.9	21.7	10.0	23.3	14.4	27.8	18.9	29.4	22.8	29.4	23.9	28.3	23.9
	1957	19.4	9.4	19.4	10.6	25.6	13.9	27.8	17.8	31.1	20.6	30.0	24.4	27.8	23.3
	1958	18.9	11.7	18.9	13.3	25.6	17.2	27.2	21.1	26.7	22.2	30.6	26.1	30.0	26.1
	1959	22.2	10.0	21.1	10.3	26.1	14.4	28.9	18.3	29.4	21.7	30.6	23.3	32.2	24.4
	1960	23.3	7.2	26.1	11.1	27.2	11.1	29.4	16.1	30.0	21.7	31.7	24.4	30.6	24.4

Name of the Station		August		September		October		November		December		Average	
	Year	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.
1	2	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Powal T. E.	1951	32.2	26.1	28.3	24.4	25.6	21.1	22.2	16.1	21.1	11.7	25.7	19.1
	1952	30.0	25.6	27.2	21.7	25.6	21.2	22.8	18.3	20.0	12.2	25.7	19.3
	1953	31.1	24.4	28.9	22.2	26.7	19.4	22.8	13.9	20.0	10.6	26.0	18.0
	1954	33.3	22.8	31.1	21.2	28.9	23.3	24.4	16.1	20.0	9.4	26.5	17.7
	1955	31.7	23.9	30.6	23.9	28.3	21.1	23.3	14.4	19.4	8.3	27.1	17.9
	1956	30.0	25.6	28.9	22.8	25.0	20.0	24.4	19.4	19.4	8.3	25.4	18.2
	1957	30.6	25.0	29.4	24.4	24.4	20.0	28.3	16.7	20.6	10.6	26.2	18.1
	1958	29.4	25.0	30.6	24.4	27.8	21.7	27.2	15.6	22.8	11.1	26.3	19.6
	1959	32.8	25.0	30.6	22.8	29.4	22.2	25.6	14.4	24.4	9.4	27.7	18.0
	1960	32.2	25.0	31.1	23.9	30.0	20.6	27.2	14.4	23.9	12.2	28.5	17.7

Max. :- Maximum.
Min. :- Minimum.

MONTHLY TOTAL RAINFALL IN MILLIMETRES.

Name of the Station.	Year	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Dibrugarh	1951	22.10	20.83	101.60	244.09	215.39	634.24	438.91	211.07	252.48	135.89	63.25	58.93
	1952	30.99	9.14	146.05	135.13	273.05	327.91	421.89	542.54	627.89	173.74	45.97	4.32
	1953	28.70	55.37	226.57	165.61	411.99	572.01	539.75	304.29	209.30	251.71	4.83	3.30
	1954	38.86	148.84	48.51	335.79	397.51	459.49	563.37	539.30	508.51	205.99	0.76	53.09
	1955	11.68	57.91	189.74	104.39	347.47	458.22	876.81	380.49	221.49	450.09	8.38	11.94
	1956	72.14	9.65	194.82	184.40	369.82	424.18	297.18	264.41	179.32	174.50	71.37	12.95
	1957	70.80	76.20	45.60	228.80	373.20	587.20	472.00	290.50	322.00	94.90	38.90	26.70
	1958	27.80	37.30	4.10	92.70	652.40	362.00	695.20	607.80	352.00	338.60	0.00	19.60
	1959	35.80	71.60	69.90	200.20	614.60	504.80	364.00	269.60	289.60	216.00	28.40	28.00
	1960	0.00	28.50	24.80	130.60	290.30	419.80	676.30	497.80	296.50	7.40	12.00	22.10

Name of the Station.	Year	Total.	Yearly average rainfall of the centre from 1951 to 1960.
1	2	15	16
1. Dibrugarh	1951	2398.78	2,749.93
	1952	2738.62	
	1953	2773.43	
	1954	3300.22	
	1955	3118.61	
	1956	2254.74	
	1957	2626.80	
	1958	3189.50	
	1959	2692.50	
	1960	2406.10	

Name of the Station	Year	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May.	June	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
2. Itakhooli T.E.	1951	38.3	15.7	146.4	218.9	207.4	552.3	420.8	292.6	151.0	91.4	77.2	22.5
	1952	17.2	27.4	177.2	206.4	159.6	249.6	410.6	417.5	356.1	266.1	31.6	25.9
	1953	38.1	62.1	292.6	198.8	374.8	385.7	419.3	403.0	553.1	107.6	1.7	11.6
	1954	25.4	108.6	38.8	417.0	477.7	379.1	494.4	439.0	232.1	122.4	13.4	88.9
	1955	25.4	25.4	299.7	168.6	308.3	343.9	697.4	336.9	232.6	258.0	14.9	19.7
	1956	84.0	9.6	192.7	220.1	315.1	384.0	462.7	221.1	204.2	324.5	87.0	22.0
	1957	68.5	61.1	45.1	314.9	671.5	271.7	466.5	409.9	219.6	96.7	39.8	13.4
	1958	33.0	47.4	7.0	162.0	462.9	333.2	497.0	659.3	277.8	275.5	0.0	35.2
	1959	54.8	88.0	58.9	195.2	555.9	431.4	656.0	280.4	265.3	128.7	7.6	0.0
	1960	2.7	50.8	54.8	104.6	156.4	371.5	512.5	312.4	324.7	32.4	2.5	17.2

Name of the Station	Year	Total.	Yearly average rainfall of the centre from 1951 to 1960.
1	2	15	16
2. Itakhooli T. E.	1951	2234.5	2,565.64
	1952	2345.2	
	1953	2848.4	
	1954	2836.8	
	1955	2730.8	
	1956	2527.0	
	1957	2678.7	
	1958	2790.3	
	1959	2722.2	
	1960	1942.5	

Name of the Station	Year	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
3. Kharjan T.E.	1951	18.9	16.4	98.2	231.8	183.5	575.2	538.6	278.8	225.2	177.4	68.2	23.3
	1952	14.7	3.7	160.5	205.7	180.8	303.2	484.8	471.6	517.1	229.6	36.2	3.5
	1953	54.0	42.1	308.0	225.5	385.0	343.6	481.2	230.6	414.7	151.8	0.0	5.7
	1954	21.0	151.5	44.1	336.9	345.9	511.2	479.5	450.0	347.4	141.7	7.2	69.2
	1955	37.5	25.6	184.0	100.5	259.0	365.2	677.8	437.3	261.8	378.1	11.3	23.5
	1956	68.5	3.0	163.5	191.0	308.8	437.3	212.3	284.4	101.8	216.9	33.7	18.4
	1957	50.2	57.3	31.4	235.3	464.8	357.6	378.9	390.3	243.5	71.6	37.0	33.7
	1958	32.6	28.1	5.5	162.5	561.8	333.7	435.8	621.7	264.1	286.1	0.0	15.7
	1959	38.3	54.8	71.1	168.3	549.6	424.3	547.8	207.2	209.7	91.1	1.0	0.0
	1960	0.0	22.8	16.9	103.8	142.7	437.0	469.9	266.7	289.7	14.2	0.0	19.7

Name of the Station	Year	Total	Yearly average rainfall of the centre from 1951 to 1960
1	2	15	16
3. Kharjan T.E.	1951	2435.5	2,464.17
	1952	2611.4	
	1953	2642.2	
	1954	2905.6	
	1955	2761.6	
	1956	2039.6	
	1957	2351.6	
	1958	2747.6	
	1959	2363.2	
	1960	1783.4	

Name of the Station	Year	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May.	June	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
4. Powai T. E.	1951	12.7	29.1	118.3	402.5	191.7	420.6	459.7	276.3	147.8	140.9	50.8	34.5
	1952	7.6	15.2	111.7	237.4	157.4	411.6	419.1	469.9	369.0	196.2	27.9	17.7
	1953	26.4	24.5	248.9	175.9	313.6	284.4	374.5	263.3	440.6	66.2	29.1	16.4
	1954	48.2	103.3	89.6	401.3	557.4	491.4	434.3	600.6	151.0	115.5	15.2	167.6
	1955	48.2	83.8	429·2	126.6	247.8	423.6	700.0	533.4	274.3	287.0	25.4	0.0
	1956	133.2	8.8	280.1	356.8	298.3	458.4	510.5	453.3	138.3	288.2	44.3	29.1
	1957	63.5	78.7	35.5	407.6	575.2	615.8	530.8	704.7	214.5	45.7	21.5	11.1
	1958	64.7	68.5	17.4	174.2	434.5	322.7	534.9	608.5	186.1	216.1	5.7	23.8
	1959	39.3	172.7	91.4	293.6	506·9	251.1	473.1	355.0	354.0	203.9	5.0	0.0
	1960	8.8	48.7	43.1	105.3	248.5	350.1	731.7	508.7	413.4	62.4	10.1	21.5

Name of the Station	Year	Total	Yearly average rainfall of the centre from 1951 to 1960
1	2	15	16
4. Powai T. E.	1951	2284.9	2,760.34
	1952	2440.7	
	1953	2263.8	
	1954	3175.4	
	1955	3179.3	
	1956	2999.3	
	1957	3304.6	
	1958	2657.1	
	1959	2746.0	
	1960	2552.3	

Name of the Station	Year	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
5. Doom Dooma	1951	34.2	20.3	101.0	331.7	281.4	614.1	406.9	216.6	234.3	111.7	59.6	24.8
	1952	13.2	16.9	150.8	204.7	271.4	333.9	446.7	397.7	323.7	248.9	22.3	12.1
	1953	48.8	59.1	296.1	242.5	339.5	301.7	439.0	347.4	636.5	152.6	13.2	14.9
	1954	38.3	136.8	37.0	322.5	410.4	417.2	505.4	402.3	198.3	141.9	9.8	73.6
	1955	23.8	36.5	240.7	112.7	211.8	323.5	675.8	541.2	228.6	292.6	12.3	10.1
	1956	88.5	3.7	251.9	192.5	261.8	440.6	395.7	244.0	103.6	238.9	34.5	26.6
	1957	50.4	79.4	46.4	323.7	578.0	341.5	399.2	303.4	225.0	54.0	26.6	22.0
	1958	55.3	41.3	5.7	158.6	595.3	232.6	414.7	672.4	233.3	328.1	0.0	18.9
	1959	67.5	0.0	85.8	213.8	653.2	517.6	653.7	156.1	353.2	141.4	0.0	0.0
	1960	7.6	49.9	44.6	143.2	151.3	256.0	539.0	255.5	315.9	43.3	3.2	11.1
6. Average rainfall in the district for as many years during the last decade as available.				2,614.41 m.m.									

Name of the Station	Year	Total	Yearly average rainfall of the centre from 1951 to 1960
1	2	15	16
5. Doom Dooma	1951	2436.6	2,531.98
	1952	2442.3	
	1953	2886.3	
	1954	2693.5	
	1955	2709.6	
	1956	2282.3	
	1957	2449.6	
	1958	2755.8	
	1959	2842.3	
	1960	1821.5	
6. Average rainfall in the district for as many years during the last decade as available.			2,614.41 m.m.

PRINCIPAL TABLES.—III

VARIATION IN POPULATION DURING SEVENTY YEARS

(Source : District Census Hand Book of Lakhimpur, 1961)

District	Year	Persons	Decade Variation	Percentage Decade variation	Males	Females
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Lakhimpur	1901	370,957	—	—	199,122	171,835
District	1911	468,480	+97,523	+26.29	248,746	219,734
	1921	628,101	+159,621	+34.07	335,885	292,216
	1931	778,313	+150,212	+23.92	428,012	350,310
	1941	959,960	+176,647	+22.70	517,149	437,811
	1951	1,126,294	+171,334	+17.94	613,657	512,637
	1961	1,563,842	+437,548	+38.85	853,879	709,963
	1971	2,122,719	+558,877	+35.74	1,135,863	986,856

PRINCIPAL TABLES—IV

AREA AND POPULATION, URBAN AND RURAL

(Source : District Census Hand Book Lakhimpur 1961)

Year	District & Sub-division	Total area in sq. mile	Total area In sq. Km.	Density per Sq. mile	Total No of inhabited villages & Towns.	Occupied Residential houses: Total no of Houses	Occupied Residential houses: Total no of Households	Total population: Male	Total population: Female	Total population: Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1961	Lakhimpur District. Total	5012.0	12981.1	312	3280	299,184	300,136	853,879	709,963	1,563,842
	Rural	4990.8	12926.3	283	3271 Villages	269,779	269,826	761,078	651,412	1,412,490
	Urban	21.2	54.8	7,149	9 Towns	29,405	30,310	92,801	58,551	151,352
	North Lakhimpur Sub-division. Total	1345.0	3483.6	277	908	63,820	63,852	201,630	170,873	372,503
	Rural	1342.4	3477.0	270	906 Villages	61,941	61,941	195,460	167,269	362,729
	Urban	2.6	6.6	3833	2 Towns	1,879	1,911	6,170	3,604	9,774
	Dibrugarh Sub-division. Total	3667.0	9497.5	325	2372	235,364	236,284	652,249	539,090	1,191.339
	Rural	3648.4	9449.3	288	2365 Villages	207,838	207,885	565,618	484,143	1,049,761
	Urban	18.6	48.2	7604	7 Towns	27,526	28,399	86,631	54,947	141,578

Year	District & Sub-division	Scheduled Tribe Population			Scheduled Caste Population		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	2	12	13	14	15	16	17
1961	Lakhimpur District Total	90,480	76,045	166,525	42,609	34,662	77,271
	Rural	89,865	75,673	165,538	37,651	31,386	69,037
	Urban	615	372	987	4,958	3,276	8,234
	North Lakhimpur Sub-diviston. Total	41,545	30,688	72,233	13,260	10,933	24,193
	Rural	41,395	30,648	72,043	12,863	10,676	23,539
	Urban	150	40	190	397	257	654
	Dibrugarh Sub-division. Total	50,267	46,891	97,158	29,349	23,729	53,078
	Rural	49,802	46,559	96,361	24,788	20,710	45,498
	Urban	465	332	797	4,561	3,019	7,580

Year	District & Sub-division	Total area in sq, Km.		Density per sq. Km.	Total No. of inhabited villages & Towns.		Occupied Residential houses		Total population		
							Total no of Houses	Total no of Households	Male	Female	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6		7	8	9	10	11
1971	Lakhimpur District. Total		12,792.0	166	3857		369,467	370,414	1,135,863	986,856	2,122,719
	Rural		12,711.8	147	3844	Villages	319,420	320,070	987,252	882,587	1,869,839
	Urban		80.2	3,155	13	Towns	50,047	50,344	148,611	104,269	252,880
	North Lakhimpur Sub-Division. Total		2,323.2	171	814	Villages	63,238	63,582	210,522	187,903	398,425
	Rural		2,304.1	162	812	Towns	58,730	59,045	195215	177,860	373,075
	Urban		19.1	1,327	2		4,508	4,537	15,307	10,043	25,350
	Dibrugarh Sub-Division. Total		7,023.9	201	2,178		259,694	260,225	759,018	652,101	1,411,119
	Rural		6,929.8	170	2,167		214,135	214,418	625,714	557,875	1,183,589
	Urban		61.1	3,726	11		45,539	45,807	133,304	94,226	227,530

Year	District & Sub-division	Scheduled Tribe Population			Scheduled Caste Population		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	2	12	13	14	16	16	17
1971	Lakhimpur District. Total	146,564	139,736	286,300	41,649	36,140	77,789
	Rural	144,638	138,454	283,092	36,417	32,133	68,550
	Urban	1,926	1,282	3,208	5,232	4,007	9,239
	North Lakhimpur Sub-division. Total	37,066	35,987	73,053	15,443	13,182	28,625
	Rural	36,680	35,827	72,507	14,768	12,691	27,459
	Urban	386	160	546	675	491	1,166
	Dibrugarh Sub-division. Total	41,408	40,081	81,489	19,490	17,210	36,700
	Rural	39,868	38,959	78,827	14,933	13,694	28,627
	Urban	1,540	1,122	2,662	4,557	3,516	8,073

POPULATION ACCORDING TO LANGUAGE (1961 CENSUS)

Sl. No	Name of Language	Lakhimpur District			Dibrugarh Sub-division			North Lakhimpur Sub-division		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1.	Abor/Adi	373	235	608	354	234	588	19	1	20
2.	Afgani/Kabuli/ Pakhto/Pashto/ Pathani	61	5	66	61	5	66	—	—	—
3.	Aka/Hrusso	30	5	35	—	—	—	30	5	35
4.	Angami	5	—	5	5	—	5	—	—	—
5.	Ao	158	11	169	158	11	169	—	—	—
6.	Apatani	21	—	21	—	—	—	21	—	21
7.	Arabic/Arbi	18	15	33	18	6	24	—	9	9
8.	Assamese	518,894	466,263	985,157	378,328	345,078	723,406	140,566	121,185	261,751
9.	Australian	2	—	2	—	—	—	2	—	2
10.	Bengali	74,383	53,491	127,874	66,723	50,102	116,825	7,660	3,389	11,049
11.	Bhojpuri	37	8	45	37	8	45	—	—	—
12.	Bhumij	100	71	171	100	71	171	—	—	—
13.	Bihari	1,388	313	1,701	1175	108	1,283	213	205	418
14.	Bishnupuriya	—	5	5	—	5	5	—	—	—
15.	Bodo/Boro	2,157	2,586	4,743	250	235	485	1,907	2,351	4,258
16.	Burmese	1	8	9	1	8	9	—	—	—

Sl. No.	Name of Language	Lakhimpur District			Dibrugarh Sub-division			North Lakhimpur. Sub-division		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
17.	Canadian	—	3	3	—	3	3	—	—	—
18.	Chakma	—	3	3	—	3	3	—	—	—
19.	Chinese/Chini	222	51	273	219	51	270	3	—	3
20.	Dafla	79	60	139	—	—	—	79	60	139
21.	Deori	3,108	3,002	6,110	703	816	1,519	2,405	2,186	4,591
22.	Deswali	95	92	187	95	92	187	—	—	—
23.	English	373	312	685	359	290	649	14	22	36
24.	French	3	4	7	3	4	7	—	—	—
25.	Garhwali	17	—	17	17	—	17	—	—	—
26.	Garo	112	173	285	88	173	262	24	—	24
27.	Ghati	12	—	12	12	—	12	—	—	—
28.	Govari	18	—	18	18	—	18	—	—	—
29.	Gowro	308	237	545	100	98	198	208	139	347
30.	Gujarati	81	17	98	65	17	82	16	—	16
31.	Gurmukhi	806	453	1259	801	429	1,230	5	24	29
32.	Hindi	75,598	33,996	109,594	68,883	31,627	100,510	6,715	2,369	9,084
33.	Hindustani	100	—	100	100	—	100	—	—	—
34.	Hmar	18	20	38	18	20	38	—	—	—

Sl. No.	Name of Language	Lakhimpur District			Dibrugarh Sub-division			North Lakhimpur Sub-division		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
35.	Italian	8	11	19	8	11	19	—	—	—
36.	Jaintia	—	2	2	—	2	2	—	—	—
37.	Kachari	4,071	4,906	8,977	3,021	2,965	5,936	1,050	1,941	2,991
38.	Kalahandi	83	68	151	83	68	151	—	—	—
39.	Kannada	28	17	45	9	4	13	19	13	32
40.	Khami	1	—	1	1	—	1	—	—	—
41.	Khampti/Khamti	33	69	102	32	69	101	1	—	1
42.	Kharia	1,609	1,315	2,923	1,438	1,141	2,579	170	174	344
43.	Khasi	153	280	433	151	264	415	2	16	18
44.	Khond/Kondh	48	21	69	—	—	—	48	21	69
45.	Kisan	512	343	855	512	343	855	—	—	—
46.	Kol	5	15	20	5	15	20	—	—	—
47.	Konda	167	170	337	167	170	237	—	—	—
48.	Koya	573	365	938	573	351	924	—	14	14
49.	Kurmi	7	9	16	7	9	16	—	—	—
50.	Kurukh/Oraon	5,134	6,046	11,180	4,532	5,296	9,828	602	750	1,352
51.	Lalung	941	947	1,888	806	680	1,486	135	267	402
52.	Lama	4	2	6	4	2	6	—	—	—

Sl. No.	Name of Language	Lakhimpur District			Dibrugarh Sub-division			North Lakhimpur Sub-division		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
53.	Limbu	41	42	83	41	42	83	—	—	—
54.	Lotha	—	1	1	—	1	1	—	—	—
55.	Lushai/Mizo	331	246	577	307	181	488	24	65	89
56.	Madrasi	59	6	65	59	6	65	—	—	—
57.	Mahili	112	46	158	112	46	158	—	—	—
58.	Maithili	49	3	52	49	3	52	—	—	—
59.	Malayalam	113	38	151	71	35	106	42	3	45
60.	Malpaharia	74	34	108	74	34	108	—	—	—
61.	Manipuri/Meithei	776	698	1,474	704	686	1,390	72	12	84
62.	Manjhi	589	433	1,022	589	433	1,022	—	—	—
63.	Mao	—	2	2	—	2	2	—	—	—
64.	Marari	377	661	1,038	49	9	58	328	652	980
65.	Marathi	1,516	1,218	2,734	1,496	1,206	2,702	20	12	32
66.	Maria	3,816	3,184	7,000	3,784	3,115	6,899	32	69	101
67.	Marwari	1,584	1,030	2,614	1,506	944	2,450	78	86	164
68	Mikir	65	109	174	—	—	—	65	109	174
69.	Miri	33,334	30,412	63,746	8,186	7,324	15,510	25,148	23,088	48,236

Sl. No.	Name of Language	Lakhimpur District			Dibrugarh Sub-division			North Lakhimpur Sub-division		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
70.	Mishing	10,047	8,606	18,653	9,667	8,447	18,114	380	159	539
71.	Mishmi	12	6	18	12	6	18	—	—	—
72.	Munda-Unspecified	19,368	19,157	38,525	16,719	16,290	33,009	2,649	2,867	5,516
73.	Naga-Unspecified	1,046	916	1,962	1,044	914	1,958	2	2	4
74.	Nagari-Hindi	419	313	732	166	154	320	253	159	412
75.	Nepali	30,208	19,694	49,902	25,425	16,014	41,439	4,783	3,680	8,463
76.	Oriya	31,017	25,220	56,237	28,453	24,382	52,835	2,564	838	3402
77.	Parji	297	191	488	297	191	488	—	—	—
78.	Parsi-Bhumi	2,071	1,153	3,224	2,071	1,153	3,224	—	—	—
79.	Punjabi	1,413	799	2,212	1,190	784	1,974	223	15	238
80.	Rabha	425	588	1,013	385	567	952	40	21	61
81.	Rajasthani	393	162	555	372	162	534	21	—	21
82.	Sadan/Sadri	7,828	8,415	16,243	5,615	5,109	10,724	2,213	3,306	5,519
83.	Santali	3,324	2,895	6,219	3,149	2,729	5,878	175	166	341
84.	Savara	998	680	1,678	779	517	1,296	219	163	382
85.	Scottish	1	—	1	1	—	1	—	—	—
86.	Shekasip	6	—	6	6	—	6	—	—	—

Sl. No.	Name of Language	Lakhimpur District			Dibrugarh Sub-division			North Lakhimpur Sub-division		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
87.	Siamese/Thai	243	334	577	243	334	577	—	—	—
88.	Sindhi	154	71	225	141	71	212	13	—	13
89.	Singpho	516	272	788	516	272	788	—	—	—
90.	Spanish	2	2	4	2	2	4	—	—	—
91.	Sunwar	2	—	2	2	—	2	—	—	—
92.	Surgujia	272	252	524	272	252	524	—	—	—
93.	Tamil	685	485	1,120	618	485	1,103	17	—	17
94.	Telugu	4,452	3,953	8,405	4,363	3,860	8,223	89	93	182
95.	Tibetan	12	11	23	12	11	23	—	—	—
96.	Turi	3	—	3	3	—	3	—	—	—
97.	Urdu	3,,925	1,600	5,525	3,659	1,433	5,092	266	167	433

PRINCIPAL TABLES—VI
POPULATION ACCORDING TO RELIGION
(Source :-District Census Handbook Lakhimpur 1961)

District & Sub-division	Total Rural Urban	Total population			Buddhist			Christians			Hindus	
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Lakhimpur District.	Total	853,879	709,963	1,563,842	4,659	3,553	8,212	27,995	26,314	54,309	767,296	639,739
	Rural	761,078	651,412	1,412,490	4,329	3258	7,587	26,868	25,440	52,308	689,402	590,192
	Urban	92,801	58,551	151,352	330	295	625	1,127	874	2,001	77,894	49,547
North Lakhimpur Sub-division.	Total	201,630	170,873	372,503	505	350	855	6,845	6,253	13,098	171,024	144,538
	Rural	195,460	167,269	362,729	501	350	851	6,774	6,194	12,968	166,567	142,141
	Urban	6,170	3,604	9,774	4	—	4	71	59	130	4,457	2,397
Dibrugarh Sub-division.	Total	652,249	539,090	1,191,339	4,154	3,203	7,357	21,150	20,061	41,211	596,272	495,201
	Rural	565,618	484,143	1,049,761	3,828	2,908	6,736	20,094	19,246	39,340	522,835	448,051
	Urban	86,631	54,947	147,578	326	295	621	1,056	815	1,871	73,437	47,150

District & Sub-division	Total Rural Urban	Hindus			Jains			Muslims			Sikhs		
		Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total		
1	2	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23		
Lakhimpur District.	Total	1,407,035	786	824	1,610	49,967	38,275	88,242	1,696	974	2,670		
	Rural	1,279,594	406	604	1,010	37,927	31,262	69,189	722	405	1,127		
	Urban	127,441	380	220	600	12,040	7,013	19,053	974	569	1,543		
North Lakhimpur Sub-division.	Total	315,562	119	88	207	22,492	19,579	42,071	271	65	336		
	Rural	308,708	109	88	197	20,936	18,477	39,413	199	19	218		
	Urban	6,854	10	—	10	1,556	1,102	2,658	72	46	118		
Dibrugarh Sub-division.	Total	1,091,473	667	736	1,403	27,475	18,696	46,171	1,425	909	2,334		
	Rural	970,886	297	516	813	16,991	12,785	29,776	523	386	909		
	Urban	120,587	370	220	590	10,484	5,911	16,395	902	523	1,425		

District & Sub-division	Total Rural Urban	Other Religions & persuasions			Religion not stated		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	2	24	25	26	27	28	29
Lakhimpur District.	Total	1,439	263	1,702	41	21	62
	Rural	1,424	251	1,675	—	—	—
	Urban	15	12	27	41	21	62
North Lakhimpur Sub-division.	Total	374	—	374	—	—	—
	Rural	374	—	374	—	—	—
	Urban	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dibrugarth Sub-division.	Total	1,065	263	1,328	41	21	62
	Rural	1,050	251	1,301	—	—	—
	Urban	15	12	27	41	21	62

VII POPULATION OF SCHEDULED TRIBES ACCORDING TO RELIGION

(Source : District Census Handbook Lakhimpur 1961)

District Subdivision.	Scheduled Tribes	Total population			Buddhists			Christians			Hindus		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Lakhimpur District	All tribes. Total	90,480	76,045	166,525	523	145	668	437	334	771	88,655	75,461	164,116
	Rural	89,865	75,673	165,538	523	145	668	409	327	736	88,068	75,096	163,164
	Urban	616	372	988	—	—	—	28	7	35	587	365	952
	1. Boro/ Boro Kachari	5,988	5,314	11,302	17	1	18	117	144	261	5,854	5,169	11,023
	2. Deori	5,121	4,042	9,163	3	—	3	12	14	26	5,104	4,028	9,132
	3. Kachari including Sonwal	28,465	24,086	52,551	151	101	252	149	88	237	28,157	23,897	52,054
	4. Lalung	1,472	1,197	2,669	252	25	277	40	9	49	1,180	1,163	2,343
	5. Mech	1,412	1,656	3,068	4	—	4	1	1	2	1,403	1,655	3,058
	6. Miri	46,608	38,478	85,086	14	—	14	96	53	149	45,650	38,320	83,970
	7. Rabha	1,414	1,272	2,686	82	18	100	22	25	47	1,307	1,229	2,536

District and Sub-division	Scheduled Tribes	Jains			Muslims			Sikhs		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	2	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Lakhimpur District	All tribes Total	4	—	4	848	105	953	13	—	13
	Rural	4	—	4	848	105	953	13	—	13
	Urban	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	1. Boro/ Boro Kachari	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	2. Deori	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	2
	3. Kachari including Sonwal	4	—	4	—	—	—	4	—	4
	4. Lalung	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	5. Mech	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	—	4
	6. Miri	—	—	—	848	105	953	—	—	—
	7. Rabha	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	3

District and Sub-division	Scheduled Tribes	Total population			Buddhists			Christians			Hindus		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
North Lakhimpur Sub-division	All tribes Total	41,545	30,688	72,233	206	54	260	162	114	276	40,966	30,520	71,486
	Rufal	41,395	30,648	72,043	206	54	260	145	110	255	40.833	30,484	71,317
	Urban	150	40	190	—	—	—	17	4	21	133	36	169
	1. Boro/ Borkachari	3,292	2,370	5,662	6	—	6	50	55	105	3,236	2,315	5,551
	2. Deori	3,810	2,927	6,737	—	—	—	7	8	15	3,803	2,919	6,722
	3. Kachari including Sonwal	4,739	3,139	7,878	38	41	79	32	10	42	4,665	3,088	7,753
	4. Lalung	304	274	578	136	8	144	9	2	11	159	264	423
	5. Miri	29,332	21,882	51,214	8	—	8	56	31	87	29,063	21,851	50,914
	6. Rabha	68	96	164	18	5	23	8	8	16	40	83	123

District and Subdivision	Scheduled Tribes	Jains			Muslims			Sikhs		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	2	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
North Lakhimpur Sub-division	All tribes Total	—	—	—	205	—	205	6	—	6
	Rural	—	—	—	205	—	205	6	—	6
	Urban	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	1. Boro Borokachari	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	2. Deori	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	3. Kachari including Sonwal	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	—	4
	4. Lalung	—	—	—	—	—	—	—		—
	5, Miri	—	—	—	205	—	205	—	—	—
	6. Rabha	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	2

District and Subdivision	Scheduled Tribes	Total population			Buddhists			Christians			Hindus		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Dibrugarh Sub-division	All tribes Total	48,935	45,357	94,292	317	91	408	275	220	495	47689	44,941	92,630
	Rural	48,470	45,025	93,495	317	91	408	264	217	481	47,235	44,612	91,847
	Urban	465	332	797	—	—	—	11	3	14	454	329	783
	1. Boro Borokachari	2,696	2,944	5,640	11	1	12	67	89	156	2,618	2,854	5,472
	2. Deori	1,311	1,115	2,426	3	—	3	5	6	11	1,301	1,109	2,410
	3. Kachari including Sonwal	23,726	20,947	44,673	113	60	173	117	78	195	23,492	20,809	44,301
	4. Lalung	1,168	923	2,091	116	17	133	31	7	38	1,021	899	1,920
	5. Mech	1,412	1,656	3,068	4	—	4	1	1	2	1,403	1,655	3,058
	6. Miri	17,276	16596	33,872	6	—	6	40	22	62	16,587	16,469	33,056
	7. Rabha	1,346	1,176	2,522	64	13	77	14	17	31	1,267	1,146	2,413

District and Subdivision	Scheduled Tribes	Jains			Muslims			Sikhs		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	2	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Dibrugarh Subdivision	All tribes. Total	4	—	4	643	105	748	7	—	7
	Rural	4	—	4	643	105	748	7	—	7
	Urban	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	1. Boro Boro Kachari	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	2. Deori	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	2
	3. Kachari including Sonwal	4	—	4	—	—	—	—	—	—
	4. Lalung	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	5. Mech	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	—	4
	6. Miri	—	—	—	643	105	748	—	—	—
	7. Rabha	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1

PRINCIPAL TABLES—VIII

AREA UNDER PRINCIPAL CROPS IN ACRES

Source :-District Census Handbook Lakhimpur 1961

Sl. No.	Items	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.	Basic Food Crops	141,986	172,497	242,832	293,601	360,659	416,439	427,556
(i)	Total Cereals							
(a)	Rice	141,976	172,497	242,110	293,601	363,591	413,886	422,746
(b)	Jower	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
(c)	Bajra	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
(d)	Maize	—	—	722	—	98	2,011	4,089
(e)	Ragi	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
(f)	Wheat	10	—	—	—	—	262	—
(g)	Barley	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
(h)	Other Cereals and small Millets	—	—	—	—	—	280	721
(ii)	Total Pulses	—	—	—	—	—	11,340	10,832
(a)	Gram	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
(b)	Tur	—	—	—	—	—	162	68
(c)	Other Pulses excluding Gram and Tur	—	—	—	—	—	11,178	10,764
(d)	Other Foodgrains including Pulses	5,380	7,626	8,865	7,620	12,284	—	—
(iii)	Total Foodgrains	147,449	180,123	251,697	301,221	372,943	427,779	438,388
(iv)	Fruits and Vegetables	17,589	10,887	29,086	38,633	63,815	55,212	30,562
2.	Other Food-Crops	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

PRINCIPAL TABLES—VIII (Contd.)

Sl. No.	*Items*	*1901*	*1911*	*1921*	*1931*	*1941*	*1951*	*1961*
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
(a)	Sugarcane	4,283	4,556	4,758	5,277	5,084	6,071	5,832
(b)	Condiments and Spices	—	—	—	—	—	14	7,458
(c)	Other Food-Crops	—	—	—	—	—	1,097	9,712
(d)	Total Food-Crops	169,321	195,566	285,541	345,131	441,842	490,173	591,952
3.	Non-Food Crops	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
(a)	Groundnut	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
(b)	Total Oilseeds	7,194	11,730	10,635	12,737	21,255	19,824	18,738
(c)	Cotton	11	54	106	117	113	218	151
(d)	Jute	15	156	174	1,057	3,750	3,174	4,431
(e)	Total Fibres	26	210	280	1,174	3,863	6,018	4,617
(f)	Plantation crops (tea only)	—	*	91,390	105,750	110,827	107,982	119,612
(g)	Tobacco	51	143	371	457	822	1,165	1,417
4.	Miscellaneous Crops	75,780	93,680	15,048	21,286	19,205	14,651	—
(a)	Dyeing and Tanning materials	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
(b)	Drugs and Narcotics other than Tea, Coffee and Tobacco	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
(c)	Fodder Crops	—	—	—	—	100	5,979	166
(d)	Green Manure Crops	—	—	—	—	—	—	483
(e)	Other Non-Food Crops	—	—	—	—	—	896	5,641
5.	Total areas sown under all Crops	252,372	301,329	403,265	486,535	597,914	646,688	642,626
6.	Area sown more than once	8,425	14,618	14,708	19,356	25,065	34,114	38,714
7.	Net area sown	243,947	286,711	388,557	467,179	572,849	612,574	603,912

* Included under "Miscellaneous Crops".

PRINCIPAL TABLE—IX (A)

LIVESTOCK POPULATION 1945-61

(District Census Handbook Lakhimpur 1961)

Livestock	Population in 1945	Population in 1951	Percentage Variation in 1951 over 1945	Population in 1956	Percentage Variation in 1956 over 1951	Population in 1961	Percentage Variation in 1961 over 1956	Percentage Variation in 1961 over 1951
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Cattle	467,707	568,269	+ 21.50	599,926	+ 5.57	830,551	+ 38.44	+ 46.15
Buffaloes	51,959	55,539	+ 6.89	64,153	+ 15.51	66,417	+ 3.53	+ 19.59
Sheep	708	1,292	+ 82.48	1,072	— 17.03	1,854	+ 72.95	+ 43.50
Goat	106,402	106582	+ 0.17	115,981	+ 8.81	229,161	+ 79.58	+ 115.00
Horses & Ponies	1,750	2,449	+ 39.94	2,532	+ 3.39	3,657	+ 44.43	+ 49.33
Poultry	—	742,257	—	995,038	+ 34.05	1,358,267	+ 36.20	+ 83.00

PRINCIPAL TABLES—IX (B)

Live Stock Population in Lakhimpur 1966

(Statistical Abstract of Assam 1967-68)

	Cattle				Buffaloes				Horses & Ponies			
	Male	Female	young stock (Below 3 years)	Total	Male	Female	young stock (Below 3 yers)	Total	Male	Female	young stock (Below 3 yers)	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
R	2,90,403	2,26,280	2,27,588	7,44,271	28,553	23,661	20183	72,397	2,018	2,129	1,899	6,046
U	266	366	454	1,086	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
T	2,90,669	2,26,646	2,28,042	7,45,307	2,8554	23,661	20,183	72,398	2,018	2,129	1,899	6,046

PRINCIPAL TABLES—IX (B) (Contd.)

	Goats	Sheep	Mules	Donkeys	Pigs	Total Live stock	Poultry: Fowls	Poultry: Ducks	Poultry: Others	Poultry: Total
1	14	16	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
R	1,46,516	2,420	41	89	45,007	10,16,778	10,07,278	2,91,123	17,129	13,15,530
U	106	9	—	—	—	1,202	1,096	242	—	1,338
T	1,46,622	2,429	41	89	45,007	10,17,980	10,08,374	2,91,365	17,129	13,16,868

PRINCIPAL TABLES—X

MINERAL PRODUCTION (COAL & PETROLEUM ONLY)

(Source :-District Stastical Abstract of Lakhimpur District, 1963).

Years	Coal (Figures in Tons): Ledo	Namdang	Bargolai	Tipong	Total Coal produced	Petroleum (Figures in Tons)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1950-51	56,293	3,973	1,98,335	51,200	3,09,801	2,53,278
1951-52	60,578	2,864	2,13,614	63,444	3,40,500	2,67,143
1952-53	57,951	3,279	2,19,101	64,013	3,44,377	2,55,794
1953-54	64,159	3,399	2,07,053	65,436	3,40,047	2,67,833
1954-55	70,738	9,817	1,81,574	61,043	3,22,672	2,99,089
1955-56	84,540	9,799	1,69,311	63,520	3,27,170	3,41,225
1956-57	84,264	13,956	1,56,618	31,551	2,86,189	3,89,036
1957-58	75,585	16,493	1,51,975	62,004	3,06,057	4,24,887
1958-59	91,631	34,457	1,50,258	69,261	3,45,697	4,27,212
1959-60	90,255	48,486	1,70,809	73,818	3,83,368	4,33,060
1960-61	90,257	62,531	1,73.432	85,332	4,11,552	4,41,768
1961-62	1,01,238	6,7321	1,79,269	1,01,710	4,49,538	N.A.
1962-63	1,05,693	67,503	2,01,262	1,21,646	4,96,104	N.A.

PRINCIPAL TABLES—XI(A)

LIVELIHOOD PATTERN.

(Source : District Census Hand Book, 1961)

Classification	Total of district			Rural			Urban		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Total population in the district	853,879	709,963	1,563,842	761,078	651,412	1,412,490	92,801	58,551	151,352
2. Total workers	464,859	288,891	753,750	411,329	284,655	695,984	53,530	4,236	57,766
(1) Working as cultivators.	229,915	189,787	419,702	228,754	189,540	418,294	1,161	247	1,408
(2) Working as agricultural labourer.	7,958	2,449	10,407	7,886	2,440	10,326	72	9	81
(3) Working in Mining Quarrying, Live stock, Forestry, Fishing Hunting & Plantation, orchards and allied activities.	98,712	80,863	179,575	97,560	80,375	177,935	1,152	488	1,640
(4) Working in household Industry.	2,431	9,149	11,580	1,145	7,972	9,117	1,286	2,463	1,177

PRINCIPAL TABLES—XI (A) (Contd.)

Classification	Total of district			Rural			Urban		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(5) Working in Manufacturing other than Household Industry.	24,069	1,148	25,217	12,526	456	12,982	11,543	692	12,235
(6) Working in construtruction	11,489	246	11,735	10,247	245	10,492	1,242	1	1,243
(7) Working in Trade & Commerce.	28,212	824	29,036	15,986	668	16,654	12,226	156	12,382
(8) Working in Transport storage & Communication	13,161	120	13,281	6,101	36	6,137	7,060	84	7,144
(9) Working in other services	48,912	4,305	53,217	31,124	2,923	34,047	17,788	1,382	19,170
3. Non workers	389,020	421,072	810,092	349,749	366,757	716,506	39,271	54,315	93,586

1. Census of India 1961, Assam District Census Hand Book, Lakhimpur pp. 223-224.

PRINCIPAL TABLES—XI (B)

Livelihood Pattern (Source, Census of India 1971, Assam, General Population Tables)

Classification	Total of the District			Rural			Urban		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Total population of of the district	1,135,863	986,856	2,122,719	987,252	882,587	1,869,839	148,611	104,269	252,880
2. Total workers.	531,199	86,145	617,344	454,177	82,807	536,984	77,022	3,338	80,360
i Working as Cultivators	266,307	8,291	274,598	264,111	8,247	272,358	2,196	44	2,240
ii Working as Agri. Labourer.	27,443	2,484	29,927	26,797	2,452	29,249	646	32	678
iii Working in Livestock Forestry, Fishing, Hunting & Plantations, orchards & allied activities.	78,962	66,239	145,201	77,446	65,878	143,324	1,516	361	1,877
iv Mining & Quarrying Manufacturing Processing, Servicing and Repairs	7,137	198	7,335	4,142	179	4,321	2,995	19	3,014
(a) Household Industry	4,876	1,016	5,892	3,336	941	4,277	1,540	75	1,615

PRINCIPAL TABLES—XI (B) (Contd.)

Classification	Total of the District			Rural			Urban		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(b) Other than household Industry.	22,451	519	22,970	8,370	272	8,642	14,081	247	14,328
vi Construction	5,290	77	5,367	2,489	28	2,517	2,801	49	2,850
vii Trade & Commerce.	42,328	498	42,826	21,455	293	21,748	20,873	205	21,078
viii Transport storage, & Communication	17,946	185	18,131	5,387	50	5,437	12,559	135	12,694
ix Other Services	58,459	6,638	65,097	40,644	4,467	45,111	17,815	2171	19,986
x Non-workers.	604,664	900,711	1,505,375	533,075	799,780	1,332,855	71,589	100,931	172,520

PRINCIPAL TABLES—XII

LITERACY IN LAKHIMPUR DISTRICT ACCORDING TO AGE GROUP

(Source :— District Census Hand Book Lakhimpur 1961)

Sl. No.	Age Group	Total Population			Illiterate			Literate (without education level)		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1.	All ages	853,879	709,963	1,563,842	522,019	593,641	1,115,660	239,154	89,332	328,486
2.	0-4	138,439	138,139	276,578	138,439	138,139	276,578	—	—	—
3.	5-9	129,425	122,444	251,869	79,609	90,294	169,903	42,167	29,032	71,199
4.	10-14	94,763	83,393	178,156	42,806	54,155	96,961	36,095	21,323	57,418
5.	15-19	67,273	66,475	1,33,748	30,720	49,557	80,277	23,857	11,068	34,925
6.	20-24	70,500	65,183	135,683	31,498	52,264	83,762	24,878	9,013	33,891
7.	25-29	80,659	59,609	140,268	40,055	49,887	89,942	28,027	7,176	35,203
8.	30-34	63,812	43,951	107,763	33,382	38,673	72,055	21,965	3,688	25,653
9.	35-44	96,727	62,612	159,339	54,153	56,902	111,055	31,054	4,391	35,445
10.	45-59	79,332	44,398	123,730	49,369	41,265	90,634	22,554	2,525	25,079
11.	60+	32,662	23,534	56,196	21,735	22,299	44,034	8,530	1,103	90,33
12.	Age not stated	287	225	512	253	206	459	27	13	40

PRINCIPAL TABLES—XII (Contd.)

Sl. No.	Age Group	Education level Primary and Junior Basic			Matriculation and above		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	2	12	13	14	15	16	17
1.	All ages	75,687	23,500	99,187	17,019	3,490	20,509
2.	0-4	—	—	—	—	—	—
3.	5-9	7,649	3,118	10,767	—	—	—
4.	10-14	15,786	7,905	23,691	76	10	86
5.	15-19	11,191	4,938	16,129	1,505	912	2,417
6.	20-24	10,168	2,866	13,034	3,956	1,040	4,996
7.	25-29	9,228	1,774	1,1002	3,349	772	4,121
8.	30-34	6,262	1,195	7,457	2,203	395	2,598
9.	35-44	8,308	1,084	9,392	3,212	235	3,447
10.	45-59	5,325	502	5,827	2,084	106	2,190
11.	60+	1,765	112	1,877	632	20	652
12.	Age not stated	5	6	11	2	—	2

INDEX

A

Abor Expedition—5
Abors Hills—5, 20, 91
Abors—57, 134, 140
Adam White—80
Advancement of Backward Classes—536
Agricultural Farming Corporation—156
Agricultural Credit Societies—279
Agricultural Implements—182, 253
Agricultural diseases and pests—184
Agriculture Department—450
Agricultural Engineering—451
Ahoms—3, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 72, 78, 124, 129, 131, 132, 135, 136, 144.
Ahom Administration—72
Ahom Coins—290, 291
Ahudhan—165
Akela—550
Alauddin, Hussain Shah—62
Allen B. C.—107, 115, 362, 385, 448, 458, 487
All India Radio—113, 326
Allopathic Subsidised Dispensary—516
Alochani—550
Ambika—67
American Baptist Mission—117
Amrit Bazar Patrika—551
Ananda Ram Dhekial Phukan—80, 531
Anglo-Burmese War—3
Animal Husbandry and Veterinary—451
Animal Disease—201
Aniruddha—125
Animal Husbandry and Fisheries—194
Ankiya Nat—479
Anticorruption Branch—434
Antimalarial Measures—521
Archaeological remains—96
Arecanut—173
Arimatta—1, 54
Arunachal—3
Arunodoi—117, 487

Assam Association—539
Assam Agro Industries Development Corporation—183
Asam Bani—551
Asom Bandhab—550
Assam Batori—551
Assam Chronicles—550
Assam Co-operative Apex Bank—274,284
Assam Gas Company—234, 235, 240
Assam Medical College—498, 499
Assam Oil Company—229, 230, 232, 264, 325, 326
Assam Oil Company Hospital, Digboi—517
Assam Petro Chemical—235
Asom Prodeep—550
Assam Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee—269
Assam Seed Corporation—193
Assam State Electricity Board—235
Assam Railway And Trading Company Hospital, Margherita—517
Assam Valley—9
Assistance to Agriculture—205
Aurangzeb—64
Auxiliary Health Services—519
Ava—3
Ayurvedic Treatment—515

B

Badati—22, 23, 575
Badaucha—61
Badan Chandra Barphukan—72
Badula Atar Than—575
Bakhana—2
Balipara Frontier Tract—5, 20, 91
Bali Narayan—64
Baligaon—136
Bamungaon—22
Bamuni Konwar—290
Bamboo and Cane Works—224, 255
Bangla Desh—15, 18, 109
Banaria—16
Banana—172
Baodhan—164
Bar-Barajonia—1
Bar Senapati—4

Baragolai—27
Bardoloni—35
Barabhuyans—1, 54, 55, 56, 62, 128
Barnadi—55, 64
Barahis—61
Baria—130
Boropaddy—167
Barbers—336
Barpujari H. K.—429, 478
Bardalani Anchalik Panchayat—474
Basambad Mitra—549
Basic Schools—488-90
Basudev Than—575
Bathowati Dol—575
Behali—5
Beltola—66
Bengal—3
Bengmora—583
Bengna-ati—17
Berry White—482, 503
Bhawmik—55
Bharat Sinha—71
Bhadrasen—57
Bhandary B. K.—551
Bhattadeva—116
Bhattacharya P. C.—118
Bhaskar Varman—290
Bharat Sing—291
Bhagawati B. C.—321
Bhismaka—52, 53, 57
Bhogeswari Chetia—94
Bhogali Bihu 149,
Bhutivarman—127
Bhuyan S. K.—132
Bihpuria—7,575
Bihpuria Tinali Town Committee—466
Bihar—108
Bijuli—550
Bilingualism—120
Bilmukh—21
Birpal or Birabar—57
Birjowan—550
Bisvanath—4, 77, 87
Biswa Sinha—55, 63, 129

Bisa Raja—90
Bishnu Prasad Rabha—118
Blitz—551
Boards of Visitors—436
Boragi Than—575
Borbarooah A. P.—475
Bordeobam—17
Bor pukhuri—576
Boro—118
Boro Sahitya Sabha—118
Boro Kachari—135
Botham A. W.—291
Brahmaputra 1-4, 9-18, 21-24, 34, 35, 54, 55, 57, 61-64, 66, 67, 72, 79, 80, 81, 83, 105, 110, 122, 124, 133, 135.
Brajanath—72
Brahmin—127
Brahmakunda—11
Brass and bell-metal—224
Brick making—251
Bridges—323
Bronson—480
Brown—480
Buchanan Hamilton—76, 79
Budha Bapuchang—576
Buragohain Purnananda—71, 72
Bura Buri Temple—576
Building materials—361
Buridihing 11, 12, 18, 23, 28, 29, 31 32, 33, 34, 35, 139, 231, 307
Burmah Oil Company 32, 230, 232, 233
Burmese—3

C

Calcutta—15
Captain Butler 530
Captain Welsh—529
Chandra Kumar Agarwalla—550
Chapakhowa—6,576
Charikaria—21
Chabua—25
Chabua Town Committee—466
Chao Sukapha 58,61

Charing—64
Chakradhvaj—66,291
Chandrakanta Sinha—72
Charduar—91
Chaklang—132
Chilarai—63,64
Chindwin—89
Choladhara Phukan—74
Choudhury P. C.—115, 128, 305
Christianity—126
Chutiyas—3, 53, 54, 56, 60, 62, 117, 124, 129, 136
Citizen—549, 550
Civil Courts—439
Clays—33
Climate—40
Cloudiness—44
Coal—31
Coal Industry—241, 268
Cobblers—336
Coins of Moamarias—291
Colleges—493
Colonel White—4
Communal Life—149
Community Development—375
Common Diseases—508
Consumers Co-operative Stores—282
Consumer Price Index—359
Conveyance of Early Times—306
Cooch Behar—63, 124
Co-operative Credit Societies and Banks—277
Co-operative Marketing Societies—280
Co-operative Department—457
Cornwallis—71
Country Spirits—145
Credit Facilities (General)—270
Criminal Courts—442
Crude Conditioning—233
Cultivable waste—152
Currency and coinage—290

D

Dafla Hills—20, 22, 71
Dairy Farming—195

Dalton—129, 57
Damodardeva—124
Dangari—36
Dani A. H.—51
Daroga—429
Darrang—5, 24, 55, 87
David Scott—73, 85, 87, 442
Dearness Allowance—368, 369, 370
Decay of old Industries—224
Deka Than—577
Deo Raja—64
Deori Chutiyas—136
Deputy Commissioner—386
Dergaon—577, 122
Deughar—577
Dhakuakhana—102, 106, 577
Dhakuakhana A. P.—475
Dhansiri—4, 17, 62, 79, 80
Dharala—18
Dhalpur—55, 94, 95, 125
Dharmadhvaj Pal—57
Dharmapala—129
Dhemaji—577
Dhemaji A. P.—475
Dhekialgaon—22
Dhekiajuli—32
Dhir Narayan—57
Dhol—21
Dhubri—17, 18, 118
Dibrugarh—2, 3, 5-8, 14-16, 18, 23, 24, 25, 31, 34, 35, 45, 51, 80, 92, 93, 96, 102, 103, 104, 106, 119, 120, 126, 128, 130, 146, 148, 577
Dibrugarh Frontier Tracts—5
Dibang—11, 12, 18, 34
Dibrugarh Central Co-operative Bank—282
Dibrugarh Co-operative Land Mortgage Bank—283
Dibrugarh Mahila Silpanusthan—553
Dibrugarh Municipal Board—461
Dibrugarh University—497-98
Digboi—23, 27, 32, 33, 102, 106, 107, 127, 578
Digboi District Council for Child welfare—554
Digboi Town Committee—465
Dihing—4, 16, 23, 27, 34, 80, 83, 138, 139
Dihang—11, 12

Dihingiya Raja—56, 59, 62
Dikhowmukh—1, 59
Dikrong—4, 12, 18, 22, 35, 98, 117
Dikhou—16
Dimarua—66
Dimapur—98, 118, 135
Dinjan Moamoria Satra—579
Dipti—550
Dirak—23, 27
Dirak Hill—26
Displaced persons—113
District Reception Centre for Females—553
Divorce—143
Diyun—23
Doctors—335, 514
Domestic servants—336
Doom Dooma—29, 36, 106, 127, 579
Doom Dooma Town Committee—465
Draught—205
Duanias—139
Duania Marriage—144
Duffagam—90
Dulungmukh—20, 21
Duliajan—25, 579
Durlabh Narayan—55
Durlabha—53

E

East India Company—2, 3, 79, 82, 86
East Bengal—108, 109
Eastern Herald—549, 550
Edible Oils—359
Educational Standard—483-84
Earthquake—34
Elephant catching—38
Election—392
Employment, General level of—373
Employment Exchanges—375
Employees' State Insurance Scheme—516
Engineering Industries—251
Excise—392
Exports and Imports—292

F

Fair Price Shop—297
Family System, Hindu—141
Famines—205
Family Planning Services—515
Fauna—38
Fee Simple Rules—244
Ferries—322
Fertilizer Corporation of India—234, 240, 241
Fibre Board Industry—249
Field Management Committee—193
First General Elections—541
First Pay Committee—368
Fire Service Organisation—433
Fishery Co-operative Societies—282
Fisheries—196
Flora—35
Floods—205
Flood Warning System—209
Flood Control Measures—211
Flour Mills—250
Fodder crops—195
Forest Belt—37
Forest Policy—37
Forest produce—203
Formalin—237
Forest Department—453
Fourth General Elections—545
Francis Hamilton—428
Freedom Movement—92
Furniture and Fixtures—249
Functions of the Panchayats—470

G

Gadadhar Sinha—67, 77, 78, 122, 291
Gait, E A—54, 77, 370
Gajanka—1
Ganja and Bhang—535
Garo Hills—12, 52
Garmur—21
Garukhuti—24
Gargaon—63, 65

Gauhati—13, 14, 15, 17
Gaur—55, 57
Gauri Narayan—57
Gauri Nath Sinha—71, 96, 529
Gelipung—32
Geological Structure—30
Ghaguwa Dol—579
Gharmara Satra and Dol—579
Ghora Nidhana—502
Goalunda—12
Goalpara—13, 64
Gobha Raja—1
Godwin-Austen—51
Gohpur—5, 97
Gohain Kamala—63, 305
Golaghat—17
Gold—34
Gold Washing—219
Gomotha Mahara—1
Goodenough—229
Gopaldeva—124
Goswami, U. N.—117
Goswami, P. C.—271
Gregorson—91
Grierson—117, 118, 119
Gyala Singdon—12

H

Hanju—27
Hanny, Colonel—98, 139, 244
Hapjan A. P.—475
Harmati Nagar—580
Hari Narayan Datta Baruah—54, 55
Harihar Bipra—479
Hastividyarnava—502
Hem Baruah—119
Hem Saraswati—479
Hills—11
Hilikapani—32
Hindusthan Standard—551
Home Guards—434
Home Life—147

Homeopathic Treatment—516
Hoteliers—336
Housing and textile—392
Hukong—90
Humidity—44
Hunter, W. W.—297

I

Imperial Bank—274
Incidence of Crimes—427
Income of Gaon Panchayats—471-72
Indian General Steam Company—15
Indonesia—75
Indian National Congress—93, 95, 541
Industrial Potential—256
Indian National Trade Union Congress—264
Indigenous Banking, History of—269
Indu Bhusan Chakravati—549
Industrial Co-operative Societies—282
Industries Department—456
Irrigational facilities—157
Islam—126

J

Jaipur—23, 29, 31, 32, 104, 106
Jaintiapur—68
Jail—435
Jalpaiguri—118
Jamira, Mauza—24
Jaydhvaj Sinha—66, 98, 291
Joymati Kunwari—78
Jenkins—80, 81, 85, 86, 78, 480
Jeypore Colliery—31
Jaidhal—18, 23, 35
Jogighopa—65
Joint Stock Bank—274
Jonai—6, 7, 580
Jorhat—92
Journalists—335
Joyhing Tea Estate—22
Joypur A. P.—476
Jugantar—551
Jute—170, 361

K

Kabiratna Saraswati—479
Kadam, Mauza—35
Kaccanabakala Kachaikhati Dol—580
Kaivartta (Jalia)—131
Kaki—35
Kakadonga—79
Kakati, B. K.—115, 129
Kakapathar A. P.—476
Kalika Purana—22
Kaliabar—65, 73
Kali Air Than—580
Kalinath Roy—550
Kalita Phukan—76
Kalitas—129
Kallong—135
Kamrup—12, 24
Kamata—55, 63
Kamaleswar Sinha—71, 72, 87
Kamkhya—122
Kanauj—55
Kandarpeswar Sinha—82
Kanaklata—92
Kanoi, H. P.—493
Karatoya—63
Kaviraj—502
Kavita Lata—550
Kayastha—128
Kedar Nath Goswami—549
Keots—130
Kerosene—360
Khampti Chief—4, 87, 88
Khabali—22
Khampeng—63
Khamtis—87, 88, 91, 92, 103, 119, 137, 480
Khaliamari—95
Khargharia Phukan—74
Khanikar Barua—74
Kherkatiasuti—21
Khowang—23, 35
Khowang A. P.—477
Koran—2b

Kossi Raja—58
Krishak Mazdoor Praja Party—541
Krishna Narayan—71
Krishna—53
Kumaria—18
Kundil—12, 18, 98
Kundil Bazar—580
Kuranganayani—68, 70
Kushal Konwar—92

L

Labour Bureau—358
Labour Welfare—522
Lachit Barphukan—66
Lahoal, A. P.—476
Lakheswar Barooah—539
Lakhimpur—1-9, 12 18, 20, 24, 25, 28, 31, 34, 35, 37, 40, 41, 52, 53, 61, 68, 81, 83, 86, 92, 94, 95, 97, 101-03, 105, 108-10, 113, 114, 117, 119, 120, 122, 123, 125, 127-30, 134, 136, 141, 146
Lakhimpur A. P.—475
Lakhimpur Frontier Tract—5
Lakshmi—1, 54
Lakshmi Narayan—1, 2, 98, 291
Lakshmi Nath Phookon—549-50
Lakshmi Sinha—3, 68, 69, 70, 76
Land Holdings—179
Land Reclamation—152
Languages and Dialects—114
Laopani—534
Laotra—90
Law College—499
Lawyers—335
Ledo—26, 27
Ledo Hospital—518
Lekhapani—26, 27
Life Insurance—285
Lions' Club, Duliajan—554
Liquor—532
Livelihood pattern—345
Local Boards—448, 458-59
Lock-ups—439
Lohit—3
Lora Raja—122

Lord Cornwallis—529
Lord Selbourne Committee—539
Lubbock J—51

M

M'. Cosh—15
Madhavadeva—123-25, 150, 479, 495
Madhava Kandali—479
Madhavar Satra—580
Madharam Chutia—94
Medical Facilities in the Rural Areas—516
Medical & Public Health Research Centres & Institutions—518
Mahatma Gandhi—93
Maheswar Sarma—2
Mahila Samiti—553
Maibong—135
Maju Gohain—84, 85, 92
Majuli—12, 17, 57, 69, 83, 117, 136
Makum—11
Makum Coal Field—26, 28, 30, 31, 242
Malaya—51, 75
Manak—61, 67
Mansarobar Lake—12
Manures & Fertilizers—192
Martin, M—129
Margherita—6, 23, 28-30, 32, 91, 113, 126, 138, 139, 581
Margherita A. P.—476
Markets—295
Mataks—83
Matak Country—2
Maternity and Child Welfare Centre—515
Matthis Harmannas—135
Mathura Mohan Barua—550
Mathurapur—65
Matibor Barsenapati—92
Mauzas—8
Mazdoor—551
Medlicott, H. B.—51
Meghna—12
Melas—295
Melamine—238

Methanol—237
Methyl Methacrylate—238
Migration—108
Military System (Ahoms)—74
Mineral Wealth—31
Mining Industries—228
Mir Faiznur Ali—539
Mir Jumla—64-66, 75
Miri—120
Miri Hills—20, 129
Mishimi Hills—5
Moamaria—1,3
Moffat Mills—80, 117, 529
Mohan Mala Gohain—69
Momai Tamuli Barbarua,—220
Money lending—273
Moniram Dewan—529, 530
Monobor—1, 54
Monogan y—138, 142
Mong-mao—58
Monsoon, S. W.—14
Moran—33, 35, 118
Moran Oil Field—230, 231
Morangi Khowa Gohain—69
Mula Gabharu—78
Mullan, C. S.—108
Multipurpose Co-Operative Societies—282
Municipalities—460
Murkongsellek Transferred Area—6,140
Murkongsellek A. P.—476
Mustard—169

N

Naharani Than—581
Naharkatiya—23, 31, 33, 127, 581
Naharkatiya Oil Field—230
Naharkatiya Town Committee—466
Nahar Khowa—69
Nakari—94, 95, 102
Nalanda Seal—290
Namchik—29, 30
Namcha Burwa—12
Namdung—26, 27, 31
Namrup—581
Namrup Fertilizer Project—239

Namrup Thermal Power Plant—227, 235
Naogaon—26
Naoboicha—104, 475
Naraka—53
Nar Narayan—54, 63, 64, 124, 129, 291, 305
Narayanpur—4, 55, 95, 125
Narayanpur A. P.—475
Nasir Uddin Nasratshah—62
Natun Asomiya—551
Natural Gas—33, 234
National Highway—307
National Sample Survey—370
Navigation—15
Nazira—63
Needham J. F.—90
Nepal—108
Nethan Brown—480
Neufville—80, 89, 90
Newspapers—549
Nidan Puthis—502
Nidhanpur Grant—127, 128
Nidhilevi Farewell—480--81
Nilachal—551
Nilmoni Phookon—550
Nimati—16-17
Nitipal—57
Noa Dihing—12, 23, 29, 34, 89
Nabin Chandra Bordoloi—539
Noctes—91
Non-Agricultural Credit Societies—280
Non-criminal Lunatics—436
Noonmati—33
North Lakhimpur—2, 4, 6, 7, 10, 21, 44, 45, 55, 57, 93-95, 97, 102-106, 117, 123, 124, 126, 128, 136, 581.
North Lakhimpur Municipal Board—462
North East India—14
North East Frontier—81, 87
North East Frontier Tract—5
Nurses—514
Nyayapal—57

O

Oil India—25, 232, 233 240,
Oil Mills—250

Oil News—551
Old Time Industries—218
Oliver Cuttle—480
Opium—529
Orange—173
Organisation of Panchayats—469
Organisational Setup of the Medical Department—509
Orissa—63
Other Coins—291

P

Padma Ata—124
Padmanath Gohain Barua—55
Paik System—74
Pakania—22
Pakistan—15
Palonga—102
Pa-meo-pong—61
Panchayat—468
Panchayat Courts—4
Pandu—17, 65
Panitola A. P.—477
Panimua Conspiracy—1
Parasurama Kunda—11, 128
Pasighat—5
Patkai—23, 68, 72, 89, 90
Pathali Pam—17
Pebbles—33
Pemkoi Sung—12
Penny, W—52
Peoli Phukan—92
Petroleum—32
Petroleum Industry—267
Phakials—138
Phuleswari—67, 69
Plywood Industry—247
Pichala—18, 21
Pineapple—173
Pishadema or Baliya Babar Than—582
Pohor Gogoi—94
Polygamy—142
Posts & Telegraphs—324
Pottery—254

Poultry—196
Power—225
Prahasa (A learned Barhmin)—290
Pramatheswari—291
Pramatta Sinha—67, 68, 96
Pran Narayar—292
Prasanna Kumar Barua—539, 550
Pratap Sinha—56, 64, 76, 77, 132, 220
Preparation of Gur—171
Preservation of Wild Life—40
Price Trends—350
Primary Schools—488
Primary Health Units—514
Printing Press—253
Prison Organisation—436
Private Hospitals and Dispensaries—512
Private Money Lenders—273
Probation System—438
Prohibition—529
Prohibition Squad—434
Protective Bunds—158
Publicity—392
Public Transport—310
Public Sector Employees—332
Public Works Department—448, 449
Public Hospitals and Dispensaries—510
Pulses—169, 359
Punjab—108-09
Punjab National Bank—275
Purandar Pala—53
Purandar Sinha—4, 72, 80-82, 90, 139

R

Radha Gobinda Barooah—550
Radhakrishnan, S—494
Radhanath Changkakati—549-50
Ragha Moran—69
Raghupati—1
Raghudeva—292
Raidak—18
Railways—317
Railway Workshop—247
Railway Police—433

Rainfall—41
Rajasthan—108
Rajeswar Sinha—68, 72, 79, 220, 291
Rajbansi (Koch)—129
Rajgarh Ali—20
Ramaraya—123
Ramakanta—69
Ram Krishna Seva Samiti—552
Ram Krishna Sevasram—553
Ramnath Bharali Barua—76
Rammukh—21
Rampur—1
Ram Sinha—66
Rangagora—86
Rangpur—71, 83
Ranga Nadi—12, 18, 22, 35
Rangali Bihu—149-50
Rasnadi—22
Ratna Sinha—1,54
Ratnapur—57
Raush—71
Religion—121
Relief Operation—209
Representation in the State and Union Legislatures—539
Revenue Branch—390
Revenue Circle—7
Revenue Court—446
Re-rolling Mills—253
Rhinoceros—38, 40
Rice—163
Rice Mills—249
Rice and Paddy—35
Rickshaw Pullers—337
Rinder-pest—201
Robinson—529
Rocks—26
Rodali—551
Rudra Sinha—67, 75, 73, 97, 291
Rudra Kandali—479
Rudrasagar—33
Rukmini—20, 52, 53
Rural Economic Survey—152

S

Saboti Kalyan Ashram—551
Sadananda Duarah—550
Sadhani—57
Sadhayapuri—2
Sadiya—2-4, 11, 18, 23, 51, 52, 54, 57-59, 62, 66, 73, 80, 87, 89-91, 98, 106, 109, 117, 118, 136, 137, 582
Sadiya Khowa Gohain—3, 4, 87-89, 428
Sadiya Frontier Tract—5, 6, 20, 91, 103
Sadiya Ghat—15
Sahabuddin—55, 66
Sahabad—92
Saivism—122
Saikhowa Ghat—15,
Saktism—122
Samanta—1, 54
Samudra—54
Samlongpha—58, 61
Sangam—551
Sankardeva—53, 56, 116, 123, 124, 125, 128, 134, 150, 479, 495.
Santanu—1, 54
Sanitation—519
Saraighat—65, 66
Sarma, S. N.—115, 116, 478
Sarbananda Rajkumar—55
Sarbeswar Barua—2
Satra—1
Saw Mills—248
Scientific Method of Cultivation—189
Second General Elections—544
Second Pay Committee—368
Secondary Schools—490-91
Sema Nagas—140
Sericulture—222
Sessa—23, 64
Sessari—18
Sex Ratio—107
Shah Jahan—64
Shirastadar—390
Shoals—14
Sibsagar—3, 4, 12, 23, 31, 33
Silghat—17
Silikhaguri—23

Singphos—89, 138, 480
Singpho Hills—23
Siromoni Bhuyan—55
Sisi—18, 21, 102, 104
Sisupal—52, 53
Siva Sinha—67-69, 78, 291
Small Savings—286
Soap Making—251
Socialist Party—541
Social Life (Ahoms)—77
Soil—160
Someswar Barooah—550
Sonagiri—57
Srihari—125
Srimali, K. L.—493
Sri Sarada Sangha—552
Standard of Living—370
State Bank of India—274, 276, 390
State Assistance to Industries—287
State Roads—307
State Government Employees—332, 368
State Trading—296
Steam Navigation—319
Steel Furniture—252
Steel, B. H.—51
Subansiri—2, 3, 12, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 35, 55, 91, 133, 206
Suchengpha—64
Sudangpha—290
Sugar—360
Sugarcane—171
Suhungmung—3, 55, 62, 63, 123
Sukapha—132, 61, 73
Sukhanpha—58, 61, 63
Sukladhvaj—56, 63, 124
Suklengmung—63, 291
Sukrampha—67
Sukumar Mahanta—56
Suniti Kumar Chatterjee—75, 78, 115, 135
Supply—391
Survey of Rural Economic Conditions of Lakhimpur—271, 371
Sut 130
Sutamla—64
Sutupha—59

T

Tailors—337
Tamuli Phookan—74
Tamreswari Mandir—96, 112
Taoa Gohain—88
Tea—173
Teachers—335
Tea Industry—242, 265
Tea Chest Fittings—253
Technical Institutions—501
Teesta—18
Temperature—41
Tengakhat A. P.—476
Tengapani—23, 34, 87
Teok—33
Tezpur—17, 25
Thakumtha—61
Thanas—7
The Assam Tribune—550-51
The Times of Assam—549-50
The Statesman—551
Third General Elections—544
Third Pay Committee—369
Thoughts Eastern and Western—550
Thunderstorms—45
Tibet—20
Tilok Chandra Sarma—549
Tingrai—23
Tinsukia—583
Tinsukia Municipal Board—462
Timber Seasoning Plant—249
Tipam Raja—64
Tipamia—62
Tipangpani—26
Tipling—23
Tirap Colliery—27
Tirap Frontier Tract—5, 6, 140
Tirap Transferred Area—6, 139, 140, 445, 446
Tobacco—173
Tonkham—63
Tools & Implements—251
Topography—9

Tourist Facilities—323
Town Planning—468
Trade Centres—294
Trade Routes—305
Trade Associations—297
Transport by Air—323
Tsan-po—12
Tuber Culosis Services—515
Turbak—62, 63, 78

U

Udalguri—91
Umananda—12
United Bank of India—275
United Commercial Bank—276

W

Wackum Khoomjao—90
Wade, J. P.—97, 98, 220
Wages—363
Ward, W. E.—442
Washermen—336
Weaving—220
Weavers' Co-Operative Societies—281
Weights & Measures—252, 297
Welsh, Captain—71
Western Education—479,
Wheat Products—359
White—4, 81, 82, 84, 85, 87, 88
Wholesale & Retail Trade—295
Williamson—91, 501
William Bentinck—74
Winds—45
Wire Fencing—252
Wise, Dr.—54

Y

Yandaboo—3, 116
Yogi (Nath) 130
Yunnan 52

A. GLOSSARY

Ahu :	A kind of paddy, harvested during Summer
Alatiya :	A loam
Ali :	An embankment across a rice field
Apong :	A Miri word for rice beer
Baki-jai :	A list of defaulting ryots filed by Mauzadar for recovering arrears of revenue.
Bala :	An ornament for the wrist
Bali-cahiya :	Sandy land
Bam :	A high land
Ban-bati :	A bellmetal cup-like utensil with a foot
Ban-Kahi :	A bellmetal dish-like utensil with a foot
Bangal :	An outsider
Bao :	A kind of paddy sown in flooded land.
Baradhan :	Glutinous paddy
Bari :	A homestead ; a plot of high waste land
Basti :	A homestead
Bata :	A small tray with a foot made usually of silver, bellmetal and brass used for keeping areca nut and betel vine
Bati :	A bell-metal cup-like utensil
Ba-tula cunga :	A bamboo pipe to furnish with healds in a loom
Bhakat :	A disciple ; a resident monk in the premises of a Vaisnava satra
Bhal-bari :	A high waste land of good quality
Bhaona :	A Vaisnava dramatic performance
Bhar :	A load of paddy in particular carried on a shoulder suspended from either end of a bamboo pole.
Bhata :	A kiln
Bigha :	A measure of land standing for $\frac{1}{4}$th of a *pura* of land
Bihu :	An Assamese national festival
Bil (Beel) :	A small lake
Bhohary :	A wheel attached to the spindle on which the Muga silk in particular is wound
Bhur (Bhel) :	A raft made of bamboo or pieces of banana tree
Cecukiya :	A damp land
Chadar :	An upper garment used by a female
Chaklang :	An Ahom marriage ceremony
Changghar :	A dwelling house, built on a raised platform
Chapori :	A high land formed by silt-deposit on the bank of a river

Char :	An alluvial land
Chariya :	A bowl made usually of brass
Charpara :	Land raised by silt or natural manure
Chepa :	A kind of bamboo fish trap
Chereki :	A contrivance for winding thread
Dangori :	A large sheaf of paddy
Dargah :	A Muslim shrine
Dhara :	A bamboo met
Dhenki :	A paddle for pounding rice
Dingaru :	A kind of square bamboo fish trap
Dol :	A Hindu Shrine ; a Vaishnava temple
Don :	A basket for holding five *seers* of grain ; ¼ th of a *pura* of land
Dong :	A small depression in a cultivated land used for irrigation
Dorpati :	The batten of loom
Dugdugi :	A pendant attached to a necklace
Endi :	A species of silk, the cocoons of which are fed on castor plant
Faringati :	A high land where *Ahu* paddy and other grains like mustard and sugarcane are sown
Galpata :	A flat necklace
Ganja (bhang) :	An Indian hemp
Ghar :	A dwelling house
Ghat :	A landing stair cr a bathing place on a river bank
Got :	An aggregate of three or four paiks during the Ahom rule
Hangdang :	A sword used during the Ahom rule by kings, nobles and Ahom bridegrooms
Hat :	A market place
Hati :	A row of dwellings of the resident Vaisnava monks
Hola :	A shallow ravine
Hukuma	A kind of bamboo fish trap
Jakoi	A kind of bamboo scoop used in catching fish
Jalatak	A flooded land or land liable to flood
Jan	A brooklet
Japi	A wicker hat, used as an umbrella
Juluki	A kind of fish basket
Juvali	An yoke
Kahi	A bellmetal dish
Kakoi	A comb, made usually of animal horns and elephant tusk

Kalpataru	A sacred scripture written by Sri Sri Sankaradeva
Kataki	A royal messenger or envoy of the Ahom and contemporary rulers of Assam
Kath	A mat made of grass or cork
Katha	A measure of land standing for 1/5th of a *bigha*
Kathiatoli	Paddy seed-bed
Keru	Ornament used in ears
Khar (Kala)	An alkaline preparation extracted usually from banana tree ashes
Kharu	Ornaments worn on wrist
Khat	A small estate including arable land
Khedashikar	A process employed in catching elephant
Khel	A division of people made by the Ahom rulers for specific profession
Khoka	A conical bamboo fish trap
Kukur suta	A species of plant wherefrom threads and ropes are prepared.
Kunki	A hunting elephant
Kunwaree :	A queer, a princess
Lahi :	A fine variety of paddy
Lahoni :	A swing basket
Lecha :	A measure of land standing for 1/20th a *katha*
Letai :	A kind of long bamboo reed used, for winding when the threads are wet
Lota :	A kind of water pot, narrow in the middle portion, made of bellmetal and brass
Mahura :	A piece of reed where threads are wound for weaving
Mahut :	An elephant driver
Maidam :	A funeral vault of the Ahom rulers and nobles
Maina (Kanan-mel-Parijat) :	A Childrens' organisation
Makhana :	A male elephant without tusk
Mako :	A shuttle
Mani :	A kind of beads used as ornaments
Meji :	A pile made of bamboo pieces, straw etc., raised on the eve of the *Magh-bihu* festival
Mekha(e)la :	A girdle
Mela :	A public show ; an exhibition
Melashikar :	A process employed in catching elephant
Muga :	A variety of Assam silk, the threads of which are usually yellow with the tinze of gold
Nachani :	A part of a loom

Namghar :	A place of worship in a Vaisnava Satra in particular
Neothani :	A Cotton gin
Nirmali :	Flowers or offerings made to a deity and distributed among the votaries
Paik :	A Ryot during the Ahom rule whose duty was to render service to the king or the State
Pala(h) :	A kind of bamboo basket trap for catching fish
Palnam :	A Vaisnava devotional (*nama-kirtan*) prayer lasting for days
Pat :	A fine variety of Assam silk, the yarns of which are prepared from mulberry-fed cocoons
Pat (Sil) sako :	A stone bridge
Pathar :	A paddy field ; an orchard
Pati :	A kind of fine mat
Pawry :	A kind of bamboo fish trap
Peteri :	A cane basket with a lid
Petu-dhowa :	To wash entrails of a dead body
Pona :	Young fish
Pukhuri :	A pond
Pura :	A measurement of land standing for four bighas of land or four to five *dons* of grain.
Ranca :	A reed of an Assamese loom
Riha :	A kind of scarf used by females
Rupit :	Land on which winter crop or transplanted paddy is grown
Ryot sabha :	An assemblage or meeting of cultivators paying land revenue
Sadhowa :	To wash dead body
Salidhan :	A principal variety of transplanted paddy
Sanci :	A kind of tree (*Agaru*) from which leaves are prepared for writing old manuscripts
San :	Fibre of hemp or flex
Sarai :	A tray with foot, made usually of silver and bellmetal
Satra :	A Vaisnava religious institution
Takalabari :	A barren land ; a deserted homestead
Tarapat :	Leaves of wild cardamom
Tenga :	A sour preparation of fruit
Toltha :	One of the beams of the Assamese hand-loom
Tongali :	A kind of dress wrapped round the waist
Thor (Jhap) :	Five, Six or eight bundles of paddy
Thuriya :	An ornament used in ears
Tulapat :	Cotton paper
Ugha :	A kind of reel for winding thread on
Ural :	A wooden mortar used for pounding paddy and rice

B. BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Allen B. C. .. Assam District Gazetteers. Lakhimpur 1905,
2. Barua, B. K. .. A Cultural History of Assam, 1967.
3. Barua, Hem. .. The Red River and The Blue Hill. 1962.
4. Barua, S. .. Journal of the Assam Research Society (vol. XVII, 1963).
5. Botham, A. W. .. A Catalogue of the Provincial Coin Cabinet Assam, 2nd Edition, Allahbad, 1930.
6. Bhattacharyya, P. C. .. Journal of the Assam Research Society, Vol. XVI, 1964.
7. Bhuyan, S. K. .. Anglo-Assamese Relations, 1949.
8. Bhuyan, S. K. .. Studies in Literature of Assam.
9. Bhuyan, S. K. .. Atan Buragohain and His Times, 1957.
10. Borpujari, H. K. .. Assam in the Days of the Company 1963.
11. Chatterjee, S. K. .. The Place of Assam in the History, and Civilisation of India, 1955.
12. Chatterjee, S. K. .. Origin and Development of Bengali Language, 1926.
13. Chatterjee, S. K. .. Kirata-Jana-Krti 1951.
14. Choudhury, P. C. .. The History of Civilisation of the People of Assam to the Twelfth Century A. D, 1966.
15. Choudhury, S. B. .. Civil Disturbances during the British Rule in India, Calcutta, 1955.
16. Dalton .. The Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal.
17. Dani, A. H. .. Prehistory and Protohistory of Eastern India, 1960.
18. Dasgupta, S. B. .. Obscure Religious Cults, 1946.
19. Dutt, K. N. .. A Handbook of the Old Records to the Assam Secretariat, 1959.
20. Dutta Baruah, H. N. .. Pracin Kamarupiya Kayastha Samajar Itibritta, 1941.
21. Elwin, Verrier .. A Philosophy for N. E. F. A. 1957
22. Gait, E. A. .. History of Assam, 1967.
23. Goswami, K. N. .. Journal of the University of Gauhati, Vol. X, No. 1, Arts, 1959.
24. -do- .. Journal of the Assam Research Society, Vol. XVII, 1966.

25. Goswami. P. C. .. The Economic Development of Assam, 1963.
26. Grierson .. Linguistic Survey of India, Vol. Part-I.
27. Hamilton, Francis .. An Account of Assam, 1963.
28 Haramannas, Fr. .. The Indo-Tibetans, Bombay, 1954.
29. Hunter, W. W. .. Statistical Account of Assam, 1874.
30. Kakati, B. K. .. Assamese—Its Formation and Development, 1972.
31. Kakati, B. K. .. Kalita Jatir Itibrittya, 1962.
32. Lahiri, R. M. .. The Annexation of Assam.
33. Mazumdar, S. C. .. Education of Assam.
34. Medhi, Kaliram .. Journal of the Assam Research Society, Vol.-III, No. 3.
35. Metre, Y. B. .. Oil Prospects in India.
36. Mills .. Report on the Administration of the Province of Assam, XXXI.
37. Neog, Maheswar .. Pabitra Asom, 1960.
38. -do- .. A Place of Vasudev Worship in Assam.
39. Rajkumar, S. .. Chutiya, Bhuyan Aru Matak Rajya, 1965.
40. Rao, V. Venkata .. A Hundred Years of Local Self-Government in Assam, 1967.
41. Robinson, W. .. A Descriptive Account of Assam, London, 1841.
42. Sarkar, Prof, Jadunath .. Assam and the Ahoms in 1660. Published in the Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society in September, 1915.
43. Sarma, Dr. S. N. .. Asomiya Sahityar Itibrittya, 1961.
44. Saxena, R. C. .. Labour Problems & Social Welfare.

CENTRAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS INCLUDING MISCELLANEOUS WORKS.

1. Asom Buranji (preserved by Sukumar Mahanta).
2. Assam Gazette—January 8, 1964.
3. Agricultural Guide Book, Assam 1967-68, 1968-69, 1971-72.
4. Assam After Independence, 1966.
5. Annual Survey of Industries in Assam, 1962.
6. Assam Information, Vol-XXII, 1971.
7. A Survey of Rural Economic Conditions in Lakhimpur, 1954.
8. Annual Survey of Industries 1962, Assam.
9. Annual Report of the Directorate of Health Services, Assam, 1960.
10. Census of India, 1931, Vol. III, Assam Part-1.
11. Census of India, 1911, Vol. III. Assam Part-I.
12. Census of India, 1951, Vol. XII, Part-I-A.
13. Census of India, 1921, Vol. XII, Assam Part-I.
14. Census of India, 1961, District Census Handbook, Lakhimpur.
15. Census of Assam Government Employees as on 31st March, 1965.
16. Community Development Programme in Assam, Progress during 1971-72.
17. Economic Survey of Assam, 1963.
18. Fourth Five Year Plan of Assam.
19. Industrial Programmes for the Fourth Plan for Assam by NCAER.
20. Industrial Potentialities of Assam & Its Development, Govt. of Assam.
21. Journal of the Asiatic Research Society of Bengal, Vol. XII Part-1
22. Land Settlement Policy, 1968.
23. Quarterly Bulletins of Statistics of Assam, Vol. II.
24. Report of the Assam Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee, 1929-30, Vol. II.
25. Satsari Asom Buranji.
26. Statistical Handbook of Assam, 1970.
27. Statistical Handbook of Assam, 1969.
28. Statistical Abstract of Assam, 1960-61. 1967-68,
29. Supplement to the Assam District Gazetteers, Lakhimpur, Vol. VIII.
30. The Assam Land Revenue Manual (1931), Introduction.
31. Tea Statistics, 1968-69.
32. Tea Board of India, Tea Statistics, 1968.
33. Techno-Economic Survey of Assam by N. C. A. E. R. 1962.

ERRATA

Page No.	Line No.	For	Substitute
3	1	part	part of
3	6	a part	a part of
5	28	occured	occurred
6	14	as the latter functions	in his capacity as
9	9	nearly	nearby
13	6	18	13
13	25-26	occured	occurred
13	28	this	these
13	38	depths of varying	depths varying
13	(42) (Footnote)	Lakhimpurs	Lakhimpur
15	39	groyness	groyne
17	11	carge	cargo
17	13	fact	feet
17	22	stremers	steamers
18	42	undidided	undivided
20	12	the expert	the most expert
21	16	conflyence	confluence
22	31	course and very	course very
22	37	and to	and is to.
23	41	and stable	and is stable
24	32	occuring	occurring
24	34	-do-	-do-
27	25	coliery	colliery
35	22	mightly	mighty
35	26	occured	occurred.
36	11	occurance	occurrence
36	11	occuring	occurring
37	5	Portion	Portions
37	25	tresspassing	trespassing
38	26	Beer	Bear
38	27-28	Squirral	Squirrel
38	33	processess	processes
38	40	throny	thorny
39	3	*Kukis*	*Kunkis*
39	23	approching	approaching
40	1	Games Law	Game Laws
40	29	swampdeers	swampdeer
40	36	aboundant	abundant
41	30	reccntly	recently
53	1	*Rukmiui*	*Rukmini*
53	32	dynesty	dynasty
53	36	Kundina	Kundila
55	38	faught	fought
65	13	asault	assault
73	36	terirtories	territories
74	43	Bantink	Bentinck
76	34	occured	occurred
77	17	which seems to have consisted	which consisted

Page No.	Line No.	For	Substitute.
77	24	managemaent	management
77	29	indentified	identified
78	34	her	his
79	5	independece	independence
82	15	responasible	responsible
82	30	bourdaries	boundaries
86	30	Bu	But
87	28	dalt	dealt
88	26	occured	occurred
88	37	bursted	burst
89	8	comine	coming
95	25	ninty	ninety
95	42	machinary	machinery
96	24	dowery	dowry
96	39	curved	carved
96	41	pillers	pillars
97	10	medieaval	medieval
97	13	Gazetter	Gazetteer
98	2	curved	carved
98	16	is very	is a very
98	23	speciman	specimen
98	24	curved	carved
98	25	deity of	deity in
98	Foot note	Ba-K. Brua	B. K. Barua
103	31	censued	censused
104	8	person	persons
104	10	mil	mile
104	12	outbreakes	outbreaks
104	33	1,199,339	1,191,339
104	36	unprecendented	unprecedented
106	34	a area	an area
108	21	gurden	garden
109	15	brougut	brought
110	3	bussiness	business
110	29	Our	Out
110	39	panoroma	panorama
112	10	plaintains	plantains
113	23	fall	fell
113	33	consisting	constituting
115	14	epigroahs	epigraphs
116	23	writter	writer
116	32	possesed	possessed
116	34	diducticism	didacticism
116	43	indigeneous	indigenous
118	3	posseses	possesses
118	8	abondoned	abandoned
119	1	predominent	predominant
120	1	culture	cultural

Page No.	Line No.	For	Substitute
120	40	Kachar	Kachari
121	14	currents	current
121	20	Hindusim	Hinduism
122	6	manifested female	manifested in the female
122	11	as	an
122	20	predominent	predominant
122	44	*Vaishnavaa*	*Vaishnava*
123	32-33	completely	completely
123	41	pursuaded	persuaded.
125	18	mediaevel	medieval.
125	22	inheritence	inheritance.
126	36	1248	1243
126	36	2608	2606
128	3	made a	made.
129	8	Dharmapla	Dharmapala.
129	23	about the Kalitas who served.	that the Kalitas served.
129	14	Kshaytrias	Kshatriyas
130	2	the present day	at present.
131	12	is	was
134	3	beaf	beef.
134	6	bear	beer.
134	11	bear	beer.
136	7	bear	beer.
137	34	indispensible	indispensable.
138	38	stripped	striped.
138	39	stripped	striped.
139	27	stripped	striped.
140	13	stripped	striped.
142	34	dowery	dowry.
142	36	dowery	dowry.
143	42	consumated	consummated.
144	8	represents	represent.
145	19	competant	competent.
145	22	elopments	elopements.
146	7	immitation	imitation.
147	32	cloosed	closed.
147	41	New	Now.
148	11	is	are.
148	13	woolen	woollen.
148	13	radiogram	radiograms.
148	14	possesed	possessed.
148	25	blelmetal	bellmetal.
148	29	betle-nuts	betelnuts.
150	2-3	plaintains	plantains.
150	24	donning in the	donning the.
150	33	hymn	hymns.
151	18	procession in the	procession to the
154	9	cultivable lands	cultivable waste lands.
156	34	memorandaum	memorandum.
157	23	losses	loses.
158	29	schemes	scheme.
		scheme	schemes

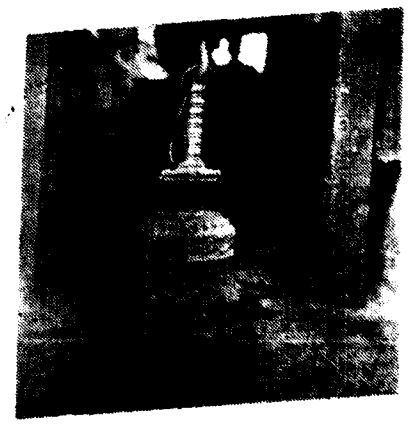
Page No.	Line No.	For	Substitute
351	13	of *seers*	of 7 *seers*
375	33	Informations	Information.
386	24	o	of
386	37	Requision	Requisition.
392	13	Assemblies	Assembly.
427	10	Beside	Besides.
436	21	Boards of Visitors	Board of Visitors.
445	9	Magiatrates	Magistrates.
460	15	deficit financing	over draft.
461	41	Scheduled Caste	Scheduled Castes.
462	27	appointed	nominated.
467	5	Loca-d	Local Fund.
468	7	Rpngagora	Rangagora.
469	34	Assemblies	Assembly.
470	14	-do-	-do-
470	23	*Panchnyat*	*Panchayat*
471	35	the addition to the	utilization of such.
473	24	this	the
478	9	type	types.
495	21	B. Com. with (Honours)	B. Com. (Honours)
498	34	State ealth	State Health.
501	10	he	the
502	5	ertain	Certain.
502	15	tress	trees.
502	30	he	the.
504	1	*Goandura*	*Gaonbura*
504	4	-do-	-do-
510	7	Beside	Besides.
522	32	Junior	junior
529	21	1772	1792
542	13 (Table line)		4415
551	3	ecretary	ecretary.

Tezpur University Library
Accession No. 25267

Stone image of Chaturbhuj Basudeva of Basudev Than,

Basudev Than (Dhakuakhana),

Metallic image at Harhi Devalaya (Dhakuakhana),



Metallic Bell of Chutiya King (Ghilamara Satra),

Image of Durga found at Tinsukia.
18th Century A. D.

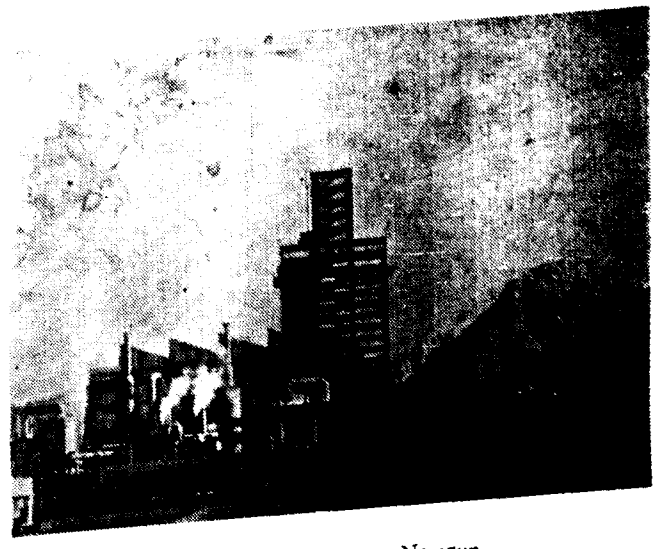
Image of Vishnu
Larua Mauza,
C. 18th Century A. D.

Image of Buddha
found at Chabua Air Field

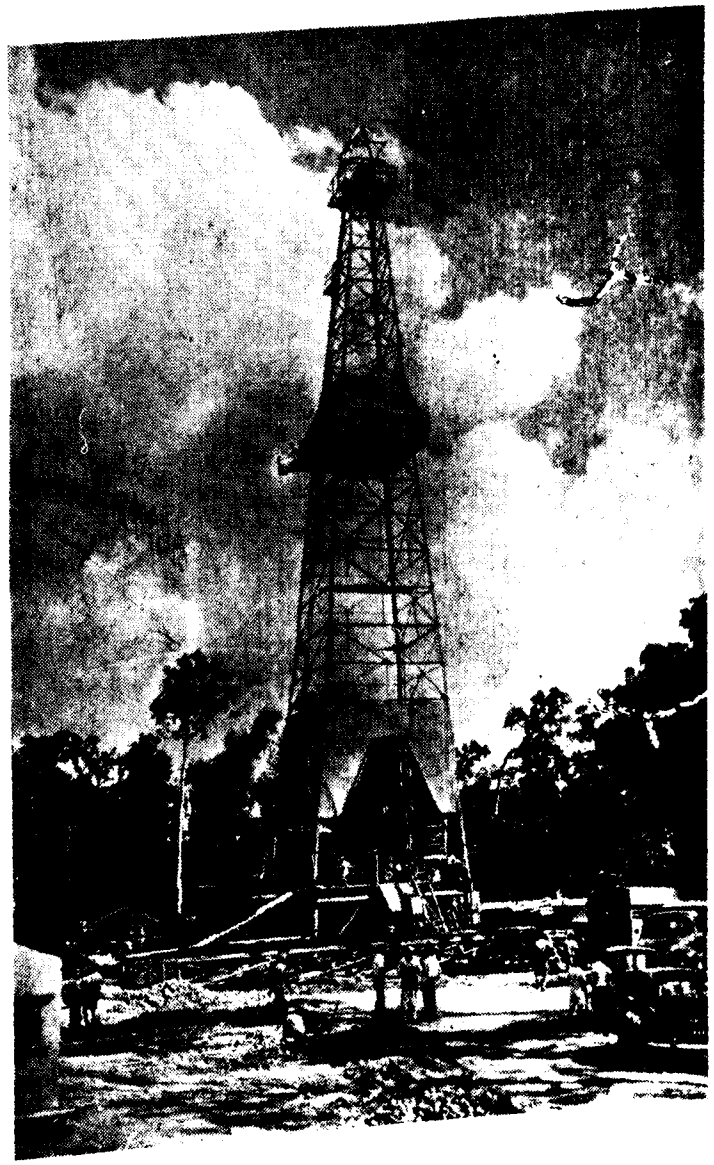
Dibrugarh Town protection works

Weeding the Field

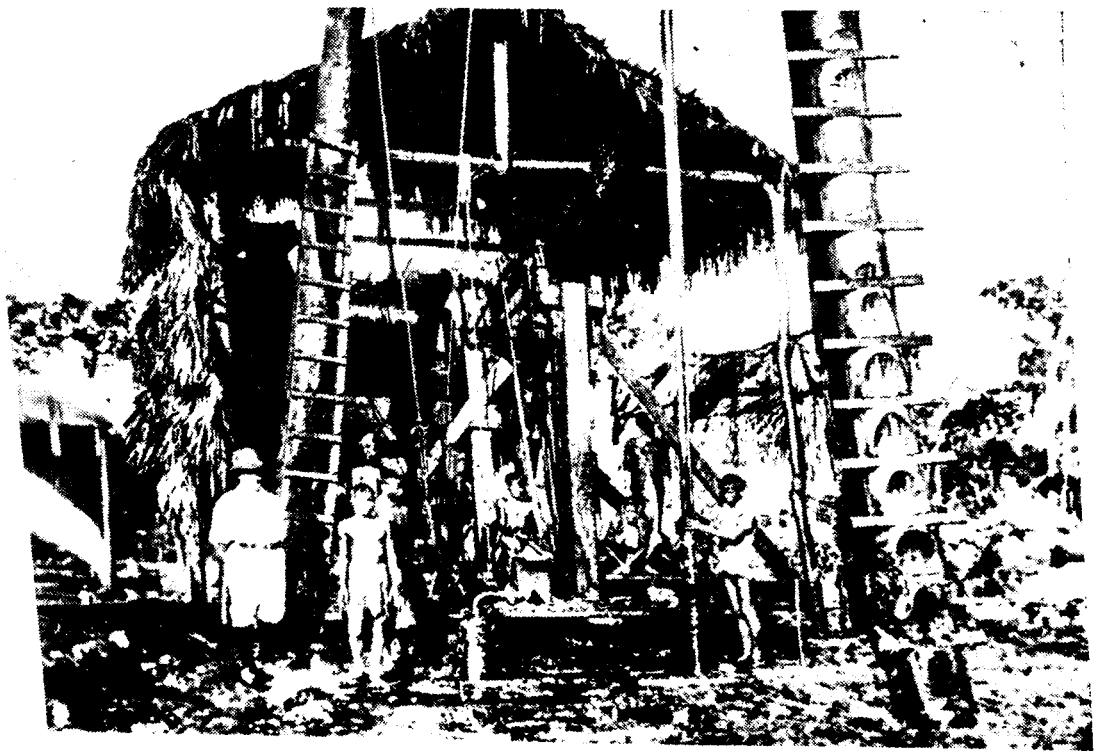
Buddha Vihar of the Phakials



Fertilizer Factory at Namrup



Oil Drilling at Naharkatiya



View of Digboi Oil Field, 1905

A view of the **Digboi Refinery**—The first of its kind in the Sub-Continent

தமிழ்நாடு ஆவணக்காப்பக நூலகம்,
எழும்பூர், சென்னை-600 008.

தவணைத்தாள்.

சே எண் :

ப. எண் :

வழங்கிய நாள். (1)	திரும்பிய நாள். (2)	வழங்கிய நாள். (1)	திரும்பிய நாள். (2)

S.F. 259A-6—1,00,000—30-1-84